



Double Portion Soup Kitchen and Pantry
A ministry of St. Thomas Church
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Double Portion Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry 2022 Report

2022 was an exciting year of “returning to normal” for us at Double Portion. As the COVID-19 pandemic waned throughout the beginning of the year, we decided that after two years of serving takeout meals, it was time to return to in-person dining. Our volunteers and guests were thrilled to be able to spend more time in fellowship with one another as we continued fulfilling our mission “to know Christ, to make Christ known, and to serve others in His name” by providing a well-balanced meal to those in need in a caring, supportive Christian atmosphere which shows concern for the whole person. Although the return to in-person dining was well received, our team also wanted to serve those who were not comfortable dining in person, so we continued offering take-out meals as well. That change seems to work well for everyone and helps us meet the needs of more people in our community.

We served approximately 9,500 meals this year, with an average of 62 meals served each day, down about 14% from 2021 (but very close to our 2020 numbers). We have been visiting with and providing meals for guests we’ve known for many years, as well as meeting several new guests who are experiencing hardship for the first time.

We are blessed to have several groups providing fully prepared meals such as St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, Double Portion Home Cooks and Knights of Columbus Post 5514. In addition, on Wednesdays we have three groups who come in to serve the meal: Lakeside Packaging Plus, Friendship Place, and Epic Middle School in Menasha. We are grateful for the faithfulness of these groups who we can count on regularly to help serve. We also have approximately 30 dedicated volunteers who serve alongside us on a regular basis from one time per month to several times per week, 10 of whom joined us just this year.

In addition to new volunteers, we have two new members of our ministry board, Joe and Melanie Miller, who also serve as lead cooks on Wednesdays, taking over for Don Bannister who served in both of these roles during COVID. We appreciate their service to our guests and ministry. We are also grateful to Bill Steinhilber, Gayle Varner, Sally Brandt, and Julie Last for their many years of continued service on our board and in the kitchen.

In the past year, the Menasha and Neenah Public Libraries eliminated fines for most materials, thereby also eliminating their “Food for Fines” drive which benefited Double Portion. Although the Food for Fines program has been eliminated, the libraries generously held two food drives for us in 2022. While other local food drives, including the USPS drive and Boy Scout drive, did resume after a break for COVID-19 we received fewer donations than in previous years. During times when our shelves were a little lean, the board voted to purchase some staples, which we were able to do thanks to Calvary Bible Church designating their Easter offering for our ministry. Each month we served an average of 64 individuals or families with our pantry, with most receiving items multiple times per month.

Double Portion exists to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need in our community. In addition to providing for practical needs, we are also able to provide an opportunity to share the gospel with others as Christ works through us in order that all would come to know Him. Our continued prayer is that we would find new ways to connect with, bless, and share the Good News of Jesus with our guests.