

Ascension Lutheran Church

Pinehurst Lutheran Church

August 2023 Newsletter

Devotion:

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it.

1 Corinthians 3:10

The Long Play

It must have been hard for the apostle Paul to leave each church he helped start. Usually, after just a short time, Paul had to move on to a different city for his mission work. Sometimes he had to leave due to persecution or because other places needed to hear the gospel of Jesus too. It's easy to imagine why Paul had a hard time leaving each of the fledgling congregations he helped get off the ground. Maybe, in some ways, it felt like letting go of his baby—to let someone else hold it for a while.

But in our Bible verse today, we see Paul trusting that the work in each of those cities would continue. He got to lay the foundation, and someone else was coming along to build on it and finish the work.

We can get discouraged when we don't see God's kingdom built as swiftly as we'd like or not see people filling every pew in the church. We can get discouraged when that person we've been trying to reach out to hasn't come to church yet.

But it's good to have patience in this gospel-sharing work. Just because we don't see immediate results doesn't mean we should stop working to build up the Church of God. Like Paul, maybe we are just laying the groundwork for someone else to come along and build upon it further. This could apply in the ministry of a church or in the personal ministry of witnessing to others.

Even if the friend we invite to church doesn't accept our invitation immediately, we at least built a foundation, planted a seed, and made a positive impression with them. We never know what God might have in store for them in the future and whom he might put in their life to continue building on that gospel foundation we began to lay down. We play the gospel-long game, trusting God's long-term plans that he has for every person.

Prayer: Lord, give me many opportunities to lay down gospel foundations for others in your Word. Amen.

From Pastor's Desk:

What is a ministry plan? Some of you may have heard me throwing around the phrase "ministry plan." Maybe I was answering a question you had about one of our two campuses, and I said, "Well, we're going to be working that into our ministry plan." Maybe you had a question about events we are hoping to do, and I might have mentioned, "Yes, this is the type of activity we want to plan on in our ministry plan," so what is it?

Let's first qualify slightly what a ministry plan is not. A ministry plan is not a plan for the Holy Spirit. We cannot plan specifically what the Holy Spirit will do for our congregation other than that He will continue to create and sustain faith through word and sacrament. How many new worship visitors' feet will the Holy Spirit guide to walk through our church doors during the next year? I have no idea. How many former members will He bring back to worshipping with us and joining us again in church membership over the next five years? I really can't say. What percentage of increase in offerings will the Holy Spirit motivate our members to give over the next 10 years. I wish I knew. God doesn't give us any of those answers; he simply asks us to trust him when David says in Psalm 31, "My times are in your hands."

Does this mean we throw up our hands and just take each day, month and year as it comes? Kind of; every day I also say with the Psalmist, "it is good to wait for the Lord," and wait to see exactly what each day will look like, even for our church. However, Solomon still says in Ecclesiastes, "There is a time for everything under the sun," and so we certainly can use the good minds God has given us to plan a time for as much as we can plan.

In next month's newsletter, I'm going to be talking more specifically about what a ministry plan is, what a ministry plan center's around, and the types of things I would like to include in our ministry plan, but for now I just want you thinking about the things for which we can plan and the things for which we cannot plan, and how to tell the difference. We will talk about our ministry plan at each congregation's annual meeting in the early part of next year. We will have congregational forums where we all have open conversations, men and women, about our ministry plan before we hold our annual meeting and before we formally adopt our ministry plan and its accompanying budget at each church's annual meeting. I look forward to doing this together. I look forward to adjusting my plans after listening to your plans. I look forward to us as the body of Christ moving forward together joyously to do our best individually and as a church to "go and make disciples of all nations."

Together in Christ,

Pastor Harter



GOLF & GIVE

August 08, 2023 | 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Lake Hallie Golf Course

Join us for a foursome golf scramble.

9 AM Registration

11:30 Shotgun Start

Buffet dinner and soft drinks on the course are included. A cash bar is available. All proceeds will benefit the tuition assistance program at Cornerstone Lutheran High School in Chippewa Falls.

\$100/person

Receive a \$25 discount when you register before 7/25

Can't make it for golf? Come for dinner! [Register now to save your spot for dinner.](#)

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