

The Soup Bowl St. Michael's Merritt



For 27 years, the Soup Bowl at St. Michael's Church has helped those less fortunate in Merritt by providing warm meals to anyone in need.

Serving sometimes over 150 people each Tuesday the supplies required have increased in number and price. Many items need to be purchased for each week, from vegetables for soups to sandwich items like buns, mayo, margarine as well as the containers, wraps and bags to put food in.

Coordinator Michael Furman said it takes about 50 pounds of meat and vegetables just to prepare the soup required each week. Most of it is donated by Save-On-Foods and the Loop Resource program, and No Frills has also been contributing under the Merritt store's new ownership. Scw'exmx Child and Family Services and Metis Society provide weekly contributions which allow the program to serve so much to so many.

Increased costs across the board are creating a strain at the Soup Bowl, as they are for most non-profits. 2025 will be the first year in nearly three decades that the program will have to actively fundraise and solicit donations to continue. All funds go to the collection, preparation and distribution of food. There are no payroll or rental commitments as everyone volunteers and St. Michael's Church has waived rent for several years now.

The volunteers work tirelessly with whatever donations come in, in order to ensure that every Tuesday, the doors of St. Michael's are opened and no one goes away hungry. Single servings, are provided consisting of soup, a sandwich, fruit and vegetables, bakery items and deli, ensuring everyone receives the same or similar items.

This year, the Soup Bowl expects to serve a total of 6,500 people, distributing 60,000 pounds of food through 4,000 volunteer hours. Roughly 15 per cent of all food collected is shared amongst other charities that combat food insecurity, including the Seventh Day Adventist Church and, most notably, the Nicola Valley Food Bank.

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