



## Tavern opens doors on Thanksgiving

**By Tom Dalton**  
Staff writer

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SALEM — For one day next week, a local restaurant should change its name from Tavern in the Square to "Turkeys in the Square."

One of the city's newest and, on occasion, most controversial restaurants is staying open Thanksgiving Day to serve free turkey dinners to anybody who walks through the door.

"If we could serve 500 people, that would be great," said Mark Morris, one of the owners of the 300-seat restaurant at 189 Washington St. "That is the goal — just to serve as many people as possible."

They expect to cook between 75 and 100 turkeys, Morris said.

The Thanksgiving dinner, which will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (doors open at 11 a.m.), is for the elderly, the homeless, anyone who is alone, and anybody and everybody, Morris said.

"We get a lot of families over at the Central Square (Cambridge) location," he said.

The Tavern in the Square owners, who have two Cambridge sites, have been serving a free turkey dinner on Thanksgiving Day for the past two years.

"This will be our third year doing it at Central Square," Morris said. "Last year, we served over 350 meals."

Morris said he started thinking about extending the tradition to the North Shore soon after the Salem restaurant opened in May. His staff and suppliers have offered to help.

"All the food is donated by our food distributors. All of our servers are volunteering their time. ... All my managers will be on board. I've got my family on board this year, and I've got six brothers and sisters and 13 nieces and nephews."

There will be greeters at the door and volunteers mixing with guests to make sure everyone has a good time.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact the restaurant at 978-740-2337.

Gifts of stocking caps, scarves and gloves also will be handed out.

The decision to offer a free Thanksgiving dinner, Morris said, had nothing to do with all the controversies of the past year, which included a battle with the City Council over an outdoor patio.

Morris said he has volunteered at a variety of Thanksgiving dinners for years and dreamed of starting his own tradition.

"I thought it would be a cool thing when I got into the restaurant business," he said. "This is always something I wanted to do."

Free Thanksgiving Dinners

Salem

Moose Family Center, 50 Grove St., noon

Salem Mission, 56 Margin St., 12:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Tavern in the Square, 189 Washington St., 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Peabody

Haven From Hunger, 71 Wallis St., noon

Beverly

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 4 Ocean St., noon

Danvers

Ma Duke's, 139 Maple St., 10 a.m. start

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