

The St. Barnabas Supper/Brunch club

Supper/brunch club is a long-running and much cherished program at St. Barnabas'; it's a perfect way to relax, enjoy the gifts of food and drink and, most of all, spend time together in ways not always possible in more hurried encounters. When my husband Dick and I came to St. Barnabas five years ago, we joined Supper club that first year; we so appreciated the warm welcome we received from our fellow group members who quickly became friends. You will have read that St. Barnabas is a "warm and welcoming community"; that's vitally evident in this program as in many others. Whether you're a newcomer or a log-time member, this is a place and a program to make and deepen friendships.

How does Supper/brunch club work?

In August and early September, sign-up sheets appear in the parlor, at the Welcome table at coffee hour. You'll see notices in the wrapper of the order of service at both services and in the email bulletin. The mid-September deadline (this year on September 15th) is important so that we can designate groups (usually of 6-8) and let people know, by the beginning of October, the names of others in their group as well as their contact information. This is so that the first meeting, where possible, can happen in October/November before the holiday season gets going and finding convenient times to meet becomes more difficult.

The first meeting will be hosted by the group's leader(s), usually people who've been in Supper club before and have kindly offered to do this. After that, couples or two single people take turns to host or arrange a meeting elsewhere—at a restaurant, park, barbeque—whatever seems appealing and doable. At that first meeting you'll be asked to bring calendars so that at least some meeting times can be arranged. Once those dates are selected, and barring unforeseen circumstances, please try to attend.

Below are frequently asked questions/statements about Supper club that you might find useful:

Q: I think quite a number of Supper club members are couples; I'd feel awkward attending as a single person.

A: Absolutely no need to feel awkward. We have many single people who join. Often, two single people share hosting duties, one person hosting and the other assisting. That has worked excellently well in the past.

Q: How many times during the year does a group meet?

A: Some meet once every four or six weeks and some choose to meet only four times during the year. It's completely up to the group.

Q: I have some dietary restrictions that are a real pain—I don't want to inflict those demands on anyone else!

A: Many of us have dietary requirements or preferences so it's no big deal—just state them on the sign-up form. No one will mind!

Q: We have a very small living space so can't accommodate that many people.

A: When it's your turn to host you can arrange to meet elsewhere—at a restaurant, perhaps, or a park—make suggestions to the group and they'll be thrilled to expand their horizons!

Q: I don't like to drive at night so that means Supper Club's out for me?

A: We can try to pair you with someone who would be willing to drive, or perhaps you would prefer to join a group that meets for lunch/brunch instead of supper? You can state your time preference on the sign-up sheet.

Q: My spouse doesn't come to church very often (if at all) so that counts me out?

A: Not at all—we welcome anyone you would like to bring as a partner or guest.

Q: I hate cooking and get nervous at the very thought of hosting.

A: Perhaps order in or eat out? Or offer to help another member who doesn't mind hosting?

Q: We have small children so it's hard to imagine we could join something like this—either hosting one or attending one.

A: You are not alone!? Karen—what can we say here?

Q: We can't join because we plan to be away several times during the year; those absences wouldn't be fair to other people in the group, we assume?

A: If you can't commit to regular meetings, how about joining the “subs”? When a group has an unexpected absence, you could be invited to fill the gap(s) for that particular meeting. Just mark “subs” at the bottom of the sign-up sheet.