

The Menucha Meander



Gathered in Harmony

Some of life's most meaningful moments begin with a simple gathering.

Guests gather around a table to share a meal. They gather to learn something new, to celebrate milestones, to create, to reflect, or simply to spend time together. Over time, those individual moments become something much larger. They become traditions. They become relationships. They become community.



This is the story of Menucha.

Every year, thousands of people arrive in the Columbia River Gorge from different backgrounds, professions, generations, and life experiences. Artists paint alongside educators. Musicians fill the halls with song while nonprofit leaders gather to solve complex challenges. Families

reconnect across generations. Volunteers work side by side to care for the grounds. Retreat groups discover that some of their most important conversations happen during a walk beneath the trees or over coffee on the terrace.

While harmony is most often associated with music, its meaning extends far beyond it. Harmony is what happens when different voices contribute to something greater than themselves. It is found in collaboration, in hospitality, in shared purpose, and in the quiet understanding that everyone has something valuable to offer. At Menucha, harmony lives in the balance between nature and creativity, learning and reflection, tradition and new ideas.

These moments do not happen by accident. They are cultivated with care, sustained through stewardship, and strengthened by a community that believes gathering in a sacred space still matters.

At Menucha, harmony is the art of gathering, creating, learning, and belonging together. It is something we build together, season after season, year after year.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Reflections from the Executive Director

Special Announcements

Menucha Kitchen Recipe

Events

Programs

Supporting Menucha



In Harmony with Others

By Courtney McHill

One evening when I was 6 years old, I announced to my parents that I would be playing the violin soon. However, they were convinced that I should play piano instead. As we were living in a small, rural Oregon town that had exactly zero violin teachers, but we knew the best piano teacher. I told them that while that was a nice thought, I would be playing the violin.



My grandpa was an avid symphony and orchestra fan. To help my parents out, he sat me in front of the TV and put in a VHS tape of his favorite piano soloist performing with his favorite symphony. I got excited. When he asked which part I most loved, I got up, pointed to the first violin section, and told him that would be me!

My parents sighed in resignation and found a teacher for me in a town 12 miles away. I played regularly from the age of seven until just after college. My violin is one of my most prized possessions. I unearth it to play every once in a blue moon, resolving to play again someday. There was a year or so when I joined an adult orchestra. All the pressure of my earlier classical music days wasn't there. The experience was special because we were all just doing our best to create the music, with no chair tests along the way to earn our spot.



As I reflect, the thing I loved most about my instrument was the ability to play with the larger whole. As a small child, I wanted the experience of playing in harmony with others, creating a magical moment.

Menucha is a place where musical notes overlap, figuratively and literally. There are weeks when a variety of groups are on site, but somehow, they connect over a meal or in common spaces. There are times when music fills the air. There are days when one group has booked the entire space and their time together is a gorgeous set of sounds, sights, meals, and connecting. Even the wildlife and plant life work together in our ecological space.

There are many reasons why people love being here, working here, and playing here, but perhaps the biggest is about how we all feel when we are gathered, creating a magical experience in a sacred place. I hope you join me in appreciating this place where we gather in harmony and can find our voice within the whole.

Peace,
Courtney



Menucha Events

Summer Volunteer Work Party

Join us for our Volunteer Work Party on **Saturday, August 15, from 9 am–3 pm**. Lunch will be provided. Our focus will be on the grounds and trail work! One of our volunteers, Bruce, has mapped out a new trail system, and the summer work party is the time to help. Whether you enjoy working outdoors, want to leave a lasting mark on Menucha, or simply love being part of something meaningful, we'd love to have you. Email us at hello@menucha.org or call 503-695-2243 to sign up.

Fall Tree Walk

Fall may seem a long way off, but it will be here before you know it. When it arrives, Menucha transforms into a breathtaking landscape of golden leaves and crisp autumn beauty.

Mark your calendar for **Saturday, October 24, from 1 pm to 3 pm**.

Open House

This year's Open House was a joy from start to finish with free ice cream, golden sunshine, picnics on the lawn, games, music, dancing, and plenty of smiles shared while strolling the shady grounds. We're already looking forward to doing it again next year.



Menucha's Fundraising Dinner: Gathered In Harmony

Join us for Menucha's annual fundraising dinner on **Sunday, September 13**, an evening inspired by the spirit of this special place where music, storytelling, and shared purpose come together.

Enjoy a harvest-inspired meal, acoustic music, and meaningful stories as you celebrate the community that helps Menucha flourish.

