

Middlebury Chapel Bulletin

November 11, 2018

- The next Prayer Breakfast and Men's and Women's Bible Studies will be held Saturday, December 1st, beginning at 8:30 a.m.



- The Connections Marriage Group will meet again this coming Saturday, November 17th. We plan to enjoy a potluck meal together...please bring one dish to share...followed by prayer and devotion time. We will rotate homes for meeting and all married couples are welcome to join us!

- Please remember to write your reasons to be thankful and/or your prayer requests either directly on the Main Hallway bulletin board or on the slips of paper that are provided and tuck it into one of the pumpkins. Consider it an interactive bulletin board!! 😊



- Now that the snow has reminded us that it is definitely on the way, now is a good time to remind everyone that in the event of inclement weather, please tune to WKYC – TV3, Fox 8, News Channel 5, WCRF 103.3 Radio, or check our website and/or our Facebook page for information on possible church closings.
- We are in need of Ushers to serve on Sunday mornings and during special events here at the church. If you are willing to serve in either capacity, please see Candy P.

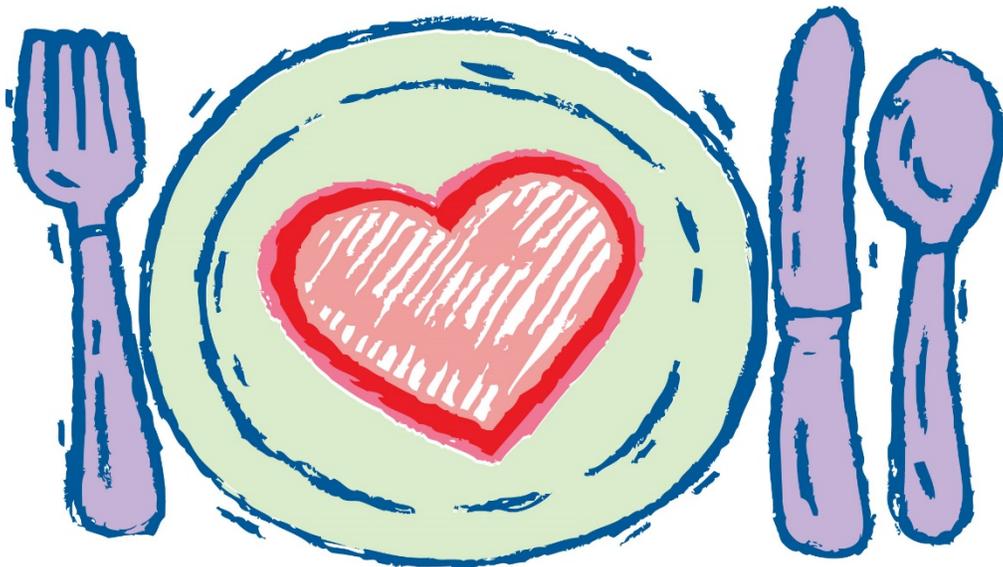


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Community Dinner Updates

November 11, 2018

- Thank you to Katie and “The Rob” for last Wednesday’s amazing grub for our neighborhood friends. Thank you, Dynamic Duo!! 😊
- A person or team is needed to set up the Fellowship Hall each week for our dinner guests.
- Cooks are still desperately needed! Team up with someone and share the service opportunity! A great option for ministries participants! Please contact Susan Gordon for more info! If you cannot commit to once a month, please feel free to serve whatever you can. We are in desperate need of cooks at this time.
- Persons willing to sit and minister to our guests and pray with them are always needed.



COMMUNITY DINNER

The Most Important Time to Go to Church

March 1, 2018 | [David 'Gunner' Gundersen](#)

The most important time to be at church is when you don't feel like it.

I've talked with three Christians about this recently—two struggling with depression, and a third who just went through a tough break-up—who've stopped gathering with God's people during a difficult season. Whether for weeks or months, all three have decided to stop going to church.

One said it would be unsatisfying, that there just isn't a sense of connection. Another said it would be awkward, because they don't want to see their ex. The last said it would be unhelpful, because they have no desire to be there anymore.

I'm not here to minimize their burdens or condemn them for feeling the way they do. I'm not writing to them or about them. I'm just writing to every Christian who feels the way they're feeling, who feels (as I have before) like gathering with God's people will be unsatisfying, unhelpful, or just plain awkward.

I'm writing to say something I said to all three of my friends at some point in our conversations: The most important time to be at church is when you don't feel like it.

