

Pastor Brian's
Midweek Message
February 16, 2022

"FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS"

"I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

Throughout our campaign, "Building to Serve Christ and Community" we emphasized that this effort...building and growing the mission and ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church, including the construction of a new and large worship space, is not meant to serve us, but those yet to come. We intend to erect a building that will stand for 100s of years and touch the lives of many generations with the love of Christ and His offer of eternal salvation as a free gift of God's grace. Now, I don't know if you've noticed it, but I sure have, that most of our members are a wee bit older than I am, and I'm about to hit 64 in a month. That means that for the vast majority of us God is going to call us home to Himself within the next decade or two. In the year 2040 this congregation is going to look very different, the facilities and the faces! All of us here at TLC have the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy that will have eternal consequences. We can lay up treasure in heaven and then see the fruits of our labor and generosity as more and more people enter into God's heavenly kingdom with us, and we see that they have come through the Gospel proclamation of our humble little church, Trinity Lutheran of SW Florida. There's another side of this equation as well, and Jesus has given us clear direction in praying to our Father for this! *"Then He [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"* (Matthew 9:37-38) We also need to build up the supply of workers...Church workers...meaning pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, etc. so that the Church will have those who will preach and teach the faith and doctrine to those who will come after us. The Apostle Paul puts it this way, *"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"* (Romans 10:14-15) As I attended our monthly circuit pastors meeting yesterday in Sarasota, it was pointed out that more than 100 LCMS pastors have announced that they will retire by the end of the year. That's just the ones who have decided and announced already. It's only February, so I'm guessing that number will increase, and substantially. At the same time our two seminaries are only producing about 75-80 new pastors each year, so that means that calls are going unfilled, and those that are filled often come after years of vacancy. Please pray to the Father, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send more workers, and also pray that He enables and empowers us to participate in that process. I would like to offer one concrete way that we can. It was about a month ago (on January 9th) that a young couple visited us here at TLC for worship. The man introduced himself as Paul Mroczenski (you can pronounce that any way you wish...I'm going with "More-sen-ski"...and his new bride was Courtney. He also informed us that he would be entering the Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN in the fall. After worship I had the opportunity, along with many of you, to speak with them. In our conversation I brought up the possibility of our congregation offering support. Just yesterday Paul reached out to me by email to humbly request just that. Now as I mentioned before, our fellowship is a little on the aged side to be sending members to seminary, but here is our chance to make a definite gift and impact to the Kingdom of God in that manner. A seminary education comes with high costs to the men, wives and their families that answer God's call to ministry. I believe we too are being called to help! Here is what I plan to propose...that our 10 o'clock Tuesday Bible Study, which currently has grown to near 50 people adopt Paul and Courtney and support them through constant prayer and financially. Kay and I (she doesn't know about this yet) will personally offer regular support, and those who don't regularly participate in the Tuesday study are encouraged to offer their gifts as well. Perhaps we'll set up a designated fund. I've heard it said many times before that "The Church is always just one generation away from extinction". Once our generation passes into glory, it is the succeeding generations that will make up the enduring presence of Christ in the world. We can take comfort that this extinction will never takes place, as Jesus promises us that the gates of hell will never prevail against us. We must not rest on that though...may we be a light for future generations!