

Pastor Brian's  
Mid Week Message  
February 19, 2020

**“PACKING ‘EM IN”**

This past Sunday morning we had 188 people gathering together here at Trinity Lutheran Church of Southwest Florida to worship and praise our God. That's the most that we have ever had on a Sunday outside of last Easter. This Sunday we will be welcoming 18 new members (8 fulltime and 10 associate) into the congregation. The Lord has indeed blessed us with a steady growth, but as I mentioned last week, our growth brings with it challenges, mostly due to our limited space. It should be obvious to all of us that we indeed need more space for worship as well as all other aspects of our church life. At this evening's Fellowship Buffet, the house will be packed again according to our sign-up sheets. It is also obvious that more space is not going to be readily available for a while. The process of design, permitting and construction of a building can take up to two years. Raising the capital to take on such a project takes time as well, although both can be in process simultaneously. In the meantime, we need to look for creative solutions to accommodate all of us who are here now and those who are yet to come. Looking back again to this past Sunday we can also see a potential solution. It may not have been so obvious to all of us that we hosted a "record crowd" because our numbers were almost evenly distributed across both of our worship services. There were 90 in attendance at 8:30am and 98 at 10:30am. If we could just continue that trend our challenge will be easily met...at least for now. We can, at least in part, thank the choir for helping to even things out. Most of our choir members regularly attend the later service, so when we sing in the early worship it makes a big difference. It's when the choir sings at 10:30am, or has the week off as is the case of this coming Sunday, that we become "overcrowded". I guess what I'm getting at here is that if we can shift only 15 people who typically come to church at 10:30 to the 8:30 service it should help a great deal. There is no significant difference in the content at either time, and this year we are making every effort to have the choir participate equally in both. Even without that, filling in the rows, not leaving an empty chair between us, will also be a big help in welcoming and accommodating our visitors as we have 140 chairs available if we use every one of them. Looking forward, our Lord will provide us with just what we need, at exactly the perfect time. What we truly need and the perfect time are determined by Him and may not be exactly the same as what we might think. I pray that we have the faith and wisdom to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit and be ready to move forward when His perfect timing is revealed.