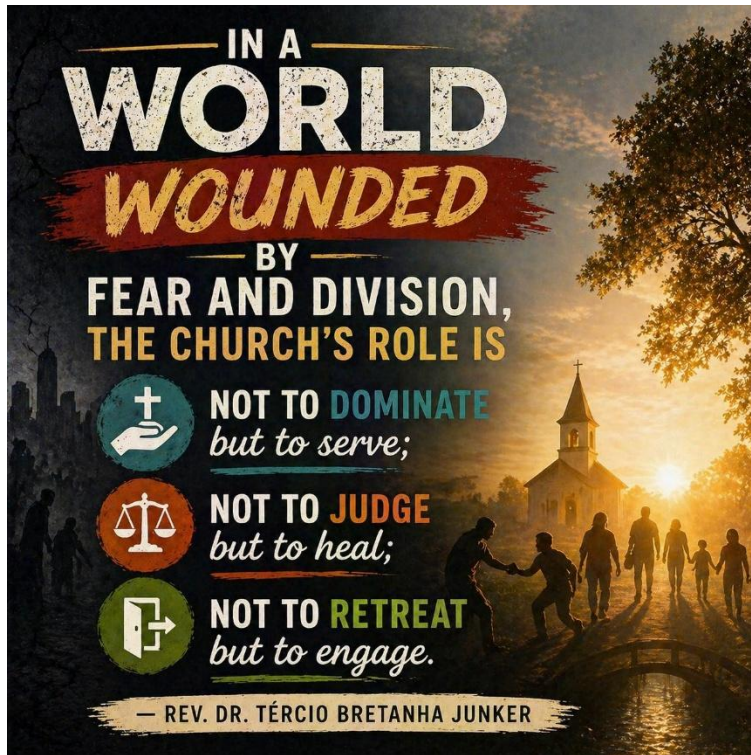


Greetings St. Paul Lutheran Church!



I saw this meme on Facebook posted by a seminary classmate of mine.

My classmate wrote above the meme that "Jesus declares in John 3:17, that God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it! As followers of Christ, we are called to continue the work our Savior started and we are invited to help God heal the world through love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, etc."

I didn't know who the one being quoted in the picture was so I did a little searching. I found out he is a United Methodist pastor serving in Illinois but originally from Brazil. He had a wonderful article written at the end of 2025 about Christian ethics and this quote came from the article.

In the article Rev Dr. Junker writes about imagery for churches. That's where this quote in the picture came from. But he also asked is the church a Mighty Fortress for the pure or a home from the broken? I couldn't help but think of our sanctuary when I read this. We wanted our sanctuary to be built like a mighty fortress to our God. And the artist-architect Victor Lundy did just that. Even though our sanctuary and entire campus is a beautiful tribute to our God, we always have to remember that its purpose is not just for us but to help God heal the world through love, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion.

I like hearing what people think Church is about. I believe our image of church reflects how we live it out and our expectations of it. Is it a mighty fortress, a hospital, a place of refuge, a place of empowerment? Well, there probably is no *one* image of the church that we hold onto. As in this world, it's never an either/or. It's always a both/and. We want our church to be a place of refuge and healing but also a place to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be led out into the world.

But I encourage you to reflect on your favorite images of the church and why they are your favorite.

Here are some other common images/characteristics of the church. You can come up with your own too.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| Body of Christ | Service | Reconciliation | Accepting |
| Family | Love | Encouraging | Sacred |
| Community of Faith | Care | Joyful | Truth |
| Ark/Boat | Prayer | Sharing | Reverence |
| Fellowship of Believers | Life-giving | Spirit-Led | Holy |

Take care and God bless

-PrAshley