



Pastor Sorensen's October 2024 First of the Month Letter

Over the next several months the Call Committee will engage the congregation in formal and informal conversations around the topic of discerning God's preferred and promised future for Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Long before there are questions about the strengths of the leader you seek, will be the foundational question about mission and purpose. In other words, why are we here? Why is OSLC here on Carol Lane and what is its core purpose?

Before I get too deep into this topic, I should clarify that the church doesn't have a mission. You read that right. The church doesn't have a mission. God has a mission. The church's reason for existing is to join God in God's mission. Whenever a church acts, thinks, or believes it has a mission separate from God's mission, that church is on shaky ground.

God's mission is not complicated. It is delineated in the most famous of Bible verses.

"For God so loved the world that he **gave** his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." But don't stop reading there, keep going for more of this mission of God. "Indeed, God did not **send** the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him."

As an aside, I do find it interesting that so many Christians spend a lot of time and energy condemning the world, or at least condemning certain parts of the world, or certain peoples. Yet, I do not think the text could be clearer, "God did NOT send the Son into the world to condemn the world." If Jesus didn't come to condemn the world, then I don't think that is my task, and certainly not the church's task.

Back to God's mission...God sends and God gives. In baptism we are chosen by God to participate in God's mission to and for the world. We are sent to participate in God's mission of justice for the neighbor. We are called together as a people of God, in a community we call Our Savior's Lutheran Church, to be part of this incredible mission.

God has given the church (the church universal and the church local, OSLC) with the gifts, graces, and tools to join in this mission. These tools I like to refer to as the great SHIPS of the church. Worship. Discipleship. Fellowship. Stewardship. (I will talk about that next month.)

It is a great temptation to function as if the congregation has a mission separate from God's mission. In fact, I have been part of and led congregations who are lured into

this false belief. But the more faithful, more rewarding, and more difficult path is to abandon our plans and discern together what God is already doing in our midst and in our community – and then join in what God is already doing. And a by-product of joining in the mission of God for the sake of the neighbor, community, and world is that a depth of intentional Christian community is discovered. In discerning and leaning into God’s activity in our midst, one discovers that their own personal, spiritual, and emotional needs are met in abundant ways never before imagined.

I am excited about this journey of discernment for OSLC. God has chosen us. God is sending us. God is before us and invites us into a future for which we cannot see clearly, but we have faith that God will guide us into that preferred and promised future.

See you in worship,
Pastor Scot



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