

Greetings St. Paul Lutheran Church!

Most of you know I was gone a couple weekends ago at the Vision2Action Grant Conference. St. Paul received a \$10,000 grant from the Florida-Bahamas Synod to start a ministry called "Building Bridges – Latino Ministry." Basically it is way to building relationships between English and Spanish speakers by offering classes for both languages that includes a time to eat and worship together as well. Hopefully you've heard me share about this a little bit when were in the application process for the grant. Now that we received it, it's time to get started on it.



You can read more about it in the bulletin on Sunday and hear about it more in the weeks ahead.

This conference wasn't just for those who received the Building Bridges – Latino Ministry grant but all V2A grant award winners. Here is a picture of us all.

At the conference we also heard from the Executive Director of Fresh Expressions. <https://www.freshexpressions.com/> "Fresh Expressions partners with churches and faithful risk-takers to unleash new forms of

Christian community in the wild and wonderful spaces of everyday life. Rooted in tradition. Animated by love. Fueled with imagination. We have a heart for the inherited church. Yet, an increasingly diverse world calls for a diversity of expressions of Christ's Church. We help churches and pioneering leaders connect more deeply with the community around them, allowing the places we are in and the people around us to participate in shaping a form of Christian community that can best reflect God's kingdom right there. Where God's Spirit is kindling these fresh expressions of church, new people are coming to faith and bored Christians are coming to life."

It was an engaging time. The Executive Director shared a definition of Evangelism that stuck out to me. Evangelism is changing people's assumptions about God and God's people. Evangelism isn't just about sharing the gospel but more so about sharing ourselves, our lives, our very selves.

I think back to last Sunday's worship service. Yes, it was an hour and half (it won't be that long again on Sunday, I promise), but we told stories. Esther knocked down Goliath (if you didn't see it, check out the Facebook page, it's a separate post so you don't have to look through the whole service for it). The confirmation students shared their favorite scriptures with me and I reflected upon them. We sang favorite songs. This worship service was our authentic self as a congregation. It's not perfect, it's not flashy, but it is real. It's sharing ourselves, our lives, our very selves. That's all evangelism is.

Here again are upcoming ministries.

New Photo Directory Time! Pictures will be taken February 5 from 11a-5:30p and February 23 1p-7:30p. **Sign-up now.** If you want to submit a photo instead you can do so for \$15. We will also be taking pictures of our ministries and other action shots, so keep a smile on, you never know when your picture will be taken. If you want to submit ministry photos put them here <https://bit.ly/StPaulPhotos> or give them to me.

If you aren't getting your picture taken on February 5 from 11a-1p, you could attend a Hope Seeds packing event at First Presbyterian Church. It's similar to what we do on the 3rd Monday of each month just at First Presbyterian, Fellowship Hall, 2050 Oak St, Sarasota, FL 34237.

Conversations Across the Aisle. Thursday, February 12, 5p St. Armand's Key Lutheran Church. Come for dinner, learn and practice civil discourse with those we may differ. The topic is the evolving relationship between church and state. Register here <https://forms.gle/rWXg85BoGRyYxdpo6> or we have hard copy forms to fill out at the church. The flyer is attached with more information.

Shrove Saturday fellowship event is on Saturday, February 14.

Then it's Shiny Jesus Sunday with Transfiguration on February 15 when we wear our bling. And then it's Lent. I said before, if we blink it will be Lent.

God bless -PrAshley