

Greetings St. Paul Lutheran Church!

This Sunday we will be installing our council during worship. It is a short liturgy that reminds us it is Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit who leads. Our elected leaders are given special responsibility in the congregation. They are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church. They are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world. They are to be faithful in their specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers them may be glorified. They are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation. Our elected leaders then promise with God's help to accept and faithfully care out their duties. We also know though that it's not just the council but that the whole congregation is needed. So then those in worship (both in-person and online) with God's help promises to support the leaders and participate in the life and mission of the congregation. I hope you are able to join us either in-person or virtually to welcome our new council.



The next Sunday, January 30, we will be blessing the Prayer Shawls that have been made recently. Our Handcrafter's Guild has started up again. They make prayer shawls for the congregation. These shawls are given out to various people for different purposes such as baptisms, weddings, sickness, new members, etc. If you are interested in joining the Handcrafter's Guild, please let Debi Rado know. You can even just reply to this email and she will get it.

I saw this reflection on Facebook and thought I would share it. It reminded me of our Education Building that is being held up by some beams and a lot of work by our property team to keep it standing.

"A pastor of a small church would occasionally call on one gentleman to pray, and every time this one particular guy would pray, he would end with the strangest statement, "And, oh Lord, prop us up on our leaning side."

Finally, the pastor pulled him aside, and he said, "I love the way you pray, but I don't understand your little closing phrase. What are you talking about – prop us up on our leaning side?" He responded, "Well, Pastor, I'm a farmer. I live out on the farm and, you know, I live in the country. I've got an old barn, and it's been there a long time. It's been through a lot of weather, and a lot of storms, and a lot of bugs have eaten at it." He said, "I got to looking at it one day when I was riding on my tractor, and I noticed that it was leaning to one side. So, I thought to myself, oh my goodness! The barn is leaning, and it's a matter of time before the whole thing falls.



He continued, "So, you know what I did? I went and got some pine beams, and I propped it up on its leaning side." He said, "It still leans, and probably always will. But I propped it up on its leaning side. And it's not going to fall down because I propped it up on its leaning side. And I got to thinking about it. When I was on the tractor, Pastor, and I was riding in the field, I thought about the kind of year I've had, and some of the storms I've been through, and some of the people that are bugging me, and eating away at my joy and eating away at my spirit. And I just got to thinking, you know, I'm still here! I'm still standing after all that stuff I've been through. The storms, and the howling winds – they couldn't topple me. I'm still standing by the grace of God."

He concluded, "From time to time, I find myself leaning. Leaning toward my old desires, leaning toward anger, leaning toward becoming bitter or hateful at the people who are bugging me, or leaning toward going back to the old habits and the old life I used to have. And when I feel myself start to lean toward that tendency, I just remember that old barn, and I pray out loud - "Lord, thank you for propping me up on the leaning side." - Jentezen Franklin

Take care and God bless,
-PrAshley

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