

How to Use Your Cal Lutheran Spirit Box

Thank you for your interest in hosting a Cal Lutheran Alumni event in your area. Here are some helpful tips to plan and host a successful event.

Planning the Event

Adequately planning ahead will help your event run smoothly.

Guidelines:

- Happy hours should be planned 3-4 weeks in advance.
- Tours should be planned 4-6 weeks in advance.
- Ticketed cultural and sporting events should be planned 6-8 weeks in advance. Allow more time for large groups and highly popular events.
- Events with speakers and/or panels should be planned 8-10 weeks in advance.

Timetable: Together with Cal Lutheran Alumni, establish a timetable for the event. Plan a block of time for registration, socializing, and food service. Determine if a brief welcome is needed. If appropriate, provide ample time for the speaker, program, and questions. Events should not be excessive in length. Generally, evening events with speakers or programs should conclude no later than 9:30 p.m.

Location: Always try to find a free location. Ask fellow alumni or colleagues to determine if private homes or professional offices are available for events. Alumni may also have connections to museums, clubs, or restaurants that might waive event fees.

Many restaurants and bars will suggest that happy hours or socials be held in private rooms. This typically requires a food/beverage minimum of \$800+, and therefore is not financially feasible. Instead, request that a section of the restaurant or bar be reserved for your guests. In determining the venue, take into account location and parking. The best venues are centrally located and have free or inexpensive parking nearby. For larger cities, consider whether the venue is easily accessible by public transportation.

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Services: If needed, determine the location's available services (podium, public address system, audiovisual equipment, and cleanup) and inquire about the fees for their use. If seating will not be readily available for attendees, provide limited seating for elderly guests.

Food and Beverage Service: For events at museums, clubs, offices, etc., determine if food service must be in-house or if an outside caterer may be used. Many restaurants and bars offer appetizer platters for groups. Sometimes this is the most cost efficient option, but often ordering from the regular menu allows for greater flexibility at a lower price. Ask to see both the regular menu and the group/catering menu.

If drink tickets are being used, determine in advance what drink tickets can be used for (e.g., beer, wine, and well drinks). Make sure this is included in the contract.

Costs: Determine all costs related to the event in advance. Work with Cal Lutheran Alumni to determine appropriate budget and registration fees for each event. Even a nominal charge of \$5 can help cover costs and reduce a drop-off in attendance. When calculating catering costs, include appropriate tax, gratuity, and service charges. These charges typically add 25-30% to the final bill. Be aware of advance guarantee requirements and nonrefundable deposits.

Supplies and Decorations: Cal Lutheran nametags and mementos are included in the Spirit Box. Other important supplies include sign-in sheets, pens, sharpies, Cal Lutheran pennants, and Cal Lutheran publications.

Additional Tips:

- Ask the venue in advance to supply a table to use as a registration table.
- For events that are larger or more formal, ask the venue if coat check is available, and if so, if there is any extra cost. Coat check isn't essential, but it's a nice touch.

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- Make sure restaurant and bar hosts/hostesses know a Cal Lutheran event is occurring and can direct guests to the proper location. The reservation may be under your last name, which can cause confusion.

At the Event

Please arrive 15 minutes early for service projects; 30 minutes early for happy hours, tours, and ticketed events; and 60 minutes early for holiday parties, panels, and speakers. If you're responsible for distributing tickets, please wear a Cal Lutheran hat or t-shirt so attendees can easily find you.

Registration: On the day of the event, appoint volunteers to arrive early to assist with registration and nametags, and to serve as greeters. Be prepared to collect any unpaid registration fees.

Welcome: Use your best judgment as to whether a formal welcome is necessary. Happy hours and service projects don't need welcome speeches. Instead, introduce yourself to new faces and share information about Cal Lutheran. When appropriate, welcome speeches should be brief and provide information about future events. Give a special welcome to newcomers. Thank those who have helped with the event. Recognize any special guests.

At speaker events, you may be needed to introduce the speaker. Close the event by thanking the speaker and the attendees. Invite all guests to stay in touch and let them know who to contact to get involved.

Photos: Designate someone to take photos at the event. These photos will be posted online and included in future alumni communications. Seeing photos from past events generates excitement for future events.

After the Event

Sign-in sheets should be scanned and emailed to alumni@callutheran.edu, or mailed to Cal Lutheran Alumni as soon as possible.

Photos: Remind the designated photographer to email photos to Cal Lutheran Alumni, and help identify those appearing in the photos.