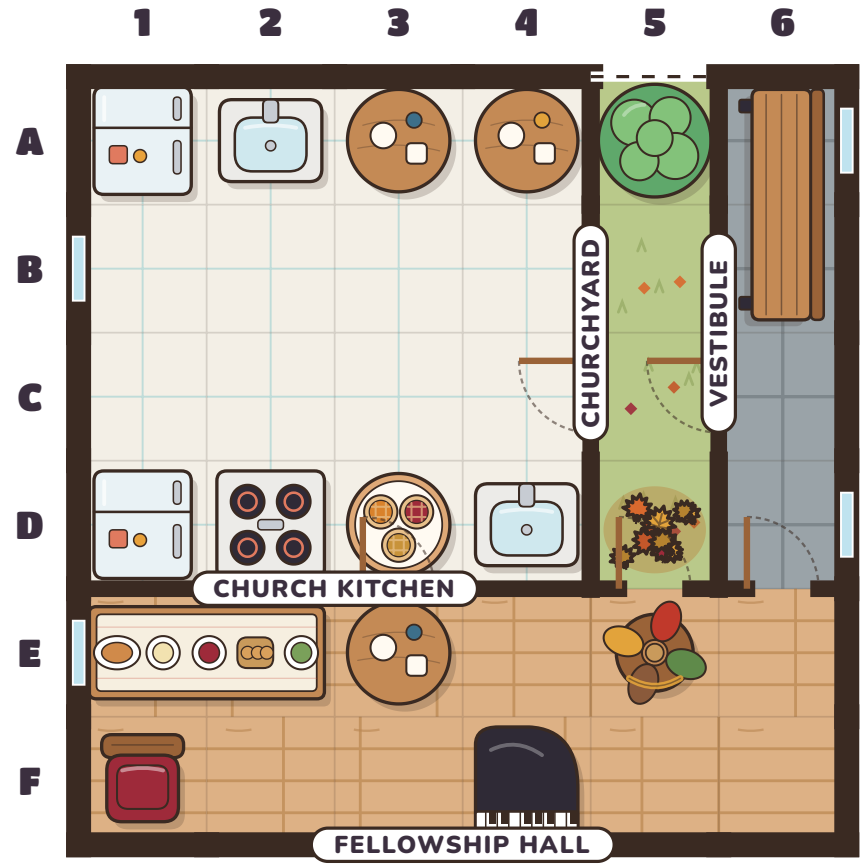
Carving Time at the Church Potluck

A storm knocked the power out halfway through dessert. When it came back, **Desmond** was face down in the stuffing.

Set in Cranberry Hollow, the town from the book Room for Murder: Thanksgiving.

Sunday special: one suspect is lying — the killer. Everyone else tells the truth.



What the witnesses say



Marcus the pastor
"He was beside the coat rack."



Rosa the sous-chef
"She was in a corner of a room."



Toby the cousin from the city
"He was in the Churchyard."



Wren the college student home for the holiday
"She was beside a sink."



Jethro the hayride driver
"He was beside the fridge."



Desmond the victim
Found dead — alone in a room with the killer.

CAN STAND / SIT ON

chair · bench · leaf pile

SOLID — NOBODY THERE

table · piano · stove · fridge · sink · tree · buffet table · pie table · coat rack

The rules

1. Exactly one person in every row and every column.
2. Nobody stands on solid furniture.
3. Every statement is true — except the killer's. "Beside" = the square directly next to it; north is up.
4. The victim was alone in a room with exactly one other person: the killer.

Your verdict

The killer was _____

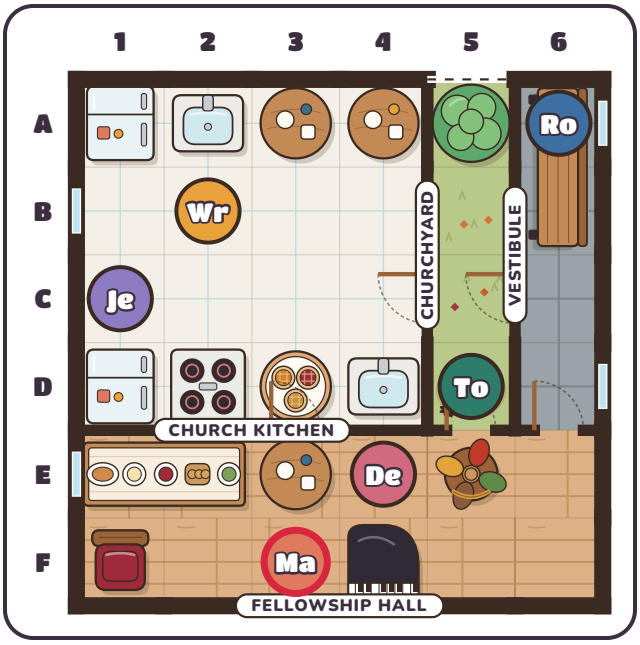
in the _____

Solved in _____

Notes

Answer and step-by-step solution: on the next page.

Solution: Carving Time at the Church Potluck



THE KILLER

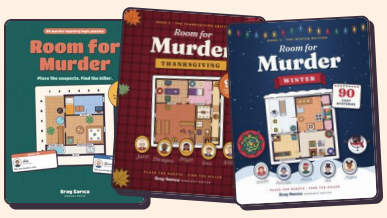
Marcus, the pastor

The only other person in the Fellowship Hall with Desmond — and the suspect whose statement was false.

Marcus F3 · Rosa A6 · Toby D5 · Wren B2 · Jethro C1 · Desmond E4

How to solve it, step by step

1. **Sunday rule: exactly one statement is false — the killer's. Try each suspect as the liar in turn: every choice but one runs into a contradiction. Only Marcus works, so Marcus's statement is the lie and the truth is the opposite: "He was not beside the coat rack."**
2. Toby, Wren and Jethro can only stand in rows B, C and D — 3 people for 3 rows, so those rows are theirs and nobody else can use them.
3. Row D still needs someone, and Toby is the only one who can still stand in it. In row D, "He was in the Churchyard." fits only D5.
4. Rosa and Jethro can only stand in columns 1 and 6 — 2 people for 2 columns, so those columns are theirs and nobody else can use them.
5. Row A still needs someone, and Rosa is the only one who can still stand in it. In row A, "She was in a corner of a room." fits only A6.
6. Desmond, the victim, has no statement — but only one square is left in a free row and column: E4, in the Fellowship Hall.
7. Wren: "She was beside a sink." Of the squares that fit, only B2 is still open — the others are in rows or columns already taken.
8. Marcus: "He was not beside the coat rack." Of the squares that fit, only F3 is still open — the rest are ruled out above.
9. Jethro: "He was beside the fridge." Of the squares that fit, only C1 is still open — the others are in rows or columns already taken.
10. Everyone is placed. Desmond lies in the Fellowship Hall, and the only other person in there is Marcus. Marcus is the killer — and the one who lied.



Enjoyed it? 260+ more cases are waiting.

The **Room for Murder** puzzle books — Maple Bend, Thanksgiving in Cranberry Hollow and a snowed-in Winter in Juniper Falls — as paperbacks on Amazon and printable PDFs on Etsy (Midnight Motive). Every case has one answer you can reach by logic alone.