

Pastor Sailer's Page

Faith Lutheran Church
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INVESTING IN FAMILIES

That's what the Family Friendly Partners Network is all about!

Perhaps the most important family time of the year is upon us, with Thanksgiving being celebrated in the coming week and Christmas a calendar page away. Family members do all they can do to get together, with many families even transferring their family Christmas celebration to this coming weekend or to a weekend on either side of Christmas Day to allow as much of the family as possible to be together.

The church also recognizes the importance of families. We try to make church activities family-friendly. For example, we begin our mid-week worship services at 6:30 p.m., instead of at 7 or 7:30, so that families can get home at an earlier hour. We provide meals before many of these services to help individuals and families avoid the rush of preparing a meal or dashing in and out of a fast-food restaurant to get to a mid-week service. It's much more relaxing and fun to come here, have a meal waiting for you, and then settle in to a church pew at 6:25 or so.

But there's always more that we can do as a congregation to minister to and with families. And one thing we must always do is to recognize the Christian home as the primary faith-growing setting for God's people. The Church certainly is here to support this effort, but we are not here to do it all for you. The leadership of Faith Lutheran Church, recognizing the home as the primary source of faith formation and the congregation's support role in this, wants to introduce a ministry to all of us called the "Family Friendly Partners Network." The introductory meeting about this will take place Tuesday, December 2, 6:30 p.m., in the Christian Life Center. The leaders strongly encourage you to attend, whether you have a "traditional" family, a blended family, are single, single-again, empty nesters, whatever!

The Family Friendly Partners Network (FFPN), an LCMS ministry out of Concordia University, Ann Arbor, MI,

"trains and equips clusters of congregations to become intentional Christian family-forming centers. These churches desire to invest resources in a three-year process to become partners with Christian marriages and homes to deliberately pass on faith in Jesus Christ to the next generation. They receive training and coaching through a series of ten weekend workshops focusing on major concentrations in family ministry" (from the FFPN introductory brochure).

The "major concentrations in family ministry" include sessions in marriage ministry, parent education, human sexuality, stepfamily/divorce/remarriage ministry, and adulthood and aging.

Does the FFPN sound like something we should be investing in? Consider this: Over a forty year span (1970 to 2010), children living with two married parents, in nuclear homes, decreased from 85% to 65%. *What is the statistic in our own congregation?* Single parent families have increased from 12% to 27%. *How about in our congregation?* The number of stepfamilies is growing. Four in ten American adults report having at least one step-relative in their family. *How many stepfamilies do we have in our congregation, and how are we ministering to their needs?*

The FFPN can help our congregation minister in all of the above areas! But we have to "sign on" as a partner congregation in the network. The meeting on Tuesday, December 2, here at Faith, will help us to determine if we are interested in signing on. At the meeting, you will be introduced to the FFPN ministry and we will seek your feed-back about taking further steps to bring this ministry to our congregation. Because becoming involved in this ministry will require an investment of about \$5,500 over three years, we will ultimately have to bring the decision before the voters in the January Voters' Meeting, to gain official congregational approval. So, please join us on the 2nd of December! We highly value your participation in this process.