



THE PROCLAIMER

“Without a vision, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the Law.”

--Proverbs 29:18

As you have all heard by now, we sold part of our property on the last week of May. From all I have heard since I have arrived, that part of the property had become like an albatross around the neck of the congregation. I can only imagine the relief this congregation feels of getting this removed from around our necks. Finally—we feel some freedom! And yes, we have the money in the bank.

So, what comes next? Well—I’ve already heard some suggestions. Some are very good suggestions! I can tell that some of you have put a lot of thought into how we might be able to move this congregation forward using this money. However, this can quickly turn from a blessing into a land mine that nobody wants to be a part of. My first words are—**BE CAREFUL.**

The wisest man who ever lived, other than Jesus, was King Solomon. At the top of this article are some of his words that we need to heed right now. “Without a vision, the people cast off restraint,” Solomon says. Did you notice the word “a” in that sentence? **“A”** vision. Not double vision, not many visions. **“A”** vision. Singular.

Before we spend anything, my strong recommendation is we get “a” vision. We need “a” singular vision, which finds its’ sole purpose in pleasing God and following His will, and not our own will. What this means is we will need to go through an intentional process of understanding who we are, where we are located, and find the needs of the area around us.

It may well be that many, if not all of these ideas can be incorporated into a long-term vision for Grace Lutheran Church. One of the things a vision process will do is determine priorities and help us plan well for the future ministry of Grace to this congregation, this neighborhood, this city, and this state. Most importantly, we need to remember Jesus’ words in the Lord’s Prayer: **“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This is not about us.** This is about discerning and doing the will of God with our resources. It always has been. It always will be.

To that end, Deacon Mike and I have spoken about a vision process. The Pacific Northwest District has a great resource in the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Billy Brath has done visioning not only for other Lutheran congregations, but for large corporations as well. The experience he brings to the table is noteworthy. Although we are a small congregation, we want to grow! Finding the ways to do that which we all can buy into and put into practice here are important.

One thing I would encourage is that we seek God’s will for a plan that has short, intermediate, and long-range goals as a part of that vision. Another part of that plan is that it has no more than three main areas of focus. When a congregation enacts a vision that includes too many things, the tendency is to lose focus after a while because the feeling is not many things are happening. We do not have that luxury. We should have goals that are reasonable, achievable, and at the same time cause us to stretch and grow, both personally, and as a congregation. That’s what a good vision should cause us to do.

I’ve heard this congregation has undergone this process before. However, the circumstances have changed since then. Changing circumstances alone call for us as a congregation to take time to take another look at our vision. Our goal with this should be a vision statement that is different than our mission statement, can be boiled down to 15 words or less (less than 10 preferably). Both the vision statement and mission statement need to become foremost in our minds as we go forward as a congregation.

As time passes, many good opportunities will confront us. However, every opportunity needs to meet one question: **“Does this fit with our vision as a congregation, or not?”** If the answer is yes, then it should be pursued. If the answer is no, then it needs to be left for others who have a vision and passion for it to pursue it.

Once we adopt a vision and vision statement, you can expect a sermon series to reinforce this vision statement. “Without a vision, the people cast off restraint,” Solomon said. But don’t forget the second part! “But happy is he who keeps the Law.” When we find and walk in God’s will, we will be blessed—and become a blessing to many.—Pastor Anderson

Discovering Your God-Given Spiritual Gifts

What gifts has God given you? Here are some more questions for you. We will be asking all members to fill out a spiritual gifts assessment as part of our look into stewardship this fall. Here are some questions you should consider.

I appreciate chances to proclaim God's word to others. YES NO

It is important to speak God's word of warning and judgment in the world today. YES NO

It is a joy to share what Jesus means to me with an unchurched neighbor, friend, or colleague. YES
 NO

People like to bring their troubles and concerns to me because they feel I care. YES NO

One of my joys is training people to be more effective Christians. YES NO

I enjoy helping people learn how to be leaders in the church. YES NO

Sometimes it is necessary for me to share God's word even it challenges another leader. YES
 NO

I feel a deep concern for the unchurched people in my community YES NO

I enjoy close relationships with people in 1 to 1 situations. YES NO

Spiritual Gifts are:

- Special gifts...
- given by the Holy Spirit...
- to individual Christians for service to the body of Christ. (Every Christian has at least one and likely more than one!)

Spiritual Gifts are NOT:

- the same as natural talents or skills. Talents and skills are given to Christians and non-Christians alike. Talents and skills can also be used to God's glory.

Why is it important to know our Spiritual Gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:1

"Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."

What are we to do with Spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:7

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

2 Timothy 1:6-7

Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you... {7} For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

COVID-19: What Has Changed

If you've been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.
 - However, if you live in a group setting (like a correctional or detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.

What Hasn't Changed

For now, if you've been fully vaccinated:

- You should still take steps to [protect yourself and others](#) in many situations, like wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. Take these precautions whenever you are:
 - In public
 - Gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one other household
 - Visiting with an unvaccinated person who is at [increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19](#) or who lives with a person at increased risk
- You should **still avoid medium or large-sized gatherings.**
- You should still delay domestic and international travel. If you do travel, you'll still need to follow [CDC requirements and recommendations](#).
- You should still watch out for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), especially if you've been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested and stay home and away from others.
- You will still need to follow guidance at your workplace.

All of this is good news. There have been other restrictions lifted as well. To give you an idea of what's happening. Look at these numbers:

January 8, 2021: **314,172 COVID infections** March 7, 2021: **41,675 COVID INFECTIONS. Almost a 7/8 drop in numbers.**

At one point in Washington State, there were 67 COVID infections per 100,000 people. Today, that number is 18.59 per 100,000 people. **This is down over 2/3rd of what it was.**

What Is About to Change

Washington State is set to fully reopen on June 30, 2021. Pray that we do; pray that we can have an even more effective outreach to our community once it does.

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God's blessings to you both on your birthday!

MAY
Pat Foye.....22

JUNE
Robert Gillepse6
Elaine Pearson 8
Marilee Ryan.....15
Sue Tenoll..... 21
Walt Ziebell..... 23
Kendra Cleveland..... 30

A NOTE FROM CAROL DAVIS:

I'm finally settling in but still have a lot of little things to do –hang up pictures, and find places to put things, etc.

I miss you all but am finding new friends and things to do to keep me busy.

I can't find my envelopes, but this is for April.

Carol

June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 ELDERS 6:30 PM	4	5
6 10:00 Worship Service With Holy Communion	7	8	9 Women's Bible Study SUMMER VACATION	10	11	12
13 10:00 Worship Service NEW LIFE SUNDAY	14	15	16 Women's Bible Study SUMMER VACATION	17	18	19
20 10:00 Worship Service With Holy Communion	21	22	23 Women's Bible Study SUMMER VACATION	24	25	26
27 10:00 Worship Service	28	29	30 Women's Bible Study SUMMER VACATION	1	2	3





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