

First Met Friendship Club celebrates 70 years!

In the late 1940s the Couples' Club at First United Church, Victoria, had become too large to continue meeting in homes. In September 1950, Rev. Moir Waters arranged a meeting of some of the younger couples, and began the Wednesday Couples Club (also known as the Young Couples Club).

The group met the first and third Wednesdays each month, a practice that continues. As young couples, members shared the joys and challenges of raising their families, including them in picnics, campouts, concerts, dinners, Sunday School, youth groups and even work parties at the church and camps. Graduations and weddings were often timed when we joined together to share the joys of our family life. Some families even called their other members "auntie" and "uncle." Grandchildren were welcomed later.

As we got older, life changed, as it does. Some lost dearly loved spouses and even children. The group has always offered support in all aspects of these changes. One thing that became apparent was the need for a group that included singles - thus in the 1990s the group became the Friendship Club.

For most of its history the programs remained essentially the same, with some of the highlights being corn roasts, decorating the church and hall for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, work parties at Camp Pringle, travelogues presented by members who took trips to interesting places and assisting with the annual flea market. Funds to provide for some of the activities came from our annual "Bring and Buy." Our auctioneer, Doug Collis, always provided hilarious descriptions of the donated articles and encouraged us to take home many things that others had stopped using.

One relatively recent gift was a substantial contribution to an automated door opener which was a great boon to those using walkers and wheelchairs. Those funds were raised through several pancake breakfasts. In recent years, with members aging (we have 15 people 90 years of older) we have changed to day meetings where we offer a schedule of restaurants for gathering over lunches. Even with this change, our primary interest is friendship, fellowship and love.

Our unofficial motto is: We Care! We Share! We Support! Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. It has been good for 70 years so far and our hope and prayer is that it will continue for many more.

We believe that this is the longest continuously active social group in the United Church. We wonder if there is one with a longer history.