Blood donors enjoy pancakes, crab cakes during drive at Pasadena parish

When people file into the church hall at St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Pasadena, Feb. 25, they will catch a whiff of sausage sizzling on a griddle and crab cakes being laid on a bun, and for a taste it will only cost them a pint of blood.

Volunteers will be serving pancakes, sausage and rolls during the morning hours of the parish's blood drive and crab cakes during the afternoon session, said Joe Turchetta, a parishioner of the church and organizer of the event.

"It's become a tradition for us," said Mr. Turchetta of Pasadena. "We get more than 100 pints of blood at all of our blood drives. A lot of these people tell me they come just for the crab cakes or the pancakes."

The blood drive begins 8 a.m. in the church hall, and the 10 parish volunteers begin serving breakfast to the donors by 8:30 a.m., he said. "We start serving the crab cakes around 12:30 p.m. and keep them coming until the blood drive ends at 2:30 p.m."

Though the church has always served refreshments during the three blood drives it holds each year, the goodies for breakfast and lunch didn't surface until a few years ago, when parishioner Bill Green – owner of the Stoney Creek Inn in Curtis Bay – suggested his restaurant could provide the meals for hungry donors.

Before the pancakes and crab cakes, the parish blood drives might have been lucky to collect 40 pints each time, Mr. Turchetta said.