

# Parish Event Planning Guide

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## Introduction

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When you ask people from Christ Church what makes this place so special, the most frequent response is simply that this church community feels like a family. The friendships and relationships we have are formed in our worship together and in the time we spent with one another in community at events. These gatherings are vital to helping parishioners to get involved and to feel part of the community; in short, they are an essential part of our church life.

They are also a lot of work, and if not carefully planned or considered, they can conflict with one another and overburden regular volunteers. To address this, the church has a series of processes, created from lessons learned over the years, to help ensure that events are successful. Christ Church also has several groups, forum, and staff members who can help support your work.

Great ideas for events become reality because of work and planning.

**If your ministry group is inspired to host a meal or put on a fundraiser or organize an activity, it is your group's responsibility to make that happen.** It requires recruiting a person (or persons) to commit to coordinate the event and others in your group committing to help.

## Planning a Simple Event for Your Group

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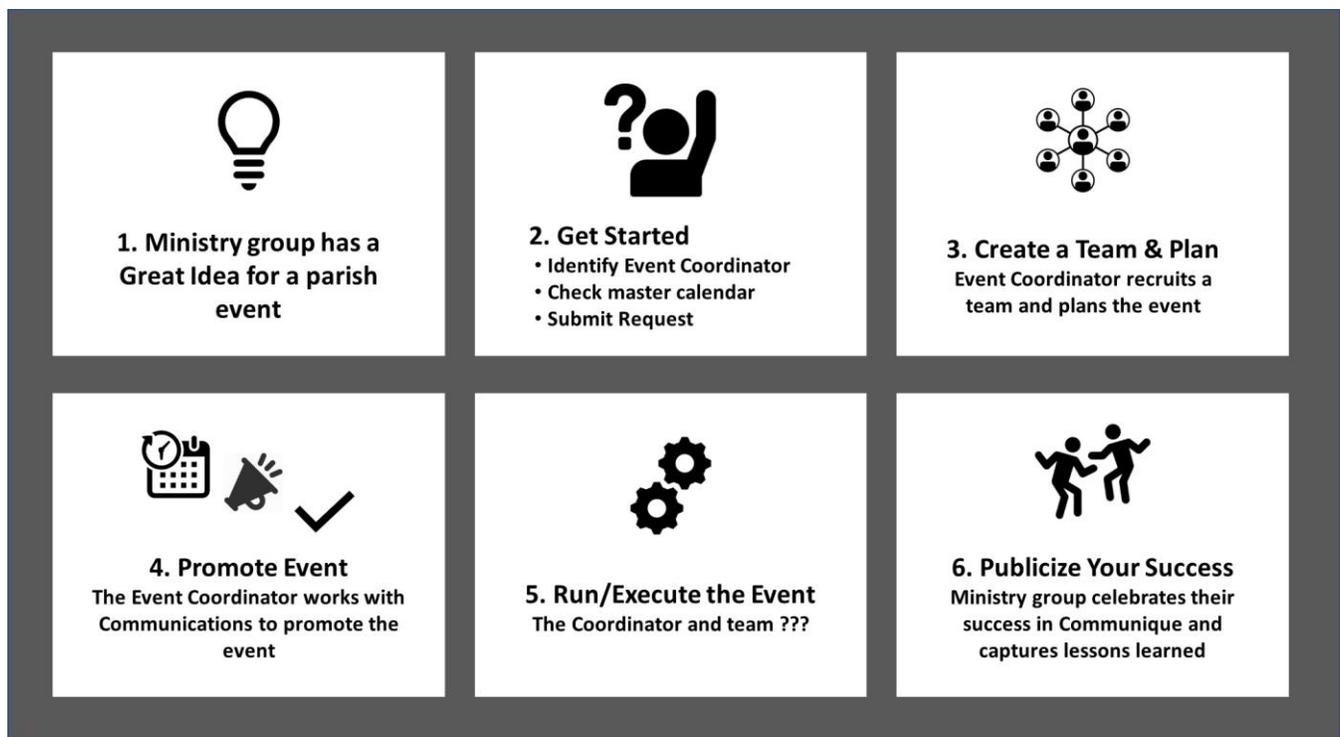
If your event is a simple meeting that does not involve the parish (i.e, requiring only one room/no announcements or of publicity) follow these steps.

1. Consult the Master Calendar available on our website, [www.ccnorcross.org](http://www.ccnorcross.org), and see if the room is available.
2. If available, send an email to the church administrator at [office@ccnorcross.org](mailto:office@ccnorcross.org) requesting the room for the date(s) and time(s) you need.
3. Follow the Facility Use Guidelines later in this document. Generally speaking, all areas are shared by other groups so be sure to leave it cleaner than you found it.
4. **IMPORTANT:** If your event involves collecting money for any reason, follow the Money Handling Procedures near the end of this document.

## Planning Larger Congregation Wide Events

If your event involves the whole parish or is open to and is to be promoted to the public, this guide will provide a comprehensive overview all the steps required and resources available to take a great idea for an activity or event at Christ Church and make it happen.

