



the maundy

GROWING DIGNITY

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A History of Innovation

Vancouver's historic Christ Church Cathedral has been operating food and outreach programs serving the downtown and West End neighbourhoods since the 1980s.

In 2017, with the support of the Vancouver Foundation and the City of Vancouver, the Cathedral began the process of shifting its focus from arms-length charity to one more rooted in justice.

In so-doing, the Cathedral pulled all of its food ministries together under the banner of "*The Maundy*," seeking to better serve its neighbours and to resource other faith communities in a similar transition.

A Walking

MIRACLE

by **Karen Giesbrecht**

"Hmm. I am a walking miracle," said Gary, reflectively, in my office one morning, where I work as the dietitian in a residential recovery program. He had come to weigh himself, and was pleased that he had dropped a few pounds since he had started treatment. Now that life had stabilized, he could also recognize that he was lucky to be alive.

To be more accurate, Gary had first gained weight, as he was undernourished when he started this program. Then, as is typical of vulnerable bodies healing after a hard season, aided by ample pastries and portion sizes, he had gained more weight than he was comfortable with. Now, after a few months of routine, balanced meals and support to address the reasons that his life had slipped into chaos, Gary was feeling better about himself, and his physical health was also improving.

Gary is in his mid-50's and comes from a large family in Eastern Canada. He slowly made his way across the country in his 20's, looking for adventure, and then settled in the construction industry here on the West Coast. He worked hard and indulged often for several decades, and eventually life and alcohol use slipped out of control. He ended up on the streets of Vancouver, and when the weather was harsh, he made his way to a shelter. He cycled between the streets and a shelter a few times, and finally was ready to start treatment.

I do not know how often Gary visited the Maundy Cafe during his stints on the street, but he was sustained by the network of community food programs in Vancouver and the caring individuals behind them. There were some bleak years for Gary - often cold, wet, and hungry. Several times, he fought nasty infections that nearly took his life. Cravings for alcohol overpowered his drive for food, a hot shower, toothpaste and other daily self-care practices most of us cannot imagine living without.

*Occasional meals are not enough to change someone's circumstances.
Only an adequate income and secure home will do that.*

Just as every lost coin and every lost sheep matters, every meal and every dry pair of socks matters. Every time we learn someone's name, it matters.

Can we, though our programs like the Maundy Cafe, prevent someone from slipping into life on the streets or into our emergency support systems? Sometimes, we can. Once someone has lost their home, income and social network, can we lessen their distress as we connect them to needed services? Often, we can do that, too.

We are not all called to be on the front lines. During the pandemic, few of us can volunteer at programs like the Maundy Cafe to meet people like Gary and his peers. But there is much we can do. Some of us are in a position to help guide and fund community supports. Some of us can pray for and encourage those who are on the front lines. All of us can follow the current public health recommendations that will get us through this pandemic and make the world safer for our most vulnerable neighbours, so they will survive, too, and can recognize, again, that they are walking miracles.

Karen Giesbrecht is a registered dietitian with a particular interest in mental health, strong communities, good stories and real food. She wove all these together in *Happy Colon, Happy Soul: An Exploration of Why and How we Share Food* (Wipf & Stock, 2019). At home in Vancouver, Canada, Karen takes great delight in sharing good meals with her family, friends, and those in her community who know hunger.

Support the Cathedral's Maundy Café with a one-time or recurring donation at
www.thecathedral.ca/give



Growing Dignity

In December 2020, the Canadian Press reported that the average family in Canada will pay up to an additional \$700 for food in 2021. For many people who visit the Maundy Cafe, this jump in price will make the already high cost of living unreachable.

As she has come to know the Maundy Cafe community, the Cathedral's new Food & Hospitality Coordinator Vienne Chan started to notice some patterns amongst some of the guests. Over the past few months, there have been increasing numbers of individuals—often mothers—coming to pick up food for themselves and their families.

Through conversation week after week, it has become clear that the need is growing, even as dignified neighbourhood-based supports have been reduced during the pandemic.

"Our daily contact with individuals and families experiencing increased poverty has compelled us to respond to their growing need," said Vienne Chan. "We know that the problem of hunger won't be solved by more charitable food. What we really need to do is question and replace the economic models that lead to the ever-increasing income inequality that so many of our neighbours are experiencing. While we work on that challenge, the addition of a bulk-buying club offers one opportunity to work with our neighbours to ensure that more people have enough of what they need."

The Bulk Buying Club will operate as a part of the The Maundy's broader food ministry at the Cathedral. To make this co-operative grocery model possible, volunteers pick up fresh produce from a local distributor, bringing it back to the Cathedral where the food is sorted and packaged into individual portions for pickup that day amongst club members.

"I really think this is the gospel in action," said the Very Rev. Christopher A. Pappas, the Cathedral's Dean and Rector. "This approach is about ensuring that all members of our community have enough." These values are deeply inline with the Cathedral's Food Philosophy.

As a result of the Maundy Café's Bulk Buying Club, 75 new families will gain access to high quality, fresh fruits and vegetables at affordable prices every month. By participating in this Bulk Buying Club, they will be able to access high-quality produce in a dignified way, while building relationships with one another, being given the opportunity to participate with others as a part of the program, and connect with the parish community where interested.

Because the Cathedral's food programs are low-barrier, not requiring means testing or identity checks, all members of the community—including those with uncertain immigration status—are able to access these services without fear.

A Table for All

FUNDING DIGNIFIED FOOD ACCESS

The Pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to adapt the Maundy to respond to our community's emerging needs. As we continue to grow the Maundy as a hub for dignified food access in the Downtown and West End, we need partners like you to help us share food in new ways.

In addition to our takeaway lunches, the new Bulk Buy Program serves new needs. We are seeking to expand this model with a Low-Cost Produce Market, and to better accompany guests at the Maundy with the addition of an Outreach Worker to help us better respond to the growing needs of our downtown neighbours.

\$250

**PROVIDES LUNCH FOR 50
PEOPLE**

\$10,092

**GIVES GROCERY SUPPORT FOR
288 PEOPLE FOR 1 MONTH**

\$1,200

**FUNDS THE MAUNDY FOR
ONE DAY**

OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIES



a café favourite to take home

We're sharing the undisputed favourite Maundy Cafe cookie recipe. Crispy on the outside, chewy in the middle, and always made with love by our volunteers, they're perfect with a cup of Railtown—the Maundy's go-to coffee blend—or on its own. While the original recipe calls for raisins, we've been adding chocolate chips as well. Feel free to experiment!

Ingredients

DRY INGREDIENTS

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt

3 cups oats (not instant)

1 1/2 cups raisins

You can substitute chocolate chips, dried cranberries,
or combine them as you see fit

WET INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed
2 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla

Method

- Preheat oven to 350°.
- Whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt; set aside.
- Combine wet ingredients with a hand mixer on low. To cream, increase speed to high and beat until fluffy and the colour lightens.
- Stir the dry mixture into the creamed mixture until no flour is visible. (Over-mixing develops the gluten, making a tough cookie.)
- Now add the oats and raisins; stir to incorporate
- Spray baking sheet with non-stick spray
- Fill a #40 cookie scoop and press against side of bowl, pulling up to level dough (this measures approximately 2 tablespoons of dough).
- Drop dough balls 2-inches apart onto pre-greased baking sheet
- Bake 11-13 minutes on centre rack, until golden, but still moist beneath cracks on top.
- Remove from oven; let cookies sit on baking sheet for 2 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool.

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