

“WHOSE CHURCH IS IT, ANYWAY?”

“So in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5

The answer to the above question is obvious: The Church belongs to Christ. He is the head of the body, and we are all members of His body and, by extension, members of one another. There is only one Church – the “one holy, Christian and apostolic Church” that we confess in the Creed. But this one Church that belongs to Jesus is made up of many visible extensions, which we call congregations.

As Christ has saved us and made us His own “by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5),” His will is for us Christians to gather with each other around His “Means of Grace” – the Word and Sacraments. We do this in the congregation. We join it, participate in it and support it. That’s what Christians do – or, at least, should do.

As such, then, the church (i.e. congregation) also belongs to you. You are brought to faith through her; you are fed and nourished in the faith by her; and equipped to live out your daily vocations as God’s Christians because of her. You have a duty, under the Gospel, to serve her as God enables you.

That means that each of us has a stake in the congregation’s work and witness. We all have a responsibility to support the church through our involvement, our prayers, our offerings and our service.

Yet, too many of our folks take the congregation for granted, believing it will always be here for them when they need it. They expect it to provide the services and programs they want when they want it, but do not want to be obligated themselves to ensure that these services and programs are continued. Frankly, you should be ashamed if that is your attitude.

How are the congregation’s bills paid, except through the offerings of her members? How are the services and programs provided to young and old alike, except through the involvement and work of her members? How can she continue if few of her members care enough to support and serve in the congregation?

So, I am issuing this challenge: Examine your own life; your time and resources, and see if there are ways you can be more involved in the work and support of the congregation. Especially to you “Twenty to Forty Somethings,” I am asking you to get involved to the best of your ability. Serve on boards and committees. Attend worship regularly. Give as you are able. Take on some of the work that our older members are no longer able to bear on your behalf.

And do this, not because you’re in trouble if you don’t, but because it’s the right thing to do. Do it out of thankfulness for the life and salvation you have in Christ, who gave His all for you. Do this for the yet unborn generations (your kids and grandkids, perhaps) who will years from now be part of this heritage and legacy you now enjoy.

Do it, because by grace you belong to Christ, and this congregation belongs to you.

God bless you. Pastor Lueke