



# Maundy Café To-Go

Pivoting in a time of Pandemic

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## Volunteer Perspective

When the Café relaunched in a to-go format, one of our long-time volunteers stepped to the front lines, wearing the familiar apron along with the less comfortable mask and gloves. As people came forward to receive food, there was one guest who looked more hungry than the rest.

"There was a chap that came and told me he hadn't eaten in three days," the volunteer said. "I got the chance to hand him lunch. Two portions, actually. And I thought—this is the business we should be in." Sharing food with all who hunger, and showing up with a loving human face (albeit behind a mask). That's what the Maundy Café is about.

# Pivoting

## IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

After a brief shut-down in the early days of the pandemic, the Cathedral relaunched the Maundy Café, its popular charitable meal program, in a to-go format on April 29, 2020. Supported by individual and corporate donors, grants, and the congregation at Christ Church Cathedral, the Maundy Café has been serving the needs of those who hunger for food and connection in Vancouver's downtown business district since the mid 1980s.

*Maundy Café To-Go* demonstrates the Cathedral's ability to adapt and pivot to current realities, responding to the needs of its neighbours, and ensuring that people who hunger continue to be able to access high-quality, nutritious food, delivered with love and care, in a location convenient for them. In this time, we're expanding and evolving our approach to food.

Holding the dignity and agency of our guests as central, we've adapted our service model to respond to the needs of our hungry neighbours. Our Monday and Wednesday take-away meals not only provide food, but also serve as a place of connection for those who are vulnerable, isolated, and alone. Lunches are high-quality home-made hot meals served with condiments, cutlery, dessert, and a drink, all in to-go containers.

Malaysian Chicken Curry, Moroccan Stew, and Egyptian Kushari are some of the guests' favourite dishes that have returned with the Café's relaunch.

### **Adaptation**

The Café's transformation has not been easy. Prior to the pandemic, 75+ volunteers (primarily retirees) would come in over five shifts to prepare meals for over 500 people each and every week. With changing circumstances (and the need to ensure safety for volunteers and guests alike) came the need to re-invent the Maundy Café model to ensure that those who remained hungry in the pandemic did not permanently lose the Café—a vital source of food and community in downtown Vancouver.

Maundy Café staff Alberto Jaramillo and Andrew Stephens-Rennie worked with city staff and provincial health authorities to adapt the Café's practices to COVID realities. They developed new partnerships and rebuilt their food supply chain to ensure that they would once again have access to high-quality, nutritious ingredients to serve to Café guests. They met virtually with other churches and local not-for-profits to find best practices to adapt the program. They applied for grants, and received some that provided temporary funding relief to bolster the program as it reopened.

Even so, there is still a funding gap that we need to bridge for this year, and heading into 2021.

### **Rebuilding Strength**

One of the most significant changes to our food program was the transformation of the Parish Hall into a warehouse and pantry. In addition to providing meals two days a week, a grant from *Community Food Centres Canada* has enabled the Café to provide emergency food hampers and grocery cards to people who have been economically harmed by the effects of the virus. A newly formed partnership between the *Faith in Our Community Society* and *Donald's Fine Foods* is enabling the Cathedral to provide 100 families with monthly protein packs that ensure that a family of four has enough.

What we continue to see is that the needs of our neighbours have not subsided even as our economy begins to reopen.

The economic burden on families we have come to know through the Café—especially families with children—is significant. Located close to the West End neighbourhood and on two SkyTrain lines, the Cathedral is well placed to respond to these needs. We are well placed, and have embraced the opportunity to build new partnerships that are helping to serve the Vancouver community in ways none of us had imagined in the earliest days of March.

Support the Cathedral's Maundy Café with a one-time or recurring donation at  
[www.thecathedral.ca/give](http://www.thecathedral.ca/give)



## Guest Profile: Claudia

Claudia has been a fixture of the Maundy Café for nearly two years. She lives in the West End and discovered the Café through a local seniors' group where somebody had shared their positive experiences at the Cathedral's meals and hospitality.

At first she came alone, but by the time the pandemic hit, she was coming two or three times per week—often with a group of other seniors—who would make plans to meet at the Café. When the Café closed, we wondered when we would see her again. On the day we relaunched as *Café To-Go*, Claudia wandered by the church building after we were closed. She saw the sign, and then walked around the building looking to see what was going on. One of the volunteers rushed out to see her, to tell her we were open, and offered some take-away food.

Over the course of conversation, she told the volunteers that her mask was falling apart. They were quickly able to offer a brand new cloth mask along with care instructions. We now see her most weeks in the food line at the Café, and are grateful to know that she is safe, still connected with her community, and that the Café—in its reimagined form—continues to be a vital part of her weekly schedule.

## Funding the Café

### MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

As a result of the Cathedral's adaptations in the pandemic, a re-envisioned Café is taking shape.

Responding to even greater needs that have been revealed by the pandemic, the Cathedral is taking further steps to develop a full-service ministry focused on the dignity of all providing access to food, food literacy, advocacy, and employment training through social enterprise. New opportunities for partnership are emerging, and you are invited to join in the response to the needs of our downtown neighbours.

# \$225

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FUNDS CAFÉ-TO-GO FOR  
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Faith in Our Community Society  
FTC Handmade Masks  
Gordon Neighbourhood House

Loblaws Gift of Choice  
London Drugs (Granville & Georgia)  
Street Outreach Initiative  
Union Gospel Mission  
Urban Aboriginal Ministry  
Vancouver Foundation

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## Moroccan Stew

a café favourite to take home

*While most Maundy Café recipes are scaled to serve 100 people or more, many have started as family favourites introduced to the Café community by volunteers. One of these recipes—loved by guests and volunteers alike—is this flavourful Moroccan Stew. This recipe makes six servings.*

### Ingredients

2 tsp olive oil	2 tsp ginger root (grated)
1 cup chopped onions	1 tsp cumin (ground)
1/2 cup each celery (diced) and green bell pepper (chopped)	1 tsp curry powder
1 clove garlic (minced)	1 tsp coriander (ground)
3 cups vegetable broth	1 tsp chili powder
3 cups sweet potatoes (cubed)	1/2 tsp salt
1 can (14-½ oz) diced tomatoes (drained)	1/4 tsp black pepper
1 can (15 oz) chickpeas (drained and rinsed)	1/2 cup raisins
1 Tbsp lemon juice	6 tbsp peanut butter (softened)
	2 tbsp fresh cilantro (chopped)

### Method

Heat olive oil in a large, non-stick saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions, celery, green pepper, and garlic. Cook and stir until vegetables begin to soften.

Add all remaining ingredients, except peanut butter and cilantro. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes or until potatoes are cooked.

Stir in peanut butter and cilantro. Mix well. Simmer for 5 more minutes. Serve hot.