

Hospitality Committee Annual Report for 2017 Submitted March 2018

Summary

2017 was very much like 2016. We served lunch on First Sundays of the months in all months except August (vacation) and December (when Christmas breakfast is held on the second Sunday of December). We setup and cleaned up on Blue Moon (fifth Sunday) potlucks, and on Finger Food Sundays (third Sunday, prior to Meeting for Worship for Business). On Easy Even Sundays (second and fourth Sundays) light refreshments were, as in 2016, handled by various committees, one month each, with occasional assistance from Hospitality Committee.

Our greatest challenge at this time is figuring out how to make Finger Food Sunday less stressful for committee members, shorter, and more helpful toward supporting Meeting for Worship for Business.

Our Membership

We currently have 19 members, whose involvement varies based on travel and other constraints. We have requested 2 new members be found. We have committee meetings twice a year, in which we sign up for coordinator duties for the next 6 months.

Ongoing Activities

1. First Sunday Lunch

In 2017, as in most previous years, we provided the food, the setup, and the cleanup, for between 70 and 90 people. Setup starts at approx. 9:30 am. The lunch begins at rise of meeting (approx. 11:40 am) and cleanup ends approx. 1:15-1:30 pm.

Challenges:

1) Set up and take down of Social Room. For a year we have been using signs on tables requesting help with clearing tables and putting away tables and chairs. Sometimes we receive lots of help from non-Hospitality members; sometimes not so much. Sometimes we receive it from aging members of the community who we worry about and wish they wouldn't. Many on the committee also have physical troubles, e.g. lifting chairs above waist level.

2) Indefatigable Appetites. Approximately 6-8 members feel compelled to make 2 or 3 dishes, rather than run out of food. Nevertheless, we sometimes run out of food before the upstairs teachers arrive for lunch. (In the old building, we usually had enough with members providing one dish.)

2. Finger Food Sunday (3rd Sunday prior to Meeting for Worship for Business)

In 2015 we began using small plates, no utensils, for food brought by the entire meeting, as a way of simplifying cleanup and allowing Meeting for Worship for Business to begin on time. We continue this approach.

Challenges:

Although it is announced at meeting and in newsletters, we continue to have 80% of food (or more) contributed by the members of the Hospitality Committee, rather than the entire meeting. While we first supplemented with running for last minute store-bought hoagies, we have more recently put out only what food arrives.

Changes to come:

At the recent semi-annual meeting of the Hospitality Committee, February 24, 2018, consensus arose that many in the meeting have begun to assume the third Sunday Finger Food is a full lunch for all, similar to First Sunday. Many go back and refill the small plates. It may have strayed from its original intent which (we have heard) was to serve lunch to those staying for Meeting For Worship for Business. Also, while it was simplified to Finger Food to enable business meeting to start on time, and allow Hospitality members to get to meeting if they choose, there in actuality has not been as quick a cleanup as we would like, because many linger and do not go to Meeting for Business. We discussed changes such as:

- 1.) Set up only 4 round tables (had been 6 or more), or, possibly use only rectangular tables for seating, with chairs on the periphery. This might help distinguish it visually from First Sunday lunch.
- 2.) Rename the event to stress its connection to Meeting for Business, such as, "Light Bites Before Business".
- 3.) In announcements, mention it is lunch for those staying for Business Meeting, though all are welcome.

We will continue to consider and fine tune these changes. Input from outside the committee is also welcome.

3. Easy Evens (2nd and 4th Sundays)

In 2015 we began assigning coffee and light refreshments to the other meeting committees, with each committee taking one month (hence 2 Sundays) per year. We are extremely grateful for this opportunity to not be on duty every Sunday. We have urged the committees to keep this simple, such as bagels/cream cheese, and one or two sweet breads or similar. We believe this is working fairly well.

4. Blue Moon Potluck (5th Sundays)

In 2017, Blue Moon Potlucks were very well attended (70-90) and were generously contributed to by the meeting members and attenders.

Challenges:

The physical challenges of the setup and take down of the Social Room furniture, as explained above, still exist, as they do for 3rd Sundays as well.

5. Christmas Breakfast

Christmas Breakfast 2017 was a rip roaring success, largely due to the fact that John Bieneck created a large drawing mural which children were invited to color in with markers. Several parents commented this was one of the best events in their children's experiences at the meeting. John has continued to create drawings since, for the

children. The exact details of the size/frequency/hanging of new seasonal drawings is under development.

Final Words

We are happy we can be of service to the CHFM community, and are in a fairly status quo place right now. The challenges we face, such as longer/heavier setups, longer/heavier cleanups, greater amounts of food required, sometimes seem tiring. However, it seems important to continue to do this for the jovial interactions that occur when sharing food and drink, and for the welcome it asserts, particularly to newcomers and to children.

Martha Rose & Al Vernacchio, co-clerks