

Group Life/ Fellowship

Bible Passages:

Galatians 6:10 “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Objective:

To provide means and encouragement for **every** member to show genuine concern for one another and to enjoy the blessing of Christian friendship.

Rationale:

Along with Bible study and service, fellowship is the glue needed to bond Christians to one another in the relationship and accountability Jesus had in mind for his church (page 41, “Parish Assistance Analysis”.) Not only is support necessary for established members, fellowship is a means to assimilate newer members into the church. “Parish Assistance Analysis” (page 40) indicates that only about 50 members or 6% are involved in some type of fellowship activity at St. John’s. We should be willing to form new groups as well as close old ones as needs change. Our intent should be to foster a feeling of belonging among our entire family of believers as we work together in Christ.

Our congregation provides many opportunities for members to serve the church and its family of believers. However we see a great need to increase opportunities for members to enjoy fellowship with one another.

During the next 7 years:

1. We envision that
40% of our members
be involved in a
congregational
fellowship activity
other than worship.
(60% by 2010)

To make this vision a reality:

- a. We recommend the expansion of Fellowship activities.
(Cf. Group Life/ Fellowship 2c, d, e)
- b. The Church Council will establish a Fellowship Committee for the purpose of planning and developing Group Fellowship activities. (Cf. Appendix 2, and Child Discipleship 13c)
- c. The Fellowship Committee will conduct a periodic review of participation.

2. We envision the addition of new and the continuance of current service/fellowship groups as interest or need indicates.
 - a. The Media Committee will create a St. John's Web site to improve communication and awareness.
 - b. Congregational Leaders will create a climate of permission that fosters creativity with in Christian freedom.
 - c. Initially retain such groups as: (Examples)
 - (1) Ladies' Guild
 - (2) Church Picnic
 - (3) Special shut-in Communion
 - (4) PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)
 - (5) Adult Softball Team
 - d. The Fellowship Committee will consider initiating such groups as: (Examples)
 - (1) "Adult Fellowship Group" (as named in past)
 - (2) OWLS chapter for St. John's (Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors)
 - (3) Men's Bible Study
 - (4) Men's "Club"
 - (5) Small group Bible study in homes
 - (6) "Adopt a Highway" Program participation
 - (7) "Night Lights" (for working women)
 - (8) Fantasy Football
 - (9) Computer class
 - (10) Muzzleloader Club
 - (11) Mississippi Shuffle
 - (12-56) You create
 - e. The Pastors, together with the Elders, will consider the formation of support groups, as needed, for members concerned about: (Examples)
 - (1) Divorce
 - (2) Death and Dying
 - (3) Alcohol and other drug issues
 - (4) Illness
 - (5) New members
 - (6) Parenting
 - (7) Gambling addiction

3. We envision a consistent, well-organized program to welcome new members and to integrate them into our family of believers.
 - a. The Host Families will provide welcome packets to show what fellowship opportunities are available. (Cf. Reclaiming the Lost 1b)
 - b. The Host Families will visit new church members. (Cf. Reclaiming the Lost 1b)
 - c. The Worship and Fellowship Committees will plan a New Member Fellowship Sunday at least twice a (Continued on next page)

- year, with lunch, and introduction program in fellowship area between services.
 - d. Established organizations will regularly invite the new members as guests.
 - e. The Church Council will arrange for more frequent updating of church directory (picture, names) than is currently done.
 - f. The Ladies Guild will continue posting pictures of new members (with names).

- 4. We envision groups working together on special events.
 - a. Cooperation among groups or organizations to coordinate and plan large events must be fostered and maintained. (Examples)
 - (1) Church/School picnic
 - (2) Recognition day for called workers and volunteers.
 - (3) Easter Breakfast
 - (4) Dragon Boat Races
 - (5) Trips, Sporting events, Theater, etc.
 - (6) New Member Fellowship Sunday

- 5. We envision that fellowship is included in all regular church gatherings.
 - a. The Fellowship Committee will encourage that time be allowed for friendly conversation at all church events.

- 6. We envision that a building program (i.e. school replacement, modification of current facility, or new building program) will be in place or in progress to provide adequate facilities for congregation groups and fellowship.
 - a. The Building / Building Finance Committee will (once again) consult groups as to their needs, and then initiate a process to provide a facility which meets those needs. (Cf. Appendix 1)

