

Church Office

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Meeting location

Marshall Middle School
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Pastor:

John Swanson

*Declaring the greatness of God and serving
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*



Sept. 1, 1999

Dear Friend,

The autumn sun hung in a cloudless sky as I made my way through the scattered leaves to my friend Nick's home. It was a Sunday afternoon. There was nothing happening at my house because my family was watching the Green Bay Packers play football. Boring! How anyone could spend a beautiful fall afternoon in front of the TV was more than my eight-year old mind could comprehend.

I knocked on Nick's door, his mother answered. "Nick, John's here to see you!" she yelled. I could hear the Packer game coming through the partially opened door. Nick appeared at the door and to my request to come out and play he said, "I can't, the Packers are playing." I said, "So what, let's play." He just said, "I don't want to" and closed the door. I was crushed. I resented the Packers.

Thirty-three years later, in January, 1997, I packed up my family and drove seven hours from central Illinois to LaCrosse, WI in order to watch the Packers play in Super Bowl 31 with friends who loved them as much as I. How did this happen? How did an eight year old who resented the Packers become an avid fan and lover of all things Packer?

I was surrounded by Packer fans. My family, my friends, my neighbors, everyone I knew was a Packer fan. They all loved to tell me how great the Packers were. They explained the game of football to me and taught me to enjoy it. I learned to delight in the Packers by hanging out with those who delighted in the Packers.

Jesus claims that to be one of His followers is better than possessing the whole world (Luke 9: 23-23). It's better than winning the Super Bowl! Yet most of us relate to Jesus and the life he offers, like I related to the Packers as an eight year old. We don't understand how knowing Him could be the best thing in life.

How do we learn to delight in all that Jesus wants to be for us? First of all, whenever a person delights in God it is the result of a miracle that God does in that person's heart. However, He uses people to perform that miracle. We can learn something from how I became a Packer fan (Amazingly! ☺). **If we will spend time with those who do delight in God, just maybe we will learn to delight in Him as well.**

This is one of the fundamental principles upon which we are trying to build our church. This is what God is saying in Heb. 10: 24-25, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching." Jesus came to make us "fans" of God. He died and rose again so that knowing, loving and worshipping God would be the chief delight of our lives. Nothing shows off God's greatness as much as a community of people who gladly spend time with each other in order to know and love God more.

We are at a place in the developing life of our church where we need to take another step forward in making it easy for people to enter into these kinds of relationships. We need to further implement Eph. 4: 15-16, "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." It takes all of us working together to provide for the maximum growth of each individual person.

You will find in this envelope a simple form entitled, "Are you the missing piece?" I have listed a variety of the ways you can be involved in the process of building our church into a community that is growing in its delight in God. Some of the items are specific jobs. Some are more general areas of ministry that still need to be developed. Please take some time to pray about how God might want you to be involved. It is my hope, that as we grow, all of us will experience the joy of knowing that we are contributing to the growth of others through our work together.

Growing in delight,

P.S. You will also find the September calendar and a brochure for the Faith Training Seminar on Sept. 24 & 25. If you are a parent, I hope to see you at the FTS!