

Ten days ago, I met with most of the staff as we worked on calendaring for 2026-27. Each of the five individual parish and school master calendars was created with input from staff and parish ministries and programs. My assistant compiled the five into one spreadsheet. She and I then went through and identified major conflicts or things that needed to shift. Staff then reworked their calendars, resubmitted, the spreadsheet was updated, and then we all got into a room together for a few hours to finish planning. Things will of course change, as calendars are always open to human and divine intervention, as well as new things to be added, but it's a good beginning framework.

One of the deficiencies, though, is that it's still mostly just the individual calendars. We have some joint programs between parishes, and with our shared bulletin we are intentionally inviting everyone to all events and activities, but for the most part our life still exists separately. But that is not our reality. We will in a couple of years time be one larger Catholic community. One of my summer projects is to add more Parish Family events to the calendar, as we begin to live more as one community. We need to start more intentionally being one and getting to know one another in larger ways beyond the individual efforts by people who choose to attend things at other parishes.

On September 20th, in the late afternoon/evening, we are going to have a Parish Family picnic, with food, indoor and outdoor games, perhaps live music, and more. It will not be at any single church hosted for all, but instead it will be at an off-site location (hopefully confirmed by the time you read this, but not by print time) – so that all have more equal ownership in it. It will be a wonderful opportunity for us to focus on being together, making new friends, and sharing in our beautiful faith.

As I talked through the transitions we are going through this month with the staffs, and with MQP Pastoral Council, who I met with this month, a suggestion was to take a break from our individual events for this summer and focus on one together. As we begin with our Parish Family Advisory Council this year to discern how God is calling us to live as one community, it's a great invitation. This will replace St. Joseph's Summer Picnic as well as MQP's Summerfest for this summer – to be one.

If you are interested in volunteering to help organize our Parish Family Picnic, please reach out to office@sjcissaquah.org.