

## A New Initiative

Meaningful community is hard to find in Silicon Valley, even in the church. The pace of life around us is frenetic; the jobs we hold are demanding, if not domineering; the grid we travel is congested; the neighborhoods are often lonely with people living parallel lives that rarely intersect. This is the cultural context of Mercy Hill. In an effort to counter such pressures and cultivate more of what we call the Christian “cross-culture” (a culture that looks like the cross), we will be starting a simple yet important initiative entitled First Sunday Fundays.

Our congregation is spread out all over the city. But there is one day of every week when we all commit to gather together and worship our God: Sunday. It seems strategic to take this pre-existing momentum and work with it in an attempt to develop deeper community within our body. Therefore, on the first Sunday of every month we are inviting the church to enjoy a picnic-style afternoon together immediately following the service.

## The Logistics

Bring your lunch or buy it (at one of the nearby restaurants) and join us at the picnic tables by the sports fields behind the school. We anticipate people trickling in and out. That is fine! This is less like a formal event and more like a family hangout. With the playgrounds, basketball courts, and fields right there, people can linger after lunch and play together. We will have kickballs, basketballs, frisbees, etc. but feel free to bring whatever else you might enjoy (i.e. card games, a good book, water balloon launchers, etc.).

## Lofty Goals for a Simple Picnic

First Sunday Fundays, while intended to be “fun” (as the name suggests), are aiming at something much more profound and weighty. When the church gathers together to eat, talk, laugh, cry, pray, and play it is displaying and declaring in a powerful way that Christ is risen. Because Christ is risen, we can let Sunday linger in our hearts and our schedules. Because Christ is risen, we can rest! And we rest best together, as the family of God. Our hope is that members of our church will be strengthened in love for God and one another as they share more of their lives with each other.

There is also a missional component to this initiative that should not go unmentioned. As already noted, meaningful community is hard to find in our city. Yet every human being made in God’s image desperately needs it. When the church is truly being the church it is a compelling community. The unbelieving see in us something they know they were created for. They are intrigued by our community and just might be attracted to our God.

We have chosen a location for First Sunday Fundays that might expose our church’s presence to the neighborhoods around. As we gather outside in this public place, it is our hope that we will rub shoulders with those from the houses nearby. We hope to talk with that single mom at the playground while our children play together. We hope to cheer and share with those families that are gathered at the fields to watch their son’s tournament. We hope to invite in those around to eat, laugh, cry, and play, and even pray with us. Again, we hope that they might be compelled by our community and come to worship our God.

We would also encourage you to see first Sundays as a good time to invite your friends to our church service. Many unbelievers might feel out of their element in a service, but they might really enjoy an afternoon picnic!

So would you consider joining with us in this? Let’s picnic and play for the glory of Christ and the good of our city!