

Bridge Street United Church Meal Program Update September 2020

COVID-19 Response: Daily Lunch Program

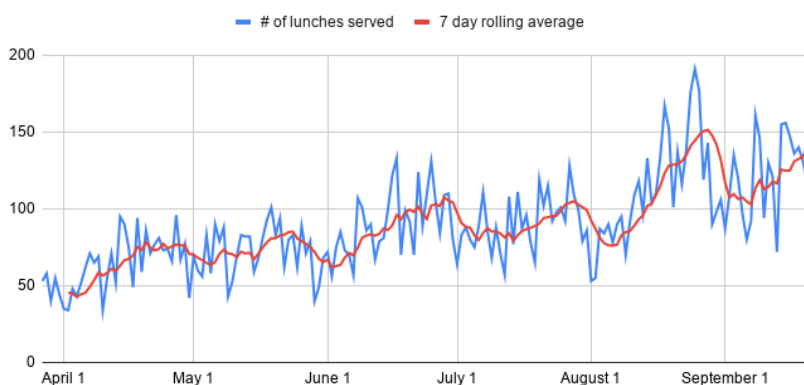
The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered the context for free and low-cost food provision in Belleville. In response, Bridge Street United Church and the Enrichment Centre for Mental Health rapidly launched a daily lunch program in late March to fill a gap in mid-day meal availability.



More than 16,000 lunches have been served through this program to date, representing more than 3,580 volunteer hours! THANK YOU for the commitment, dedication, and care you bring to these programs.

There is considerable variation in the number of meals served each day, as shown by the blue line in the chart below. Average number of meals served continues to increase since the start of the program, with the highest number of meals served toward the end of each month. This is clearly shown by the 7-day rolling average (red line) in the chart.

Number of daily lunch meals served, Mar 27 - Sep 21



We are grateful for the generosity and financial support of numerous donors, large and small. The lunch program has also received funding from the Corporation of the County of

Hastings, and the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF) delivered by United Way Hastings & Prince Edward.

Connie Carson Community Champion Award

The Bridge Street United Church Meal Programs were recognized as a recipient of the inaugural Connie Carson Community Champion award. This honour is a recognition of the hard work, dedication, and care of the many volunteers that make this program possible. Read more at <https://enrichmentcentre.ca/2020/09/17/community-champions-honoured-for-volunteerism-leadership-and-public-advocacy-amid-pandemic/>.



R-L: Carole Lennox, Bill Lundy, Rose Doran (front), Steve van de Hoef, and Ian Sutherland (back) smile broadly as they receive the Connie Carson Community Champion Award on behalf of the Bridge Street United Church Meal Programs.

'Thank God It's Friday' continues...

TGIF frozen meal distribution has continued throughout the pandemic, distributing more than 2800 frozen dinners from March to September. Approximately half of these meals have been produced by St. Thomas Anglican Church cooking crews through an ongoing partnership with the Bridge Street Church Meal Programs.

Volunteers Needed

More volunteers are needed to maintain the lunch program in the coming months. There are two volunteer shifts:

- 1) **Meal preparation (9am – 12pm):** Preparing sandwiches, soups, or salad, baking
- 2) **Serving (11am – 1:30pm):** Serving lunches to meal guests, setup, clean-up

Please email Dianne (dwest@bridgestchurch.com) or call the church office (613-962-9178) if you would like to volunteer with the lunch program, or for more information.

Planning for Cold Weather

As cold weather approaches, we are actively considering ways to adapt the meal programs for the changing seasons. This will likely involve serving takeout lunch meals indoors – that is, meals to be taken and eaten outside of the church building. This new serving format would provide comfort for volunteers and a brief respite from the weather for our lunch guests.



Some of the 1000+ cookies and brownies baked for the lunch program by Lee Casselman (pictured), Rose Doran, and Jess Chambers on a baking day in September.

Health, Safety, and Risk Mitigation

Maintaining the health and safety of volunteers and guests remains a top priority. We recognize that risks can never be eliminated, only identified and managed. The practices with which we are all now familiar – screening, signing in/out, physical distancing, wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose, frequent handwashing, and enhanced cleaning – remain effective to mitigate the risk of virus transmission. We are therefore confident that the Meal Program's policies and procedures are sufficient to mitigate the risk of virus transmission for both volunteers and guests, including with a shift to serving takeout meals indoors. If you have questions about the processes in place to promote the health and safety of volunteers and guests, please contact Steve van de Hoef (svandehoef@bridgestchurch.com) or call the church office (613-962-9178).