

The Value of Small Groups at St. Brendan Parish

From Ellen J.

Before the scourge of the virus disrupted my life, for a treat I would regularly visit my Elks Club or have a mani-pedi; two places where I enjoyed friendly chatting with folks that I had something in common. Then the lock-down came and I was feeling isolated and missed those warm interactions. To avoid feeling isolated I am fortunate to have been welcomed into two small groups with people of our faith from St. Brendan and other local churches. I've never met any of the group members but that didn't stop quickly feeling bonded with them. I have found that after a small group meeting with my new friends I feel peaceful, less stressed and more joyful. This is how I found a way to cope better during these difficult times and wanted to share my "secret" with others.

From Gerdellie W.

I have been blessed to facilitate the St Brendan's bible study class for 4 years now and co-facilitate the Marian and Divine Mercy small group with Lou S. for the past year. We would meet weekly on the church's campus, sharing our faith, giving hugs, and taking turns bringing in treats to snack on. During this time of pandemic, new challenges arose. How can we continue doing this beautiful fellowship while social distancing in the midst of this pandemic and healthcare protocols? The answer: Zoom!

I applaud the members of our groups; some are technology savvy, and some are technology challenged, but all tried their best to continue their commitment to pray, learn and socialize together. They helped each other register and get familiarize with this new virtual conference platform. They had their family members, some, their grandchildren, to teach them how to log on, turn on the microphone and video camera. And it was just a thrill to see each other on the screen with smiles, pajamas and curlers!!

As we connected with God's Word, we also learned from each other's insights and experiences, comforting each other in this time of uncertainty. Even in Zoom, the Holy Spirit must have been moving within us because someone would say something so insightful, you could feel your soul, surprised and renewed, consoling you. Indeed, something special was happening.

And we wanted to share all of this! We invited and welcomed members from other parishes like St. Finn Barr, St Stephen, and St Gabriel. Sister Angela would also invite new parishioners to the small groups. They were welcomed as they are. No experience is necessary. As we just learned from St John's Gospel in the story of the Woman by the Well, Jesus takes the time and meets with each of us where we are. He has a gift for us.

From Phil L.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that there are things beyond our control that have the ability to wreak havoc on our lives. But I've always found it useful in times like these to focus on the things that I can control. And I know with certainty that the thing most responsible for my happiness is how I treat and serve my brothers and sisters. The Random Acts Of Catholic's Group has afforded me the opportunity to create a positive impact - sometimes big and sometimes small, but nevertheless meaningful - on the lives of those around me.