



What's on the horizon for 2024?

St. Joe @ Y was fearlessly planted as a congregation to be out in the mission field in close proximity to the staff and members of the Jackson R Lehman YMCA. You continue to faithfully live out that mission. The following outlines what's on the horizon for 2024 at SJ@Y. If you'd prefer to listen to it, click [here](#).

I know it's long (whether you read or listen/watch), but it's important that you are aware of how SJ@Y helps support the Y's mission of "putting Christian principles into practice". If you don't find some of these ways are ways you would want to engage with the staff and members at the Y, let's talk about where you might want to plug in. No matter what, you can pray. Pray that God continues to move in ways that touch people's lives.

-Pastor Ashley

Sermon Excerpt 1/14

As Christians, we're called to put our faith into action to reflect God's abundance by giving our lives away. And while we each have our own individual ways of doing that, here at St. Joe @ Y there are a few things I want to go into a little more in detail about how we are giving to the Jackson R Lehman YMCA.

I believe in transparency, accountability and teamwork. So I want you to know what is on the horizon for 2024 and how you can engage with each one.

But first, I want you to know, that St. Joe and St. Joe @ Y continues to be one of the strongest church partnerships within the FW Y association. And that's because of you. You all have stepped in and supported the ways over the past 6.5 years that Pastor Jason, Pastor Gabrielle, and now Pastor Glenn and I have asked you to. But it's not because the badge of honor of being a good partner is what drives you. What drives you is fearlessly connecting with the 17,000 members and the countless staff here at JRL in order to point them to a loving Savior. You are faithful people, and it continues to bear fruit.

SUNDAY MORNING

So what does 2024 look like at St. Joe @ Y? Let's start with Sunday morning. We're not going anywhere. We're going to continue to set up, have church, and tear down every week. A couple months ago, the Y Roundtable which is a group of people from the SJ@Y congregation, met and discussed what the Sunday morning worship schedule looked like: the good and the bad. And this is how we're going to move forward.

We have a love/hate relationship with Circle Church. Let's just be clear about that. I hear some of you say, you love it and we shouldn't change it. I hear some of you, mostly by your absence that you hate it and we should change it. We took that, as well as, what it was like as a visitor to experience 2 different Sunday's a month with one of them being very relational, and decided that we are going to spend the next 6 months with a trial run of the following schedule. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Sundays will be regular church. On the 4th Sunday, we will alternate between Circle Church and Brunch Church.

For example, this month on January 28th, we'll be doing Brunch Church, in February on the 4th Sunday we'll do Circle Church, March Brunch, etc. And then we will reevaluate in June.

We're going to keep Brunch Church because it continues to be a really good way of being able to invite friends and family. Now, we have to do a better job of that, but we'll get there.

Maybe you're asking, "why not just combine them? Or just do away with one? It's going to be confusing..." It's a compromise. Because the person sitting in the row behind you might really love talking to you in a small group, circle, setting. Because the person sitting in the row in front of you might really love baking their cinnamon rolls for Brunch Church but it would be nice to have a break once in a while.

This is why it's important for you to take the 1/2 sheets available at the Mission Center, get the SJ@Y monthly email newsletter, and get the weekly SJ/@Y email newsletter. There is no shortage of communication, you just have to engage with it.

CHAPLAINCY

Okay, let's talk about what happens during the week. We have an amazing team of chaplains, the biggest in fact within the FW Y. People who consistently give anywhere between 1-4 hours of their time. We will continue to engage in chaplaincy by sitting at the Prayer Table. The Y is in the process of rolling out some new ways of engaging with chaplaincy that really revolve around providing a ministry of presence to the branch staff at each Y. We're going to do that, too. Really, building relationships with the members and staff of the Y is what chaplaincy is all about. **So how can you give yourself away to this?** Don't let the word chaplain scare you. You're fearless, remember? If this interests you, come talk to me.

COFFEE WITH PASTOR

So let's move to some other ways that we are engaging with members. At the beginning of December, I started what's called "Coffee with a Pastor". And really what this is all about is...well, maybe a little bit of bribery. As I sat at the Prayer Table one day, I thought, "Man, if I were just some member and I really needed prayer, I would NOT want to pour my heart out to a chaplain in the middle of the lobby." So I wanted to provide another opportunity for perhaps the people who want a little more privacy, a little more intimate environment. But how do they know I'm there? How do I get them to come in?

