



FROM THE PASTOR

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, and consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete; be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2: 1-5

For a long time, the main way that people were able to care for their neighbor was through the local church - from the days of Paul writing to the Philippians to very powerful Roman Catholic Europe to the colonized Americas. Local churches did all the social work, much of the health care, and, the education. All the town's activities revolved around the church. It was the most happening place in town.

Since the 1950s, the church's role in society has undergone a significant shift in the USA. Much of the changes have been good. School, sports, and social clubs allow us to interact with people that don't practice faith in the same way as us. People aren't excluded from society just because their beliefs are different. People are educated and cared for by society regardless of religion.

So, what is the point of church in the post-modern era? Does it have a purpose? Of course! As it turns out, it has the exact same purpose it has always had – spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ with no strings attached. We always have been and always will be tasked to preach the gospel and preside over the sacraments. We are the body of Christ in the world working to bring about God's realm on earth.

The church provides space for people to Love the Lord Our God through worship and giving back to the One, Who has given us everything. It is also the place that we can love our neighbors as ourselves. St. Timothy, in particular, has many ways that people can give of their time and money to care for people throughout Wayne, New Jersey, the USA, and the world. The time and the money that people give makes a real difference in the lives of many.

Sometimes pastors get confused about what really matters. We start to think that filling pews and raising money are the most important things. When, in fact, our most important job is preaching and presiding (loving the Lord) and next after that is providing spiritual care to the congregation (loving our neighbors). We have to do this to the best of our ability and then put our trust in the congregation to go out and tell others – in schools, workplaces, and anywhere else we encounter neighbors.

We are no longer the main source of social work, health care, and education, but that was never God's purpose for us anyway. Those things were done by churches as a way of living the gospel. They were never more important than preaching that gospel. The church is still a significant way to care for our neighbor, because it is still the only place that communicates the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul wrote to the church of Philippi telling them that if they truly believe in Christ, they needed to act like it and support the work of spreading the gospel. His message is just as relevant today. For St. Timothy ELCA to align with God's purpose of spreading the gospel, the church needs your time and money. It takes a whole church to serve God. What can you contribute?



It's pledge time!!!! In an effort to make this as easy for you all as possible, we are providing the form here, in the weekly bulletin, and on the website. You can deposit the completed form **any Sunday in October** in the box in the Narthex. Every member of St. Timothy has been equipped by God to contribute to the ministry of the church. No contribution is too little to make a difference. We invite you to pray the following prayer from discipleship.dio.org to help you discern what God is calling you to do.

Loving God, I come to you in thanksgiving, knowing that all I am and all that I have is a gift from you. In faith and love, help me to do your will. I am listening, Lord God. Speak your words into the depth of my soul, that I may hear you clearly. I offer to you this day all the facets of my life, whether it be at home, at work, or at school—to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy. Give me the wisdom and insight to understand your will for me and the fervor to fulfill my good intentions. I offer my gifts of time, talent and possessions to you as a true act of faith, to reflect my love for you and my neighbor. Help me to reach out to others as you my God have reached out to me. Amen