




**Pastor Sorensen's November
2024
All Saint's Day – Nov 1**

Greetings Saints of Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

Last month I began a conversation about mission, particularly about God's mission in the world and the invitation to communities of faith to join in and participate with God in that mission. It

is not OSLC's mission, it is God's mission. I also said that God has given the church (the church universal and the church local, OSLC) 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. This month I want to talk about those four SHIPS of the church.

Worship. It is at the heart of our life together. Our Presbyterian friends put it succinctly in their Westminster Catechism when it states, "the chief purpose of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy God forever." Worship is a time when we are called together, gathered, fed, and sent. Certainly, worship doesn't just happen on a Sunday morning but that is a central time and place where the community of faith is called, gathered, fed, and sent. I have some assumptions about worship that guide me. One, I believe God is the primary actor present and active in worship. If we don't expect to encounter the living God through the Holy Spirit in worship, then why would anyone show up? Two, worship is a participatory, team activity. It is not a spectator sport. Three, worship is not about what I like or don't like. Worship is not about me. Communities of faith who understand that worship is about God and not individual likes and wants have a higher probability of being dynamic centers of ship number two, Discipleship.



Discipleship. The final recorded words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew are, “Go and make disciples of all nations...” When we hear that Great Commission, it is often misunderstood that the imperative is the command is to GO. But the word ‘go’ in the text is a participle, better translated ‘in your going.’ The imperative is **make disciples**. For about the past 16 centuries the Christian church has relied upon society and culture to make disciples. But, in the last few decades of the 20th century, discipleship making has fallen back to congregation to make disciples. Sadly, most congregations are ill equipped to make disciples. They know what to do with fully formed Christians who arrive on their doorstep, but to actually make disciples is a skill set that is lacking. One of many tangible outcomes of making disciples is ship number three, Fellowship.

Fellowship. I am not talking about coffee and cookies when I use the word fellowship. Christian fellowship is described in Acts as a community united in prayer, caring, and support of one another. If fellowship is not grounded in Christ-like care of one another, the congregation looks like a social gathering of like-minded people. The Biblical witness of fellowship is not about like-mindedness, but unity in Christ and celebrating differences and diversity. This Christian fellowship requires work and commitment.

This leads me to the last SHIP, and that is **Stewardship**. Rightly defined, stewardship is everything that happens in our lives after we say, “I believe.” The way in which we worship, make and become disciples, and live into fellowship are all aspects of our stewardship. While stewardship does address our relationship with our finances, it is so much more. How we tend to the care of our bodies, how we manage our time, how we nurture relationships, how we understand our vocations...that is all stewardship.

Our Savior’s, like every other congregation, can only sail the tides of life as well as it has tended to the ships in which it sails: Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship, and Stewardship. As we

continue in this season of transition and discernment, let us pay attention to the care of our ships. And may the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, fill our sails in that preferred and promised future.

I will see you in worship,
Pastor Scot



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