

St. John's Lutheran Church

August

Not Everyone is Coming Back

By now you probably have noticed what your new attendance patterns are likely to be going forward. That means that if you are hoping for the rest of your pre-COVID regular attenders to start coming regularly again, you are going to be disappointed more often than not. Most worship attendance is lower than pre-COVID although the numbers vary from about half to closer to 80 percent.

Some of this is long term – the pandemic took a lot of semi-active people and gave them space to be inactive and no one could really see that they were gone. Some of these people would likely still be attending some if the pandemic hadn't happened. But this is also a clue about how engaged people were before all of this happened. Most of the people who came back already were more engaged before this all started. Most of the ones we are missing – weren't too connected in most cases already.

So what are we to do with this new reality?

First, engage the unengaged. It has rarely worked to try to get a lot of inactive people to reactivate their involvement in a faith community. As tempting as it has been to try – the history of this being a helpful strategy is pretty weak. But this is a different time and most people who became inactive during the pandemic did so by attrition in a disconnected time. They disconnected in an era of disconnection. That means visits and phone calls and handwritten notes will likely be well received.

Second, most of the trajectory of the church was already in decline. The membership and attendance losses we feel now were likely going to happen over the next 5 plus years anyway. The pandemic didn't cause all of them. In most cases it accelerated the trends already in place. So the most important way to changed participation in the church is the same as it has always been – *reach new people with the Gospel*. While church decline and growth is never reason enough to reach new people, *the call to share the love of Christ and invite people into it has always been at the heart of the church's work – most of us have done limited work in this area for far too long*.

So take this chance as you rebuild your ministry to put evangelism where it belonged all along – near the center of your work. *Sharing the story of Jesus, how God has been at work in your life and then inviting others into a life of faith is fulfilling*. The pandemic may remind us that it has always been central and give us a chance to put it back where it belongs. You and the new people you meet will be glad you did!

Dave Daubert is a Lutheran pastor in Illinois and an author of numerous thought-provoking books such as "The Invitational Christian". This article is from his blog (www.day8strategies.com). The emphasis is mine.

Being new pastors to congregations and communities presents all sorts of opportunities to share the story of God's work in our lives, for you to share the stories of God's work in your lives AND then inviting others to join us.

The world continues to change and that's normal. Let's not get discouraged. We will do this work together one step at a time with God leading the way.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The light no darkness can overcome!

Pastor Jennifer Thul



Usher : William Lindquist

Reader : Nancy Stredde

Happy Birthday

Mildred Jacobson—9th

Paula Stredde— 10th

Sheila Stredde— 10th

Cate Krieger— 16th

Katie Krieger— 25th

Paal Haug— 28th

Happy Anniversary



Caryl and Butch Haug- 19th

Paal & Holly Haug- 29th

Pennock Fun Days

August 5th– 7th

Friday is our Hog Roast

Please let Paula know if you can be their to work.

Please be there by 4:30,

Thank you to everyone for those donations to help cover almost all of pre-cost for the event!



Autumn Bazaar

October 1st

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

If you are going to be able to be at the bazaar to work please let Nancy know.

Need everyone to:

- ◆ make items for bake sale
- ◆ One pan of bars for our bar bar
- ◆ Make items for craft sale
- ◆ Promote event!

Fliers will be available next month.



August 20th

6:30 pm

Bring your favorite appetizer to share!
Beverages provided.
Teams formed that night.

August Worship Schedule:

7th– Joint ACT Worship at Pennock Fun Days 8:30 am under the tent.

14th– 8:15, Worship led by Nancy Carlson

21st- 8:15, Worship led by Pastor J. Thul

28th– 8:15, Worship led by Pastor D. Thul

