

Equipping Disciples For Witness

Proverbs 23:26 tells us, "My Son, give me your heart, and let your eyes delight in my ways."

When you come to worship here at First Lutheran, do you honestly give God your whole heart? If you are not, I would imagine it is hard to see what the Holy Spirit is doing here in God's church, but if you are, aren't the Spirit's gifts amazing?

Take the service where we recently delighted in the baptism of Jakob. Now if you were a visitor who came to check out a potential new place of worship and your major focus for determining the health of a church is the number of those attending, then you probably checked First Lutheran right off your list. However, if that same visitor held the major focus of looking for God's Spirit in this place, that visitor would have seen a 4-year-old leading the congregation in the Lord's Prayer during Holy Communion and hopefully delighted in God's ways and planned for a return visit.

Do we take delight in worship here at First Lutheran? Yes, I truly do feel we have some attending who find great delight in worship here at First Lutheran. Some, but certainly not all.

Every Worship service we are told that it is our duty and our joy to bring God thanks and praise. My biggest question is, where is the joy?

For example, the joy of singing at the top of your lungs even when others think you have a terrible voice and they wish you would stop. Singing from your heart, not caring that others think you need to live up to some human determined level of competence before you can join together in song.

You ask me what my vision is, well, my vision is twofold. First, to invite, remind and encourage people to give God their whole heart (mind, body, strength, soul), in all times and places, that their eyes might delight in God's way, always. Can you honestly think of any better way to face the good times, or the bad, in your life?

Second, to equip disciples of Jesus Christ for witness in the world. The world keeps evolving. Do we even know how to speak to the world anymore? At three different services I asked the youth if they knew who John Wayne was...they did not! The youth in turn showed me a text which was filled with letters like... BAU AYS DGT LMK IKR BAE. Seriously, how many of us really have a clue what they are talking about?

Bridging those gaps through the potential common ground of faith in Jesus Christ is how I see us witnessing to the world. In the very near future, (next council meeting), I will be proposing some of the ways I see us engaging together to witness the joy of Christ in our lives. With their backing, we will continue to work (BELIEVE) to the glory of God.

In Christ,

Pr. Keith Johnson