

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP MEAL MANUAL

PURPOSE OF FELLOWSHIP MEALS: Provide an opportunity for members, friends and others to get together around a meal on a weekday evening, provide fellowship and a complement to other Wednesday activities.

Therefore, Meals should be:

- Affordable to all
- At a convenient time for the majority of potential attendees, including families and children
- Acceptable to most in terms of the type of food

History of Fellowship Meals at TVUUC

It appears that Fellowship Meals (FMs) began in 2001, when Carolyn Rogers and Alan Moore decided that they would be a good idea, especially as a means to attract more people to attend the every Wednesday evening Vespers service that was struggling. In addition, potlucks were not well-attended, and it was thought that people might come to a meal that was prepared for them at a modest cost.

At first, they organized a catered dinner, once a month, with Yahwah Awalowo, who provided largely vegetarian food. Initially they requested that attendees make reservations so that food could be planned according to the number of people who would be there. This system did not work well, as most people either did not confirm at all, or confirmed at the last minute, making it not very useful for planning the food.

Because most of these meals lost some money, and because of Yahwah's increasing unavailability,, Carolyn and Alan began to prepare the meals themselves. Most of these meals have made a profit. Meals became twice monthly in year two, and have remained that way until the present time.

Over time, they have tried to incorporate church groups as meal preparers, and occasional non-church non-profits, for fundraising or publicity purposes. When needed, one or two meals are catered.

The price of the meal has not changed since the beginning, \$5 for adults, \$3 for kids, and \$13 for a family. For the most part, meals have not lost money, and over the course of the year, have provided the church with \$200-300 in income. This does not include, however, the cost of utilities needed to prepare a meal and clean up after a meal. Over the years, the price of food has increased, and the type of food has changed, as we now make an effort to buy local, organic, fair trade food when possible. This has decreased the profit margin considerably.

Who Prepares?

- Responsible Church member/volunteers: Over the years, this has been the most consistent means of coordinating and preparing the FMs. Carolyn Rogers and Alan Moore have been doing this since the beginning, and although others have occasionally helped out, no one else has shown interest in taking on some or all of this responsibility.
- Church groups: Occasionally, some church groups have prepared a meal, but not usually more than once or twice a year; e.g. Greg's Group, High School group.
- Community groups: occasionally, (once or twice a year) a community non-profit will prepare a meal in order to raise some money or for publicity purposes. E.g. Food Not Bombs, Haiti School building etc.
- Catered: When only one (or none) of the normal volunteers is available for the first or third Wednesday time slot, then a caterer is arranged e.g. Earthfare, Backyard Burger, SITAR.

It should be noted that there are three basic phases to a normal Fellowship Meal: meal planning and food acquisition, meal preparation, and cleanup. Over the years there have been many volunteers who have been extremely helpful in the latter phase – clean up. This is extremely important, but it requires a lot of effort to recruit them – make sure they are available for a particular meal.

When To Have Fellowship Meals

FMs have been held always on Wednesday evenings to complement other church activities that are most numerous on that evening. They are currently held on the first and third Wednesdays only. Potlucks occur on the other Wednesdays.

Until 2011, meals were set for 6:30pm, but because some parents wished to attend a class at 6:30, the time was changed to 6pm. This time seems to suit most people better than 6:30pm.

Because attendance tends to decrease in spring and summer, there are no Fellowship Meals in June, July or August.

How Many Attendees

In the fall and winter, attendance has been a fairly consistent 40-45 individuals. In the spring it gradually diminishes to sometimes 20-25. Usually, 8 tables are set up, and 2 for serving the food.

Characteristics of a Fellowship Meal

Most FMs have certain characteristics, in order to provide a healthy balance of ingredients and to provide for some, not all, of the special needs of meal attendees. The meal coordinators have been able to accommodate special dietary needs if informed in advance.

- Meat and vegetarian options
- Salad
- Vegetable if not incorporated in main dish
- Dessert
- Ethical Eating: In 2011, the coordinators adopted the UUA Ethical eating statement has a guideline for purchasing and preparing the food. This means that we attempt to buy local when possible, organic when not too expensive, and fair trade items when background is known.

Cost of a Meal

Currently (2012), the food ingredients of a typical Fellowship Meal cost about \$100-\$120 to purchase. The meal coordinators purchase the food with their own funds. Money collected at the Fellowship Meal is turned in to the Administrator for accounting purposes. The coordinators are reimbursed by check a week or so after the meal.

List of Commonly Prepared Meals:

- meatloaf, lentil loaf, mashed potatoes, green beans
- spaghetti bake, salad, bread
- chicken, beans/rice, roasted vegetables, salad
- soup supper, salad, bread
- baked potato and salad bar
- hamburgers, veggie burgers, potato salad, tossed salad
- lasagna, salad

Time frame for Preparation

- Advertising in newsletter and on listserve - 1 person/15 minutes
- Meal planning – 2 people/30 minutes
- Shopping – 1 person/2 hours

- Preparation – 2 people/2or 3 hours, varies per menu. Allow 2 hours immediately before meal for final prep including beverages, serving set up, reheating, collection basket, etc.
- Cooking – 30 minutes preheat oven, 30 minutes to boil large pot of water
- Set up tables/distribute salt and pepper - 10 minutes by Sexton on duty
- Serving – 2 people ½ hour (may choose to serve or self-serve based on number of people present at serving time)
- Clean up – 2 people 30-60 minutes for recruiting volunteers to clean and putting away tables/tablecloths/chairs and wash dishes plus supervising and helping with kitchen cleanup
- Collection - 5 minutes including count money, complete form, and deliver to administrator's office.

Fellowship Meal coordinators are available to meet with anyone who is planning a meal: to review these procedures, describe the layout of the kitchen, or answer other questions. Also, please refer to the general kitchen manual located with this procedural manual in the top left drawer near the phone.

Submitted by Carolyn Rogers and Alan Moore January 23, 2013