There are essentially six major steps involved in parish-wide event planning shown below. The remainder of this guide is organized into six sections, each of which will present the tasks and resources you need to effectively and efficiently move through the process of putting on a terrific, well-attended event.



### Six Major Steps to Putting on a Parish-wide Event

**NOTE:** Throughout this guide are references to forms or documents that you may need; they are available on the church website, [ccnorcross.org](http://ccnorcross.org). Click on **Forms** in the upper left-hand corner and then select **Events**.

Resources:

- **Ministry Group Leader:** The leader of the ministry group with the event idea who can formally request the event.
- **Event Coordinator:** A person appointed by the sponsor (if other than him/herself) to coordinate the event and make it happen.
- **Event Team:** People who have been recruited by the Ministry Group Leader or Event Coordinator to make the event happen.
- **CCN Event Support Team:** Ministry Group of people who are willing to assist with events by providing supplies, food, or help.

**The Event Coordinator should not do all the work**

They are coordinators of the event, not the ones who will put it on. Relying on one person to do the lion's share of event planning not only creates an unfair burden on one person, potentially contributing to volunteer burn-out, it prevents others from the very real fellowship that is created by serving together.



## Step 1: What a Great Idea!

The first step to any occasion is the idea. Your ministry group might want to host a fellowship event with food, coordinate an outing, host a speaker, organize a fundraiser.

## Step 2: Get Started

The second, and perhaps most important step is to **identify an Event Coordinator**, someone who will commit to serve as a project manager to coordinate volunteers and ensure that the work required to plan, promote, and execute the event gets done.

Once your group has agreed on an event, chosen a date, and identified an Event Coordinator, this is how space is reserved, how it gets placed on the Parish calendar, and how to begin to get the event promoted.

### Schedule Your Event

1. Consult the Master Calendar available on our website, [www.ccnorcross.org](http://www.ccnorcross.org), and see if the space is available.
2. Six weeks PRIOR to your event, complete an Event Request Form found on our website under the Forms section – Events (or just [click here](#)). Fill it out, save it to your computer, and either send it to the office per the instructions at the bottom of the form or print it and drop it by the church office. This will give the church staff and volunteers and idea of what support you will need. The event will be reviewed at the next office staff meeting (currently on Tuesday mornings). **The staff will notify you if the event & date are approved.**

## Step 3: Create a Team & Plan

Once approved, the Event Coordinator(s) need to get a team in place to help to plan, promote, and execute. Ask for volunteers from your ministry group to commit to oversee a smaller piece (i.e, someone to take over planning the decorations and space set up; someone who will work with other group members to determine a menu, etc.).

At a high level, you might consider asking volunteers to coordinate one of the general tasks listed below.

Plan	Promote	Execute Event
Theme for event	Promotional materials	Set up
Coordinate arrangements for space (Decorations, Set up)	Plans to post/distribute	Serve
Supplies (food, decorations)	Request/schedule announcement	Clean up
Volunteers		
Finance needs		

## Plan

Determine a theme for your event – and/or an event title. This will help drive everything from decorations to the promotional plans you have. It is helpful to do this with the entire team, and then let your individual groups move forward with other planning work.

**Coordinate Arrangements for Space:** You will have reserved space with your event request on the master calendar, but you will need to

- Determine what you need in terms of tables, chairs, etc. and where you want these set up.
- Create a diagram of the tables you need and submit it to the parish administrator at least one full week in advance of your event.
- Determine what decorations you will use, where/how you will use them
- Recruit people to:
  - Provide decorations
  - Help with setup prior to the event

Make sure you have read the Facilities Use Guidelines later in this document. **Generally speaking, all areas are shared by other groups so be sure to leave it cleaner than you found it.**

**Finance Needs:** If you plan to charge admission, solicit donations, or submit receipts of any kind, you need to contact Robin Miller at [bookkeeper@ccnorcross.org](mailto:bookkeeper@ccnorcross.org). **before** the event. She will help you arrange ticket sales, advise on plans to collect donations, and getting them safely to the church office. See additional info on Money Handling Procedures later in this document.

**Supplies:** The Event Coordinator should work with others on the team to determine what supplies will be needed to put on the event. This can include plates/napkins/etc., food, beverages, and supplies specific to your event for your attendees (i.e., if you plan a game night, you need games, tokens, prizes, etc.).

- **Plates/napkins**, etc: Once you have an inventory of what you need for paper goods, email Beth Holland to see if we have supplies on hand. Anything we can't supply, your group will need to acquire
- **Food/Beverage:** Create a list of items needed and determine what your team can provide.

### Work with Christ Church Event Support Team (if needed)



If you need help from outside your ministry group, the Christ Church Event Support Team can help! This ministry group is a comprised of parishioners who have volunteered to be available to provide supplies and support for parish-wide events. Contact Kathy Smith with the list of your supply and volunteer needs, and she can create a Sign-Up Genius for your event.

Plan
Theme for event
Coordinate arrangements for space (Decorations, Set up)
Supplies (food, decorations)
Volunteers
Finance needs

## Step 4: Promote the Event

As soon as your event is approved, it is time to consider how to get the word out.