Far More Than a Place

Yes, I know the church is a people, not a place. The church is a body, not a building. The church is something Christians *are*, not just somewhere Christians *go*. Yes, I also know the church is a family that should meet and study and eat and fellowship and pray and serve throughout the week, not just on Sunday. I know these things, and if you've walked with God for a while, you do too.

But I also know the church is marked, known, and enlivened by its regular, rhythmic, ordered gatherings ([Heb. 10:24–25](#)). A body that's never together is more like a prosthetics warehouse, and a family that never has family dinners or outings or reunions won't be a healthy family, if any family at all.

Sure, you could listen to some praise music and an online sermon, but there won't be any personalized one-anothering, there won't be any face-to-face fellowship, and there won't be any bread and wine. Sure, you could read the Bible and pray on your own, but you won't hear the studied voice of your own shepherd teaching and comforting and correcting you. Yes, you could just attend another church for a while because yours has grown unsatisfying, but that's not treating your church like much of a covenant community.

Covenants are made for the hard times, not the good times. In the good times, we don't need covenants, because we can get by and stick together on feelings alone. But covenant communities hold us up when we're faltering and pick us up when we've fallen. They encourage us when we're weary and wake us when we're slumbering. They

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draw us out of ourselves and call us to our commitments and responsibilities. They invite us back to the garden of Christian community, where we grow.

It's Not About You

I get it. The worship team didn't pull their song selections from your Spotify playlist; the pastor didn't have the time and resources to craft a mesmerizing sermon with a team of presidential speechwriters; the membership may not have the perfect combination of older saints to mentor you, younger saints to energize you, mature saints to counsel you, hospitable saints to host you, and outgoing saints to pursue you.

But I know another thing: If your church believes the Bible and preaches the gospel and practices the ordinances and serves one another, then your church has saints, and those saints are your brothers and sisters, your fathers and mothers, your weary fellow pilgrims walking the same wilderness you are—away from Egypt, surrounded by pillars of cloud and fire, with eyes set on the promised land.

Which is to say, this isn't really about you.

And those people you wish would pursue you and care for you and reach out to you need you to do the same ([Gal. 6:9–10](#)). That pastor you wish were a better preacher is probably praying this morning that you'd be a good listener ([Mark 4:3–8, 14–20](#); [James 1:22–25](#)). Those people whose spiritual gifts you desperately need also desperately need your spiritual gifts ([Eph. 4:15–16](#)). Those people whose fellowship you find dissatisfying or unhelpful or just plain awkward don't need your criticism but your gospel partnership ([Phil. 4:2–3](#)).

And you can't do any of these things if you're not *present*.

Vital Means of Grace

At all times and in all places, the gathering of the saints is a means of grace established by God for edifying his people. Christians gather to worship not because it *might* be helpful if all the stars align, or if our leaders plan the service just right, or if everyone smiles at us with the perfect degree of sincerity and handles the small talk seamlessly and engages us with just the right depth of conversation that's neither too personal nor too shallow.

We gather because the God we're worshiping has instituted our gathering as a main way he matures and strengthens and comforts us. It's not just when the songs or prayers or sermons or Sunday school classes touch our souls right where we need to be touched. We meet because God builds up his people through our meeting every time, in every place, without fail, no matter how we feel. Like rain in the fields, it's how our gatherings work.

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Ask for Grace. Then Go.

So I know you may not feel like it on Sunday morning. You may not feel like it for a while. But I'm asking you to trust God, ask for grace, and go.

Go, because the church gathers every Sunday to remember the death of Jesus for our sins and the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and that's precisely what we all need to remember and celebrate, regardless of what else is going on in our lives.

Go, because the stone trapping you in the cave of depression can be rolled away in a night, and once God does it, no Roman soldier or Jewish priest can stop him. Go, because you're gathering to anticipate a greater marriage than the one you hoped would happen later this year. Go, not because your trials aren't real, but because that tabled bread and wine represents the crucifixion of the worst sins you could ever commit and the worst realities you've ever experienced.

Go, and in your going, grow. Go, and in your going, serve. Go, and in your going, let God pick up the pieces of your heart and stitch together the kind of mosaic that only gets fully crafted when saints stay committed to God's long-term building project, when they speak the truth to one another in love ([Eph. 4:15-16](#)).

The most important time to be at church is when you don't feel like it. So please, brothers and sisters: *Go*.

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/most-important-time-to-go-to-church/>