



Supporting the spiritual integrity of rural life and farming

Connecting Rural & Urban Communities

Winter Farmers' Markets Overview for Congregational Hosts

We invite you to join us in building the connections between your faith community and those who provide our food. Hosting a Winter Farmers' Market engages your congregation in several vital issues: nutrition and health, environmental stewardship and sustainability, food security, economic justice for farmers and community-building for your congregation. Markets draw neighborhoods and communities together for festive celebration, meaningful dialogue, and positive change—all in your faith community, over food.



Winter Farmers' Markets began in Madison, Wisconsin as a project of the Churches' Center for Land and People (CCLP), a nonprofit organization that has provided support for Midwestern (WI/IL/IA) farmers and rural communities since the 1980s farm crisis. In late 2015, Churches' Center for Land and People changed its name to Food, Faith and Farming Network (FFFN) to better reflect its mission.

Why host a market?

These markets provide a way for faith communities to:

- Give local organic/sustainable farmers opportunities to earn money in the winter months and consumers opportunities to purchase local products during the off-season.
- Experience the joy of eating locally by sharing a delectable meal made with local, sustainably produced foods.
- Educate community members about the importance of buying local and sustainably-raised products.
- Offer their members a chance to stand on the side of land stewardship and economic justice for farm families.
- Join with and learn from other congregations if cohosting the event.
- Foster community and spirituality while promoting direct market relationships between farmers and consumers.
- Provide income for the Harvest of Hope Fund to help Wisconsin farmers in distress.

What happens at a Winter Farmers' Market?

- Local farmers, small farm cooperatives and local producers of value-added product *sell their own products* such as grass-fed meats and poultry, farmstead cheeses, flour, eggs, honey, maple syrup, sorghum, apples, cider, wool and woolen goods, jams and preserves, hoop-house greens, root vegetables, and more.

- Members of the participating congregation often **provide fair trade** coffee, tea and/or chocolate to complement ready-serve products like locally sourced pastries and croissants.
- Participating farmers that reach a gross threshold of \$150 **donate 10%** of their market proceeds to the Harvest of Hope Fund. They do not otherwise pay a fee to participate.
- Congregations are strongly encouraged to **serve a meal** prepared with products of participating farmers so market participants can enjoy local, sustainably-produced foods.
- Host congregations may choose to enhance the market experience with **additional programming** (see Information for Congregational Host section).

What is the congregation's role in a Winter Farmers' Market?

FFFN is seeking four things from congregational hosts:

- **Place:** An **adequate space** to hold the market, as well as available parking.
- **Publicity:** **Get the word out** to bring in members of local faith communities and the community at large (100-150 minimum hoped-for attendance for a successful market).
- **People:** **Customers** for the market and **volunteers** to help farmers unload and cook/serve the meal if offered.



- **Meal:** Providing a meal using local and sustainably-produced food draws in more people and communicates values important to all the great faiths around the world: abundance, gratitude, hospitality, community, stewardship, justice, reconciliation, love.

You can draw on the services of a local chef or the talents of a food-savvy parishioner. Prepare plenty of food (demonstrating abundance and hospitality!) and have a plan in place if there is left-over food (local food pantry or shelter for the homeless). We suggest you set a fair price for the meal (\$10 for adults, \$5 for youth ages 6-12, free for children under 6, and \$25 for a family has worked well). We ask that any profits from the meal be split with FFFN to help cover our upfront financial investment (the balance can be kept to support congregational ministries).

What growing methods do participating farmers use?

Farmers are local (generally within 100 miles of your church) and use sustainable farming methods. Some are certified organic, some are transitioning to organic certification, and others farm sustainably but cannot afford certification expenses and fees or otherwise have elected not to certify. We encourage consumers to ask farmers directly about their farming practices.



Who benefits from Winter Farmers' Markets?

- **Individuals:** by having access to fresh, healthy, locally grown food and value-added goods
- **Congregation:** by making your broader community aware of your existence, values, and offerings
- **The environment:** by lessening the impact of transporting food and by using sustainable farming practices
- **Local community:** by forming and strengthening relationships between area faith communities and the community at large
- **Farmers at the market:** by adding value to the products they sell and increasing their incomes during off-season months
- **Farmers who receive gifts** from the **Harvest of Hope Fund** get help to continue farming which protects another small farm from loss or sale.

Information for Congregational Host: Publicity, People and Programming



Publicity Suggestions:

- Distribute flyers before/between/after services for 3 to 4 weeks in advance of market.
- Put blurbs in congregation's newsletter, bulletins, and website calendar of events.
- Set up signage inside the church. (Enlist Sunday School students to create colorful signs.)
- Make announcements during church services, particularly on the day of the market (if it is held on a Sunday).
- Make a low-cost banner to be hung from church building or staked on lawn 1-2 weeks in advance.
- Ask neighboring congregations to co-sponsor the market and/or help with publicizing the event. (Send the announcement/reminder far in advance to accommodate deadlines.)
- Submit blurbs to Events/Calendar departments of community newspapers and/or pitch a story to local press 2-3 weeks in advance.
- Distribute flyers around the community and on community bulletin boards, e.g. coffee shops, libraries, store windows, community farmers' markets. (Ask permission first.)

FFFN adds to congregations' efforts by:

- Purchasing local foods and suggesting menu options for the meal.
- Locating and coordinating with local farm vendors for the market.
- Investing \$600 in coordination and planning for each market.
- Posting Winter Farmers' Market information on our FFFN website and Winter Farmers' Market Facebook page.
- Making story pitches to area-wide press when appropriate.
- Deploying one or two large outdoor signs on the day of market. (Let us know the best placement for walk-in/drive-by traffic.)

People/Planning Suggestions:

We suggest 2-3 planning meetings far enough in advance to book chefs/speakers and develop publicity. Also, a wrap-up meeting enables you to capture suggestions for improvement and enables you to provide constructive feedback to FFFN. Congregations are responsible for providing volunteers and name tags so the event runs smoothly. We suggest the breakdown below. (Some volunteers may choose to perform multiple tasks.)

- 2-6 people to *set up tables for vendors and meal* in advance
- 2-4 people to *help vendors unload and reload* (e.g. Scouts, youth group)
- 1 person to *facilitate vendors' opportunity to share in the meal*
- 4-8 people to help *prepare and serve food, bus tables, wash dishes, clean up, and reset the room.*



Day of Market

- **Keynote speaker** before or after the meal
- **Chef demonstration** or presentation on local foods
- **Children's activities:** storytelling, face painting, child care
- **Musicians** or other performers (not too overwhelming)
- **Door prizes** (basket of non-perishable market products)
- **Sale of reusable shopping bags** as a fundraiser
- **Recycling depot** for electronics, CFC light bulbs
- **Demonstration** and orders for rain barrels, compost bins
- **Demos** of indoor gardening, herb-drying, canning, composting
- **Health counseling** via parish nurse or local hospital/clinic
- **Book Display** on food security, food justice, food & faith, local eating

Programming Ideas:

We encourage you to offer additional programming, educational opportunities, and fundraising in conjunction with your markets to help draw the connections inherent in food, faith and farming.

In Advance

- Adult education on “food justice,” “local foods,” or “food, faith and farming”. (See “Food, Faith and Farming: Resources for Faith Communities” on our website.)



Questions?

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Find out more about Food, Faith and Farming Network by visiting www.cclpmidwest.org