Please visit us at www.menucha.org/fall-fundraising-dinner



2026 THIS YEAR AT so far MENUCHA



Creativity and connections take many forms in our programs. Pictures and songs tell the story best. Board member and Ukulele Band Camp attendee, Lizann Schultz, wrote new words for an old tune which conveys what many of us feel about this place:

**Menucha, the place I love the best of all.
Menucha, the year around I hear you call.
I love you Menucha, the friends,
the peace, the breeze in the air.
I love you Menucha.
A sacred space I long to be there.
Menucha, I love your friends the joys we share.
Menucha, I'll tell your blessings everywhere.
I love the spirit of this place so warm and true.
I love you Menucha, I do.**

THIS YEAR AT *Later* **MENUCHA 2026**

August
2-8 & 9-15

Creative Arts Community @ Menucha, Week 1 & 2

September
4-6

The Last Hurrah of Summer Retreat

October
7-11

Blues in the Gorge: Acoustic Blues Guitar Workshop

October
10

Blues in the Gorge Concert at the Corbett Grange Hall

October
15-18

Bluegrass in the Gorge

October
17

Bluegrass in the Gorge Concert at the Corbett Grange Hall

October
22-25

Harmonica Northwest

Oct. - Nov.
30 - 1

Scrap & Sew Craft Retreat

November
2-5

Fall Watercolor Workshop with Tess Myers

December
4-6

Missing You: A Loss & Grief Retreat for Body, Mind, & Spirit

December
13

A Service of Lessons & Carols

Learn more at www.menucha.org/programs

Meet Jake Crouse: Menucha's New Food Service Manager



Jake Crouse was hired as the food service manager for Menucha in June 2026. He started working in restaurants at the age of fifteen as a dishwasher and never looked back. A native of western North Carolina, he began his culinary travels in 2006, when he left home to work as a line cook at Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park. While traveling there by plane, train, and bus, he read a book that would change his life. The book *Kitchen Confidential*, written by Anthony Bourdain, inspired him to study at the same culinary school the author had attended. When his summer at Yellowstone was over, he started school at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. There he learned, like the many great Chefs before him, the art of French Cuisine.

Through the years, during and after school, he would travel and cook in San Francisco, back in North Carolina, San Diego, and finally landing in Portland, Oregon. He says, "I signed a six-month lease fifteen years ago and never left." He met his wife while working at a restaurant where he was the Sous Chef, and she was a front-of-house employee. They were married in the backyard of the house they were living in in August of 2020. They have a 4-year-old daughter, a 2-year-old son, and a 2-year-old pup named Roscoe. When he is not cooking, Jake enjoys working in his garden, fishing, hiking, sitting by a fire, and cheering for the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Cooktop: A recipe from the Menucha kitchen

By Jake Crouse, Food Service Manager

Focaccia

140 g (1⅓ cups) bread flour
1 g (¼ teaspoon) instant dry yeast
100 mL (100 g or about 6¾ tablespoons) warm water (105°F/41°C)
3 g (½ teaspoon) salt
Olive oil, as needed
Toppings of your choice: Fresh rosemary or other herbs, Sautéed onions, Sliced tomatoes, Flaky sea salt, Garlic, Olives



1. Combine flour and yeast in a mixer bowl. Add warm water and salt. Mix on low speed for 2 minutes, then on medium speed for 3 minutes, until the dough is smooth and elastic.
2. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover, and let it rise until nearly doubled, about 30 minutes.
3. Gently fold the dough over itself once. Cover and let rise another 30 minutes, or until doubled.
4. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and shape it into a ball. Cover. Let it rest for 15 minutes.
5. Stretch the dough into a rectangle about 4 × 10 inches. Place on a generously oiled baking sheet.
6. Let the dough rise until doubled, about 30 to 40 minutes. Preheat the oven to 450°F (235°C).
7. Before baking, press fingertips into the dough to create dimples. Drizzle with olive oil and add your desired toppings.
8. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, until the top is deep golden brown and the bottom is crisp. (Begin checking around the 20-minute mark.)
9. Cool on a wire rack for at least 15 minutes before slicing.

Menucha Guest Highlights



Boy Scouts

This year's Eagle Scout project is giving new life to Menucha's beloved rockery ponds. The scouts spent two days rolling up their sleeves, digging deep into the muck, and clearing years of buildup to begin restoring this special corner of our property. We are grateful for these young leaders who are helping preserve and revitalize a place that has brought beauty and reflection to generations of guests.

World Labyrinth Day

In May, Menucha joined people around the world in honoring World Labyrinth Day and the invitation to "walk as one at 1." As a group, we stepped into the labyrinth in a shared moment of reflection, mindfulness, and peace. It was a beautiful day of connecting and experiencing the quiet power of walking together. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped create a meaningful collective moment.



Portland FolkMusic Society

Singtime retreats offer workshops, inspiring guest artists, and the simple joy of singing together in a place where connection comes as naturally as the music itself. Year after year, participants return not only for the songs, but for the people and the welcoming spirit that make Menucha feel like home.

High School Music Programs

We were proud to host more than 80 Forest Grove High School students from their band, strings, and choir programs for a weekend at Menucha this year. Together, they bonded through music, shared meals, and the simple gift of stepping away from the day-to-day pressures young people carry in today's world.





MENUCHA
Sacred Space - Purposeful Work

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Support the Gift of Menucha

Imagine Menucha as a tree. Like any tree, it grows stronger through the care of many hands, offering shade, welcome, and renewal to everyone who gathers beneath its branches. Every gift helps the roots grow deeper and ensures that Menucha remains a place of hospitality, learning, reflection, and renewal for generations to come.



Make a donation today! Use the QR code to contribute online or mail us a check made out to Menucha at PO Box 8, Corbett, OR 97019



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