

How to get involved in the Sunday Soup Kitchen hosted at St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Evanston

(as of September 2011)

The Big Picture:

To participate in the Sunday Soup Kitchen plan on providing:

- 10-20 volunteers
- \$300-600 to provide enough food 110 people with at least one generous helping of the meal, plus 3 gallons of milk
- Time commitment: Sunday afternoon, 1-4:30 (generally) in addition to any grocery shopping and meal preparation needed.

Organize a Serving Group and Provide a Meal: We welcome groups of all kinds, from members of churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples, to groups of friends, family, neighbors, sororities and fraternities, business and offices, even softball teams. Serving groups should bring between 10 and 20 people (including school-age children). Groups are responsible for planning the meal (we can offer guidance), purchasing and preparing the food, and serving and cleaning up. The cost of the meal depends on what is served, but a good rule of thumb is about \$3.00 to \$6.00 per person (\$300 to \$600). Groups use our modestly equipped kitchen to do basic meal preparation (we have a large commercial stove and ovens, but limited counter space and extremely limited sink space).

Each October, we circulate a sign-up sheet for January to December of the following year. To see this year's serving group schedule go here: <http://sundaysoupkitchen.blogspot.com/>. Dates during the school year, and especially dates in November and December, fill up quickly, but we have great need for groups who are willing to provide a meal on other holiday weekends (Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day) and during the summer months.

Help Coordinate: We welcome responsible adults to help coordinate the meal on a regular basis (at least once every 5-6 weeks). Coordinators open the Soup Kitchen to guests and serving groups at 1:00 p.m., close around 4:30 p.m., oversee the dining room, trouble-shoot issues, get to know the guests, help serving groups, make sure clean up is done properly, and generally act as a resource to guests and groups alike. (At least one member of our church is always on-site, but we try to make sure there are two coordinators at all times.)

Assist the Coordinators: We welcome mature high school-aged volunteers who are willing and able to help out the coordinators, preferably at least once a month, or on a more frequent basis for a short period of time. Our need for assistant coordinators is unpredictable. Some serving groups bring many volunteers, and there is little for extra volunteers to do; others are smaller and

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really appreciate extra hands and help. Working at the Soup Kitchen will fulfill most community service requirements. No advance sign-up is required, but during the spring, when many high school students are trying to fill community service credits, we may have to turn away high school-age volunteers.

Contribute Financially: The congregation of St. Paul's provides meals on many Sundays when no meal would otherwise be served (at \$300 to \$600 per meal); purchases all of the non-paper-good supplies (coffee, tea, lemonade, hot, chocolate, cleaning supplies, foil, etc...), and pays for extra cleaning, scavenger services, and utilities. Our kitchen equipment is extremely old and in need of upgrades and improvements. Financial contributions are greatly needed. The Soup Kitchen is a beloved, but costly, mission for a small congregation. If you would like to contribute in any amount, please contact the church office St. Paul's office@stpaulvanston.org phone 847 475 3403.

The Basics:

Location/Access:

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Evanston, 1004 Greenwood St., Evanston
(corner of Maple Ave. & Greenwood St.)

You may come in the Maple Ave. (office) entrance, or the side door on Greenwood St.

The kitchen and fellowship hall, where the meal is served, are on the second floor. Unfortunately, we have no elevator, although we do have a stair chair lift, if any of your volunteers have problems climbing stairs.

Time:

Serving groups usually arrive between 1:00 and 1:30 p.m. If the group is bringing in a meal that is already prepared and hot, they come in as late as 2:00.

The meal is served at 3:00 p.m.

If everyone sticks around and pitches in, clean-up is usually done by 4:30. If not, it takes longer.

Help/Coordination:

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St. Paul's always has at least one, and usually two, coordinators on hand to answer questions, show the serving groups where things are, supervise the guests in the dining room, and generally make sure everything runs smoothly.

What we provide:

All paper/plastic goods (plates, napkins, bowls, plastic cutlery, hot & cold cups, etc.) supplied by Interfaith Action of Evanston.

Coffee, creamer, tea, lemonade mix (in the summer) or hot cocoa mix (fall through spring). Our coordinators make the coffee and set up the beverage table.

A large (12-burner) commercial stove with two large ovens, large pots and pans, strainers, bowls, and basic cooking utensils.

Dish towels and cloths

Cleaning supplies

Aprons and headscarves (but some groups/individuals prefer to bring their own)

Number of Guests:

The number of guests ranges from 80 to 110. 90 or so has been a very typical turnout. Dates at the end of the month tend to bring more guests than Sundays at the beginning of the month.

What Your Group Should Bring:

At a minimum: Enough food to provide 110 people with at least one generous helping of the meal, plus 3 gallons of milk (we recommend 2%). (It is completely up to the serving group to decide what to serve. Guests are very appreciative of fresh vegetables and fruit. Typically, groups provide a protein, starch (sometimes mixed together, as in a casserole or lasagna) and a vegetable, plus a dessert (e.g., brownies, cookies, cake, ice cream sandwiches, etc.) Some of our guests cannot eat pork; some are vegetarians, so it is a good idea to have a small amount of one meatless dish.

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Many groups provide enough food for guests to have seconds of at least the main course. This is appreciated by guests, but not required.

Keep in mind that we use plastic cutlery and many of our guests have dental issues, so many cannot eat things like a whole, uncut apple.

Two bags of ice (in the summer).

Condiments appropriate to the meal. **** Please do not leave any food -- including opened bottles and jars of condiments -- in the refrigerators or freezers. Our refrigerator space is very limited.

*** What to do with leftovers. It is hard to know exactly how much food to bring. If you have extra and guests (many of whom are homeless or otherwise lack a place to store food) cannot take the leftovers, you may divide the extra among your volunteers or drop off leftovers (provided they are at a safe temperature) at the McGaw YMCA for their residents. During the winter, we can offer small quantities of leftovers to our Monday afternoon warming center guests, but please check with a coordinator before leaving anything. In the summer, there is no warming center, and leftovers generally have to be thrown out. Please take all perishable goods home with you, unless a coordinator specifically tells you that an item will be used.

What to Expect:

Guests begin to arrive at about 1:00. They have coffee, talk, read the paper, play card or board games, or nap as they wait for the meal.

Typically, unless your group would prefer to serve differently, guests take numbers as they arrive (e.g., the first one to arrive gets #1, second to arrive gets #2, etc.)

At 3:00 p.m., there is a blessing (which your group can lead, or which can be led by a guest or one of our coordinators).

The guests are called to the serving line in groups of ten. Guests keep their numbers for the call to "seconds" -- which only happens after everyone has been served once, and only if there is enough food for second servings.

Guests take plates and move through the serving line. The serving group volunteers (wearing food handling plastic gloves) place the food on the

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plates for the guests as they move through the line and indicate what they would like.

Clean-up:

Serving trays and all cooking pots/pans, and utensils must be cleaned. We have no dishwasher. This is a fair amount of work, and it is messy and wet. Please make sure your group has one or two designated dishwashers.

Floors must be swept, tables washed, garbage and recycling put out at the curb, and the kitchen must be cleaned.

We try to clean up and get our volunteers on their way as soon as possible. Our coordinators really need volunteers to stay for clean-up, including cleaning all of the pots and pans, trays, utensils and kitchen counters, cleaning the tables, sweeping and mopping the floors, and taking the garbage out to the curb. We are usually done by 4:30-4:45.