- Create a *draft* of your promotional materials (“handout” postcards, posters, announcement text) following the Style Guide. A two-page Style Guide, a Full Style Guide, and templates for most of these are available in the Communications area of the Forum Google-Site. (<https://sites.google.com/site/christchurchforums/communications>). **If you need help or advice:**
  - Creating materials, contact Jane M. Scott ([jane@scottcreative.com](mailto:jane@scottcreative.com))
  - Promotional strategies, contact Pamela Russo ([pamela1368@aol.com](mailto:pamela1368@aol.com)) or Walt Thompson ([walthompson03@aol.com](mailto:walthompson03@aol.com)) – Forum Co-chairs
- Send your drafts to the Communications forum for approval. Once approved:

- The Communications Forum can help print the appropriate materials at your request. **You are responsible for placing posters in the church and in outside businesses.** Please use either masking tape or Plasti-Tak to keep the walls from being damaged.
- The Communications Forum will list in electronic bulletin boards, our website, our Facebook page, and This Week At Christ Church, and send out a Constant Contact email as appropriate.

## Step 5: Run/Execute the Event

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The Event Coordinator is expected to be at the event to oversee final details and to ensure that the Facilities Use Guidelines later in this document are followed. In general, this person will make sure there is a plan and resources in place to

- Setup the space (See important note next in Best Practices.)
- Serve/Run the event
- Clean-up

### Best Practices:

- Take note of what the space looks like upon your arrival, so you know how it should look when you leave. You are responsible for returning the space to its original condition or better. **TAKE PICTURES BEFORE YOU MOVE ANYTHING.** Then during clean-up you can put things back where they were.
- **Important Note:** Make sure that whoever is in charge of Clean-up knows where things go. For example, if the Setup crew had to move some banners and put up decorations, make sure the Clean-up crew knows to put the banners back and to take down *all* the decorations and where to put them. Likewise for tablecloths and anything else. All our janitorial staff is responsible for putting away the chairs and tables and mopping the floor.
- If you need keys, be sure to request them well in advance. Most doors are locked.
- Take pictures of the event to share on Facebook and to use in Communique Article

## Step 6: Publicize Success & Learn Lessons

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- Send photos of the event to Robin Miller to post on our Facebook page. It is helpful to provide her with a short blurb about the event to go with the photos.
- Have a member of your team write up an article about the event to share in our Communique and email it to Judy Moore ([jimpiano@gmail.com](mailto:jimpiano@gmail.com)).
- Consider sending thank you notes or emails to the people who were especially helpful.
- Reach out to members of the team and ask for feedback about the event while it is still fresh. What went well? Did you have enough food/supplies? If not, what changes would you make? Overall, what would you do differently if you decide to do the work next time? Were there any issues with the processes that you need to communicate to your Vestry liaison?
- Share your feedback with Kathy Smith and she will keep track of your experiences to share with future groups who may have similar events planned.

## Facilities Use Guidelines

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Make note of any problems (any supplies that need to be replenished, equipment that doesn't work, etc.) and report to church office as soon as possible.

If you need to adjust the temperature, follow the directions posted next to thermostat to temporarily override the program. (Do NOT press HOLD as this disrupts the program.)

### Setting Up

As noted earlier, if you have to move things out of the way for your event, **TAKE PICTURES BEFORE YOU MOVE ANYTHING.** Then during clean-up you can put things back where they were.

Make note of any problems (any supplies that need to be replenished, equipment that doesn't work, etc.) and report to church office as soon as possible.

### ***Clean up when done***

- Clean tables, chairs, and any spills on the floor. If using church-provided table clothes,
  - Immediately treat any stains using stain spray in tablecloth closet.
  - Have someone wash them and return to the closet hung in the proper place on the proper hangers within three days.
- Put chairs and tables away
- Clean-up including sweeping food off the floor
- Adjust thermostat to not-in-use temperature
- Empty trash cans – no food left in any trash can except kitchen
- Let the office know if any supplies need to be replenished.
- If you used any cloth tablecloths, your group is responsible for washing them and returning them to the closet in the same condition you found them.

### ***Closet Usage***

Do NOT put stuff in closets that did not come out of them. If you don't know where to put something, put a note on it so someone else who knows, can put it away in its proper place.

## **Money Handling Procedures**

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### ***Money Collected***

If your group plans to collect money at the event for any reason, you must adhere to the following church procedures: These will ensure that the money collected is safe and that we pass our annual financial audit.

- **Under no circumstances should money be taken home** by an individual. It must be counted and put in the church safe the day of the event.
- A vestry member is required to help count the money, so **prior to your event, arrange for a vestry member to be present to help**. The vestry member will know where the forms are and how to count cash and checks, and they will have keys to deposit the money in the church office.

### ***Receipts***

If you plan to submit any receipts for any expenses, please contact our church bookkeeper, Robin Miller bookkeeper@ccnorcross.org to make arrangements prior to your event.