

Monday, August 31, 2020

Doers of the word

- Pastor Hank French

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.... Those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing (James 1:22, 25)

I wrote a thank you letter a week ago to 20 people of faith—adults and youth who are members and friends of First Lutheran Church. It has long been my habit to write such letters when I witness people of faith “being the church” by selflessly “doing” the work of the church.

In my letter, I noted that the coronavirus pandemic has turned things upside down in so many ways, including the way we do church. A couple of weeks ago the church should have been filled with well over 100 kids, laughing, running around, singing, having a great time and learning about Jesus. There should have been lots of youth and adults making sure the younger ones had a fun and faith-filled week. It happens every year in August, but not this year.

This year, with the church closed to in-person activities due to the pandemic, a different way had to be found—and thanks to these people of faith, their love for and commitment to young children, and their creativity and innovative thinking, a different way to do VBS was found. **Rocky Railway - Where Jesus Power Pulls Us Through!** brought the fun of VBS both digitally and in the form of activity packets to a lot of kids and I can’t thank them enough for all the time and effort they devoted to making it happen.

They—and so many more—are the church in action in a difficult time. Those who distribute the bread and wine of Holy Communion in the parking lot each month; those who give hours recording music and worship for on-line and access TV services; those who keep an eye on their neighbors—especially the elderly—breaking the loneliness with a note or a phone call, and running errands; the Call Committee, working through this summer of the virus, meeting via zoom to find new pastoral leadership for First Lutheran; the Church Council and the Reopening Team, also meeting via Zoom, to tend to the church’s ministries and safely reopen the church when conditions permit. We are finding creative and innovative new ways to “do church” and it will all make us a stronger community of faith when the pandemic is behind us.

As much as we all love our church building, we know that our building is not the church. The church is people of faith who “do the gospel of Jesus” through selfless acts of service, of love and compassion and mercy, and through sharing with others the reason we do what we do—our faith in Jesus. Thanks to all of you good and faithful followers of Jesus.

Prayer: Thank you God for all the faithful folks who are the body of Christ, the continuing presence of Jesus in the world, the church. Amen.