

Mission Moment: Jack Brandl (11/23/2014)

Who I Am

- I have attended Christ Lutheran my entire life.
- I was baptized and confirmed within these walls.
- I have spent almost 2 decades worshipping here.

What Christ Lutheran Means to Me

- Christ Lutheran is special in many ways.
- Our church has always battled incredible adversity – and prevailed.
- Through several years, pastors, members, and struggles, I have witnessed a cycle of toil and rebirth.
- During my life, I have had the privilege of visiting some of the greatest mosques & cathedrals in the world.
 - Although their structures are amazing, I am still more inspired by Christ Lutheran.
 - My time here has taught me it isn't about the stain glass, marble columns, or bank account that makes a church great – but the congregation.
 - In the First Book of Peter, he described the people in the congregation as “the living stones that are built up as a spiritual house.” (1 Peter 2:5)
 - When we think of the church, we commonly think of a steepled building.
 - But, in fact, a church refers to the people within.
 - That is something we do well here – we recognize the importance of the people.

What Is Stewardship

- However, when it came time to discuss stewardship, even when I was 12 I knew it was going to be painful.
 - For an unbearable length of time we would preach about the wrong “PROFIT,” the one spelled “P-R-O-F-I-T.”
 - We focused on the building, the traditions, and the trimmings.
 - In reality, it is the congregation we should be caring for.
- Stewardship of the church is about looking at the church as a whole and then modifying the church to benefit the people, not the other way around.
- Fortunately, we have changed this tradition, which is a testament to our adaptability as a congregation.

Our Future

- As we look to the future, we must continue to alter and improve even the most venerable traditions to achieve our mission as a church – to spread the love of Jesus Christ.
- In a society that demands a new model of iPhone every two years, some of our 2,000 year old traditions are simply not sufficient or appealing to possible new congregates.

- This is not blasphemous. Remember these traditions were made not by Jesus, but by motivated men over the past couple of millennium.
- It is our duty as good stewards to improve our church and not remain stagnant.
- Churches fail when they focus on the building over the people.
- My vision for the church is one that meets the needs of an everyday person with...
 - Efficient services,
 - Meaningful liturgy,
 - And an emphasis on spreading the love revealed to us in Jesus Christ from one person to another.

Conclusion

- Christ Lutheran has taught me the the true definition of the church and I wanted to use my mission moment to remind all of us that our first mission is not to collect offering and track attendance numbers, but to spread the Good News.
- We may not have towering steeples, centuries-old stain glass, or ubiquitous bumper stickers, but we have something that is rare in today's world of organized religion – an ability to adapt.
- Unfortunately, Christianity has developed an image of being “authoritarian, homophobic, misogynistic, fear mongering, arrogant, and out-of-touch.”
 - However, I know all of you; that is not at all who we are.
 - I appreciate all of you for the prayers and guidance you offered me over the years to shape me into the person I am today.
- You have taught me the value of true relationships – with each other and with our Savior.
- Through even the most tumultuous times, these are the relationships that sustain our church and my own faith.
- As was written in the First Book of Peter,
 - We, *the congregation*, are the living stones that make-up this spiritual house,
 - And because of this, I believe our church is more magnificent than any cathedral.

Amen.