



Message from Pastor Scottie *September 2013: God's Mission, Our Hands*

On a church work day recently we loaded our old kneelers in a rented dumpster for elimination. We first tried to sell the kneelers, then discounted the price, then tried giving them away when no one would respond. Lastly, we tried to salvage the metal from the kneelers, but discovered the return was at best only \$16. Given the trouble, it wasn't worth the money. So we decided to get rid of them. The night of dumping them, thieves stole every one of the kneelers out of the dumpster. Given we needed to rent another dumpster for the remaining refuse because the kneelers had taken up the original dumpster space, the church saved \$4 in the deal and extra work. God has a sense of humor. Add this story to our earlier tale of the thieves stealing the Air Conditioner that is now replaced with a new unit that is saving us considerable money each month on electricity (literally paying back any expenses for security) and you have to marvel at how God takes care of his people when they use his resources wisely.

Christian stewardship is the wise use of all we have towards God's mission. It is based on the belief that God gave us life and all with it. As Luther says in his explanation of the first article of the Apostles Creed, "I believe that God has created me and all that exists. He has given me and still preserves my body and soul with all their powers. He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil. All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him." Like explorers of the New World, we claim what we discover in the name of our king, Jesus. As Jesus repeatedly says with parables, we are stewards, managers of God's earthly kingdom. That kingdom continues to expand with our sharing of the Good News.

Chief among the ways we share that message of love is by our lifestyle of service, lavish giving, and use of time. We do this as if there is no tomorrow, yet knowing we have eternity already reserved for us with the owner, God the Father. You continue to astound me with your generosity and dedication to God's mission with how so many of you conduct yourselves. You share thousands of hours of volunteer work with the church besides that much and more in our community. This church is noted for possessing community leaders and community helpers. You donated over 1,015 pounds of food for Central City Lutheran Church to feed the homeless. You put together over 106 boxes of supplies for the Lutheran Maritime Ministry in Long Beach with over a \$1,000 offering. You broke our August Malaria Month Campaign goal for the third straight year to cap a highly successful push for the Pacifica Synod the ELCA saving scores of people from death. You consoled the grieving from several recent deaths. You helped a homeless family to no longer be homeless with shelter and other necessities. I can go on with several more paragraphs of such accomplishments in time, talent, and treasures. I thank God for you and am humbled to be your pastor.

The opportunity to excel with this love continues with our service project at Wildwood Park on Sept 8th and with our Stewardship Sunday, Sept 29. That day all who worship with us are asked to pledge a portion of their time, talent, and treasures to God for 2014. This is used for planning by the Church Council and is critically important for a wise use of what God gives us. The information you share is confidential. I don't see any of these pledges. Also, if your situation changes and you can't give as much as you pledged, that is ok. God understands. Remember, he is the one who blesses us. We give what we can. The same holds true if you come into greater blessings and you can increase giving, but this, too, is between you and God. Please participate in this effort so our congregational leaders will have an accurate idea of what we have to work with in the New Year. 2014 looks to be a great year for The Lutheran Church of Our Savior because the Lord's love continues to burn brightly in each of you as your stewardship shines.

Blessings to all.
Pastor Scottie

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