

## Parish Life

According to the Oxford American College Dictionary, the definition of life includes such phrases as “the capacity for growth,” “vitality, vigor, or energy,” and “a way of living.” These words help to describe the sense of community that occurs when we work together, play together, and eat together during Parish Life activities.

Parish Life activities do not stop when we leave the church after events. I see them on a continuum of movement – happening all the time. As events near, the Parish Life contributors act by considering what will be needed, communicating to get plans made, and following through with helping with the events. The total process brings about the feeling of community that we experience.

To further describe the activities that comprise Parish Life, let's look at the big picture first and then the parts that portray it in its important supportive role in our parish. Picture an umbrella with a spike at the top for our overall mission and the spokes to indicate the activities that fulfill the mission. One possible statement of overall mission is the following:

The Parish Life Mission is to contribute to the vitality and growth of church community through caring attention to social events and parishioners who attend the events.

The spokes are the following: Coffee Hour, Foyer Groups, Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday, Men's Breakfast, Parish Picnic, Parish Retreat, Receptions, and Building and Grounds Luncheons.

The spoke for receptions is the flexible spoke. The activities that occur here can be anytime during the year, depending on need. Special events during 2008 included Burning of the Greens, the Easter Egg Hunt, the Mother's Day Brunch, Ann Dieterle's Farewell Reception, Pastor Lauren's Ordination Celebration, the celebration on Pastor Lauren's first Sunday, Ed Godshall's Organ Recital, lunches for the Building and Ground Work Days, Big Event Social, and Annual Meeting Luncheon. All Parish Life volunteers, under the leadership of Lynn Geddy, helped to make last year a banner year for Parish Life.

Another spoke I would like to address is Coffee Hour. We have very loyal members providing this event each Sunday, and it is a major time for sharing. We are experimenting with extending coffee for both the 9:00 and 11:15 services. In order to provide the extended coffee hour, we would like to invite additional coffee hour volunteers. Perhaps some who attend the 11:15 service would like to help with this ministry. All are welcome.

Our mission is to continue to respond to the needs of the church, providing the same gracious hospitality as we have in the past. We have already worked together on several important events this year, and I have been delighted at the response of church members.

A number of my fellow parishioners have listed Parish Life as your choice for Time and Talent this year. Not only will the church benefit from our contributions, we will benefit greatly from working together for such worthwhile endeavors. We get to be together and have fun as we plan and put together events. We get to grow as Christians as we see the friendships develop among our fellow parishioners. We see the

Church becoming a stronger entity because we make sure that there are no “invisible people.” By that, I picture our awareness of participants at our events to be sure that no one is left out of opportunities to interact with others and feel a welcome member of the group.

Very soon, we will have a meeting of all Parish Life Volunteers. I will invite your ideas for planning. Also, we can further discuss our mission statement as we examine our mission together. In the meantime, please call me anytime. It takes all of us to support each other and the church. Fortunately, we benefit greatly from our efforts.

Ann Bartholomay  
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