

Wednesday Community Fellowship

Volunteer Handbook



Grace Community Church

*Making disciples who live from the gospel, crossing ethnic and
economic lines.*

Thank you for your interest in being a part of the Wednesday Community Fellowship (WCF) at Grace Community Church!

More than a Meal

On Wednesday nights we provide a community meal for anyone who would like to come. Many of our guests are food insecure and are experiencing homelessness. Our meal provides a time of fellowship, an opportunity to worship and a message of hope.

You are part of something simple but powerful – sharing a meal and sharing dignity with those who need it most. It's more than a meal – it's offering kindness, respect and community to people who may be going through one of the hardest times in their lives.

Every plate you prepare, every smile you give, and every moment you spend listening or helping to serve – it all matters. Here, we're not just serving food, we're serving hope.

Your presence reminds every person who walks through the church doors that they are seen, valued, and not alone.

It's easy to underestimate the power of a warm plate and a kind word, but for many, this may be the highlight of their week – a reminder that kindness still exists in the world. You are that kindness.

Helpful Background Information

There are individual, systemic and spiritual roots of material poverty. Our job is not to alleviate poverty but to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ as He reconciles all things in heaven and earth. (Colossians 1:15-20, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20) We ask that volunteers educate themselves in order to build healthy relationships.

Here are a few suggested readings:

***I See You.. How Love Opens Our Eyes to Invisible People* by Terence Lester**

***When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert**

***Helping Without Hurting in Church Benevolence: A Practical Guide to Walking with Low-income People* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert**

There is intersectionality between ethnicity and economics in our community. We suggest using this devotional during your quiet time or studying it together in your Bible study/ministry group:

***Multiethnic Conversations: An Eight-Week Journey Toward Unity in Your Church* by Mark DeYmaz and Oneya Fennell Okuwobi**

WHY VOLUNTEER?

All people are image-bearers of God, our Creator. Our goal is to build relationships and deliver messages that help people see themselves as image-bearers.

A person experiences **material poverty** when they lack adequate material resources such as food, clothing and shelter. Material poverty is one of the possible symptoms of relational poverty.

A person experiences **relational poverty** when they are unable to enjoy a proper relationship with God, their self, other people and the rest of creation.

Restoring relational poverty helps restore material poverty long-term. As volunteers, we strive to restore relational poverty through fellowship and prayer.

Our prayer for relationships between volunteers and guests... “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:5-7)

We trust that this witness of reconciliation across economic lines will result in many more women and men worshipping around the throne of God, celebrating His Kingdom and His reign (Revelation 7:9-10).

WAYS THAT YOU CAN HELP

1. WEDNESDAYS – SET UP

WCF prep begins in the morning, getting the food into the warmers, setting the tables in the sanctuary, and preparing for the food service that happens later in the day. A single volunteer is needed on a rotating basis.

2. MAKE A CASSEROLE

On the 4th Wednesday of every month, Grace Church provides the meal to serve our guests. Often bible study groups or families see this opportunity to participate in community service. We provide the recipe and disposable pans, and prepared meals can be dropped off from Sunday to Wednesday morning. Sign up on Realm or our website www.gracegso.org/events.

3. DONATIONS

We offer adult men's and women's clothing, shoes, socks, personal care items, Bibles, etc. during WCF, and they are very much appreciated. New and gently used clothing and new toiletries can be dropped off in Room 105.

4. GROCERY BAGS & 2-LITER SODAS

We package about 150 meals every Wednesday for those who prefer a meal to-go; plastic grocery bags are needed all the time. We also serve our guests soda with their meals. This very popular treat requires about 15 2-liter bottles every week. You can drop these donations off in Room 105.

5. JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

This is a time when we gather together to serve our guests in person. You can help with food prep, serving, or joining the ministry prayer team.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SERVING AT WCF

1. Our mission at Grace Community Church is to make disciples, living from the gospel while crossing ethnic and economic lines. WCF is a disciple-making opportunity.
2. Please notify your group ahead of time to wear comfortable shoes and dress modestly, covered shoulders.
3. Please ask your group to silence their cell phones. We don't want calls or texting to be a distraction to what the Lord wants people to hear, see, and experience while they are at church.
4. Volunteers should report to the set of doors on the back side of the church labeled "Entrance C" and knock loudly. It may take a minute, but someone will let you in. Please do not knock on the other doors.
5. Volunteers are given a nametag with first name only.
6. Most volunteers arrive between **5:00 – 5:30** to help prep.
7. Individuals and groups smaller than 5 can serve on any Wednesday night. For larger groups, please email mackmknotts@gmail.com to schedule your group. We would like to know when you are coming so that you have the best possible experience.
8. We do not allow children under the age of 13 to serve in the dining room area for safety reasons except at the water bottle station with an adult.

OUR TYPICAL SCHEDULE

- 5:00 Ice cups and food prep stations are set up. Volunteers are encouraged to walk through the sanctuary and pray a blessing over each chair.
- 5:30 All volunteers gather in the sanctuary for announcements, assignments, and group prayer.
- 5:45 Sanctuary doors open for our guests. They are welcomed in and encouraged to find a comfortable place to sit. A time of Worship and a short message is presented, and prayer teams are released.
An extended Bible Study time is offered to guests and held in Room 103.
- 6:00 "To-go" meals are given out to those who choose not to stay

6:15 Food is served after the speaker finishes with a prayer over the meal, and teams pour soda and hand out dessert to the guests.

