

GROWING Together

ISSN: 1481-9465

A RECIPE FOR UNITY OR HOW TO COVENANT

Ingredients:

- 2 or more congregations or parishes
- An openness of mind and heart
- Generosity of spirit
- Interest in other human beings, their beliefs and traditions
- Willingness to take time to visit
- Desire to make God smile



Method: Mix the above ingredients as follows:

1. **Visit one another.** Send bulletins, newsletters, interesting information about who you are and what you do. Become familiar with each other's building. Invite the other's staff to lunch regularly. Worship with the other.

2. **Eat together often.** Christians and food seem to be complementary ingredients. Enjoy potluck suppers. Share your traditions around food.

3. **Tell your story.** Begin by discovering your own story. Make a time line from the beginning of your congregation's history by drawing a line lengthwise across the middle of a long paper. Note the significant events for your church family according to date and as you remember them. You don't have to dig into history books. Underneath the line record events that were happening in the world. Using another colour, describe where God was during each event. How was God leading you? Underneath the line, record events that were happening in the world. Then come together with your partner/s. Share your stories. Together focus on how you perceive God has been acting in your histories. Finally, make 3 charts: God's Actions with us, Our Differences, Our Similarities.

4. **Pray together and for each other.** Become aware of the Spirit's activity

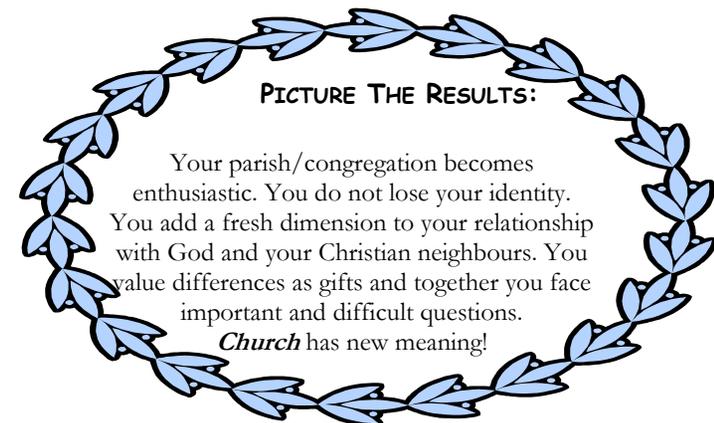
in your midst.

5. **Celebrate.** Enjoy what you can do together. Recognize what you can't. Make banners and parties. Sing one another's music. Make sure the officials of your denomination are aware of what you are doing. Don't keep your relationship a secret!

6. **Work together.** Discover the needs in your community. Determine how to remove the *causes* of those problems. Invite people with knowledge to help you choose activities for *social change*.

7. **Covenant.** When you and your partner/s have developed a deepening relationship over time, you may want to declare that relationship publicly. Committing yourselves to each other in a *covenant* means you have committed yourselves to a holy friendship. Decide and state clearly how you will live out this friendship: prayer, Bible study, discussion groups, community projects, socializing. Come together to celebrate and announce this covenant in a special service.

Serves a multitude! Be prepared for others to want the recipe.



GROWING TOGETHER is a series of five monthly Sunday bulletin inserts for the ecumenical education of Christ's faithful.

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