Coffee. I make delicious coffee with the aroma that



wafts through the lobby as you walk in. As I walk in on Thursday afternoons, I can't even make it to the kitchen to get my little cart before Cassandra at the front desk says, "Oh it's Thursday! Can I get a coffee??" It continues to gain momentum and last Thursday I spent 2 hours either making someone a cup or talking to someone. And I love every moment of it. **How can you give yourself away to this?** Spread the word. Wonder in one afternoon. Donate a little bit of milk money, because I don't charge them a penny to have a cup.

THE MOMCO

So that's for everyone. But how can we give ourselves away to perhaps one specific group of people. My kids are older now but when they were little, as I stayed home with them, there were days I was like "I gotta go to the Y and put these little monsters in childwatch. I don't really want to workout. I'd really like to just take a nap in the car for 2 hours. But I need a minute." Childwatch at JRL is always bustling. Which tells me that there are probably moms in the building who feel the same way I did. (SLIDE 6) Let's connect them. Moms, and dads, need encouragement. They crave connection. And while I'd love to encourage and connect dads, I'm not one.

So I talked to Teri Stoots, the Youth and Family Director here at JRL, and we're going to launch "The MomCo". The MomCo is formerly MOPS, Mothers of Preschoolers. It's a faith-based curriculum that does an excellent job of cultivating an environment for mothers to be real, encouraging, and support each other. **How can you give yourself away to this?** I need 1 woman who's willing to be of general help for the group: organizing speakers, providing some hospitality, and serves on this small leadership team to get this group up and running.

CENTERING PRACTICE

2 other things that are specifically for members of the Y. One is called "Centering Practice" and this is a contemplative prayer time. If you've not done contemplative prayer this is what it is... I know, I just did a seminary class on this. Contemplative prayer is a receptive posture of quiet, stillness, and willingness to receive what God has to say to you. It's NOT

eastern meditation. It's not an emptying of yourself. It's filling yourself with God. It's prayer that intentionally trusts and rests in the presence of the Holy Spirit deep in our own spirit without effort. Well, maybe it's more without words. It's effort. It is hard to be still and quiet for 20 minutes. But in this fast paced world. We need it.

What is REALLY cool about this particular opportunity is that it is actually part of the Group Exercise Schedule. So just like you'd see a water aerobics class, a yoga class, a spin class, "Centering Practice" class is going to be on the Group Exercise Schedule FOR ALL THE MEMBERS TO SEE. Now you might be like, what's the big deal.

It's a BIG deal to treat the "spirit" part of the Y's mission as equally important as the "healthy body" part. **How can you give yourself away to this?** This is unfortunately for Y members only. So if you're a Y member, come. This is part of my commitment to presence at the Y, I will be leading this class. So come. Thursdays at 11a starting February 1st. Don't let me sit awkwardly by myself in a room, at least for a few weeks before other non-SJ@Y people start to catch on and come. If you're not a Y member, practice it by yourself in your home Thursdays at 11a. OR become a Y member, financial aid is available if that's a barrier for you.

FAITH AND FITNESS

This is where we take the Y and the Church and we mash it all together. It's a 6-week program that starts on February 8th. It will be 35 minutes of a popular fitness class at the Y. One week it might be "beat the drum", the next week Holy Yoga, and so on. Then it will be 10 minutes of devotional and prayer. That's it. If our partnership between the Y and the Church were a hands-on program: this is it.

How can you give yourself away to this? Great news! You don't have to be a member for this one. So if you want to experience what the Y is about, this is a great opportunity. It's only \$10 for non-members, members are free.

STAFF WORKSHOPS

Remember I said the Y Association is revamping what

it means to be a chaplain that really revolved around caring for the staff? Well, what if we took it one step further? What if we helped provide the structure and framework to connect them with each other and give them valuable tools that they might need. So what if: we provided a regular time (monthly? quarterly?) where there would be a potluck meal, some fellowship time, and then a short presentation on a skill: how to build a budget, how to manage stress, how to deal with difficult co-workers, how to parent better.

And that's it. Just a meal, time together, and a small amount of learning.

I'm excited about this one. If we can partner with the full-time staff here at the Y to really drive and entice the rest of the staff to come, this could be incredibly powerful. And it's bonus points because it really aligns with where the Y Association is already heading. **How can you give yourself away to this?** I really need 2-3 people to step up and take some ownership of this and really make it happen. I'll help lead, I'll support, I'll make connections, I'll be there at each one, but for this to have a shot at being successful: I know there's 2-3 of you out there who are passionate about hospitality and relationship building that God could use to make this dream a reality.

Faithful. Fearless. Fruitful.



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