

CONVERSATIONS IN THE MARKETPLACE



"Paul spoke daily in the marketplace to all who happened to be there."
Acts 17:17

Where has the community gone?

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"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." I Corinthians 12:26-27.

On Sunday, Sept. 18, St. Ansgar's members and friends attended an adult forum and enjoyed listening to Ken Althoff and others reminisce about their days of youth at St. Ansgar's and their early years in Cannon Falls. Some of the stories shared called up humorous memories, some echoed of a past where there was a close-knit community feeling. Almost everyone knew their neighbors and other church goers. But things certainly have changed. It is hard for me to imagine three hour confirmation classes . . . or Luther League meetings as the highlight of the week for youth! In those days there was no TV or computer and video games. Social life and leisure time revolved around the church.

As I sat and listened to life in years now passed, I couldn't help but wonder at how many important qualities of living are now missing from our society. Our church is much bigger now and a comment I often hear is "I don't know very many people when I look around on Sunday." Unfortunately, we no longer have the "family" feeling we remember from years ago. We often do not know when another member of our church is going through a stressful time in life or when they have good news to share.

It's true that in the past people's lives were centered around church and home.

Everyone was in church on Sunday - it was not a "choice" among other activities. All the youth were involved in church groups.

Now our churches have become "marginalized" - meaning that they are no longer important to many. Questions of faith and meaning in life do not seem to be crucial in a culture where most families have at least two incomes and are struggling to keep up all the payments. Most families are so busy with activities they rarely have time to sit down to dinner together! Often our lives are just too busy to spend time listening to one another and learning how to become a neighbor.

We must find ways to rebuild community once again. Christians need to become intentional about sharing Christ's love with one another. Who do you know that needs a listening ear? Who has some great news that could use a "congratulations?" Those who follow Christ are called to suffer with and to rejoice with others. How much easier it is to divide our burden with those who really care. How fun to share exciting news and pass along the great feeling!

St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church - in existence now for 125 years - would like to build a strong community for the future as well. All of you who are a part of the larger Cannon Falls community are invited to join us in our final "anniversary" celebrations this weekend. There are still tickets available for the festive Swedish Banquet on Saturday, Oct. 15 at 5 or 6 p.m. Sunday we will conclude our 125th anniversary focus by looking into the future with traditional liturgy service at 8:30 a.m. and "Celebrate" service at 10:30 a.m. Come share that "community" feeling and invite someone to come along with you!