6:45 Guests finish eating. Volunteers begin clean-up.

7:00 Clean-up is normally completed.

Some of the areas where you might serve at WCF

- 10-12 volunteers to plate the food in the hallway. All volunteers handling food must wear plastic gloves and have their hair pulled back.
- 4 - 5 volunteers will be packaging up the to go meals
- 2 volunteers as welcome greeters, handing water and cups of ice to guests entering sanctuary
- 1-2 volunteers can help with donations – we tag clothing and shoes by size, and lay out any personal care items on a cart; and someone can help monitor the distribution of items
- 1 or 2 volunteers at each set of double doors to serve as ushers inside the sanctuary to help keep our guests from coming through the doors and into the back hallway where the food is being plated. The usher may also help guests who have questions or need something.
- 1 volunteer to serve as a bathroom monitor. We use the women's bathroom for both men and women. The bathroom monitor needs to sit at the corner near the bathroom and make sure that no men go into the bathroom when there are women using it and vice versa. This is a great time to talk to folks if they have to wait.
- Bike check: We have guests who ride their bikes, or come with large bags of their belongings, and so we offer a "coat check" type system where we will store their bike or their belongings in the stairwell. We tag the belongings with a number, give them the corresponding number, and store the items over the course of the meal.
- 2 volunteers to pass out to-go meals and count number of to-go meals given out with the counter.
- Volunteers will serve meals in the sanctuary, serving soda and handing out desserts. All servers must wear plastic gloves.

- We encourage volunteers to interact with our guests, offering a smile, an introduction, and friendly conversation

AT THE END OF THE EVENING:

- All the prayer baskets are gathered and someone goes through each basket, pulls out the ones that have been written on, and stacks them together. The office staff will post to the requests to the prayer team.
- All unused utensil packets and hand wipes are collected.
- The tables are wiped off and sprayed with a sanitizer spray. They are stacked 6 to a cart with the legs all going in the same direction.
- All the chairs are stacked on the carts.
- All the trash cans should be emptied in the dumpster in the back parking lot and the yellow cans should be returned to Room 105.
- All items that can be recycled are taken to the recycling bins behind the Eagle's Nest.

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

As ambassadors for Christ, we treat everyone with dignity and respect. We are all equals and image-bearers of God. Smile and introduce yourself. Offer a polite compliment. Begin a friendly conversation and don't forget to talk about yourself as well.

Knowing that someone cares can help brighten someone's day. Remember names of regular guests. Many guests don't often receive hugs or human touch in their daily lives. Consider placing a hand on someone's shoulder as you talk with them or pray for them.

You can offer a listening ear and a word of prayer. Be clear and honest about what you can and cannot provide.

"I'm sorry we do not have any financial assistance at this time. May I pray with you?"

"I'm sorry, we do not have any bus passes."

Prayer **is** help. Do not discount the power of prayer!

Grace Community Church staff and the WCF discipleship team are aware of many needs. We do our best to help with benevolence when we are able, according to church policy.

Conversation starters

How is your day going?

What's your favorite part of today's meal?

Are you from around here? Where is home for you?

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Who had the biggest impact on you growing up?

Did you have a pet when you were a child?

What inspires you the most?

What's a favorite job you've had? What did you like about it?

What is your favorite type of music? Do you sing or play instruments?

What's your favorite season of the year? Why?

Do you have a favorite sports team? Player?

What is the one thing you would love to experience in your lifetime?

How can I pray for you today?

Conversation wrap-up

Thank you for sharing with me. May I pray with you?

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

I'm so glad you had dinner with us tonight.

It was great talking with you.

I look forward to talking with you again.

We're here every Wednesday, hope to see you soon.

Thank you and we look forward to serving Christ with you!

For questions about bringing food or helping with daytime set-up please contact:

Michele Garr, WCF Meal Coordinator

Mgarr6@yahoo.com

716-725-2110

To join the Wednesday prayer team or to deliver a message/testimony please contact:

Charles Amisial, WCF Discipleship Coordinator

Charlesha74@gmail.com

561-307-6476

LOCAL RESOURCES

Mental Health Emergency /Suicide Prevention **988**

Medical Emergency number **911**

Greater Guilford County Food Finder App- <https://findfood.ghpfa.org/>

Greensboro Urban Ministry GUM – food pantry, meals, shelters, emergency financial assistance

305 W. Gate City Blvd Greensboro, NC 27406

336.271.5959

Interactive Resource Center (IRC) – showers, laundry, mail, classes, white flag warming center (in the winter months)

407 East Washington Street, Greensboro NC (336) 332-0824

Salvation Army - resource center

1311 S Eugene St Greensboro, NC (336) 273-5572

Affordable Housing Website <https://www.myhousingsearch.com/>

Daymark Recovery (336) 633-7000 (does not require insurance)

110 West Walker Avenue

Asheboro, NC 27203

24-Hour Crisis Hotline

866.275.9552

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800.273.8255

North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://www.ncceh.org/bos/ehv/>

NC FIT (Formally Incarcerated Transition Program) 336 840-9621

Triad Adult & Pediatric Medicine (336)355-9921 (sliding fee scale)