

What is God's Vision for a Congregation?

"They (the early church) were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer." Acts 2:42

Presently we are in the beginning stages of looking to call a second pastor. This is also a good time for us to ask, what should a congregation look like? Today there are hundreds of books and articles on the market that focus on "successful churches." How does God measure "success?" What are the characteristics of a "church" according to the Bible? In the book of Acts the Apostle Luke records the characteristics of the early church which was thriving in God's eyes. Here is what Luke includes in his description from the keynote verse of Acts 2:42:

1. The early church was "continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching." This was of utmost priority for them! They had a "high view" of Scripture as the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God. They loved and longed for God's Word and did not miss an opportunity to hear it preached and taught. Later verses identify that they gathered together for worship in large groups and also gathered during the week in small groups for more relational study together. Luther would later write that "The holy Christian people are recognized by their possession of the holy Word of God" . . . as "God's people cannot be without God's Word."
2. The church was also devoted to fellowship. They loved being together and looked for opportunities to "do life together." They got to know each other, served each other, and shared with each other. Verses immediately following speak of how they shared with all those who were in need. The Apostle Paul would later encourage Christians to work diligently so that they might have enough not only for themselves but also to share with others in times of need.
3. The church was also devoted to "the breaking of [the] bread." The early church used this phrase to refer to the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Just verses earlier the Sacrament of Holy Baptism had been instituted at the formation of the church. The church took it seriously to be connected into Christ, to be nourished by Christ, and to live in Christ. Following verses spoke of simply eating meals together, which was part of their fellowship times.
4. Prayer was another top characteristic! Today, prayer is often at the bottom of our list, but the early church knew that the hand of God moved powerfully through the prayers of the people of God. They prayed together in corporate prayers, in small group prayers, and privately before the Lord. Prayer is a conversation with God, which also means it includes time to listen!
5. In reading verses 43-47 one quickly notices that several things happen when a congregation focuses on these four characteristics listed above. They experience the power of God as miraculous things take place. They willingly share, even at great sacrifice, with each other. They have "glad and sincere hearts." Their attitude is one of praise to God and love for others. People are being saved as "The Lord was adding to their number."

When God's people give themselves to Him and to one another, then God's Church advances in this world. Let's be this kind of congregation!

Ruthfred Lutheran Church

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September 2019 Issue

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The submission deadline for the next Herald is **Saturday, October 19, 2019.**

The publication date is **Wednesday, October 30, 2019.**

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Fall Festival

Families are invited to the Cox farm on October 12, 2019 from 1 to 7 PM for the Fall Festival. There will be food, games, a hayride, a pumpkin carving competition, a scavenger hunt, an apple pie baking competition, and more. Sign up on the sheet by the fellowship hall by October 6 if you plan to attend.

Feel free to bring a dessert if you like; all other food will be provided.

If you would like to participate in the apple pie baking competition, please bring your home-baked apple pie with you to the festival.

Address is 1007 Route 481, Monongahela, PA 15063.

Questions? Call or text Brandon at (715) 781-6063.

Member Profile

By Mettelise Ziegler

Ron Stout



Ron Stout lived most of his life far from Pittsburgh. He is now enjoying his retirement here, married to Ruthfred's own Christine (Chris) Haunschild.

A native of Iowa, Ron attended St. Ambrose University. He planned to teach history while coaching basketball or baseball. However, marriage and family at a young age prompted him to change his career path. He and his former wife raised two sons and a daughter together.

Ron worked for various retail businesses throughout the Midwest, overseeing large territories which kept him away from home much of the time. Midwesterners might remember Ardan Jewelers, a catalog showroom, or Venture, a discount chain. He also worked for Volume Shoes in Kansas City, Missouri, the parent of Payless, which is now out of business. Dick's Sporting Goods, still going strong, had Ron's loyalty for over ten years as a regional manager for areas including Kansas City. Ron enjoyed the corporate culture at Dick's until he retired.

Retirement allowed Ron time to devote to his family. His wife passed away, but he had eight grandchildren living in the Kansas City and Des Moines areas. Many of the grandchildren played on travel sports teams, a huge time commitment. When not involved with them, Ron enjoyed playing golf.

Golf brought Ron and Chris together. In October of 2015, Ron, his brother, and their sons enjoyed a golf trip to Scottsdale, Arizona. They paired with Chris and a man Ron assumed was Chris's friend or husband. Ron noticed a Kansas Jayhawks cup in Chris's golf cart and inquired whether she was a Kansas City Royals fan. No, she explained, but her deceased husband had been! Getting her name from the pro shop, Ron was able to find Chris's telephone number online and called her. They conversed regularly before arranging to meet. They married in June of 2018.

Ron was raised Roman Catholic but worshipped as a Presbyterian for many decades. A thoughtful man, he has had many conversations with Pastor Carlson about the Lutheran faith. He has embraced Ruthfred and loves the form of worship as it is so close to his Roman Catholic roots. Last summer, he helped at Vacation Bible School. You will find him attending adult Bible study every Sunday.

Ron and Chris enjoy both their families. In fact, this fall they are touring South Dakota with their mothers. Chris's mom is church-member Evelyn Meyer (who doesn't appreciate losing to Ron when playing dominoes). Accompanying them are Ron's brother and his wife, as well as his sister. There will be seven of them traveling in a van together.

To Ron's amazement, life has fallen into place seamlessly. His only complaint is a minor one. It is not easy adapting to our crooked roads and hilly landscape. Thankfully, it is not hard to love his life with Chris in Pittsburgh.

Official Acts

August 19, 2019 – September 15, 2019

Funerals

Shirley Ann Dengler – August 17, 2019

Weddings

*Alanna Marie Rudolph and Sean Michael
Fyalkowski – August 31, 2019

*Indicates Members

Council Highlights

August 12, 2019

- Pastor Carlson reported that Lauren Compel has decided to step down from directing VBS after serving faithfully for 7 years.
- Treasurer Chuck Morrison distributed his report as well as three pages of charts regarding Fund Classification and Management. Of particular note, the AFLBS Scholarship Fund has been classified as donor restricted. Future member contributions to the Scholarship Fund will be pooled and divided among qualified applicants.
- Matt Moore, Rebecca Libell, and Coltin Cox have been awarded scholarships to AFLBS, now FLBC (Free Lutheran Bible College), for the fall semester.
- Council approved removal of the restriction on the Harris Benevolence Fund to allow principal, rather than only interest earnings, to be used for special benevolences, which Council must approve.
- To date, no one has volunteered to drive the church bus or to coordinate the bus schedule. Since only two drivers are available, transportation will be discontinued at the end of September.

September 9, 2019

- A new parenting Sunday School class, “Value-Packed Parenting: Raising Rock-Solid Kids in a Pleasure-Driven World” is scheduled for October 6th through November 17th. Mark & Jodie Riley and Kevin & Sue Boehme will facilitate. Interested individuals should register.
- Pastor Carlson initiated a discussion regarding a proposed once-a-month Sunday School brunch, which would include a lesson as well as food.
- Offerings continue to fall short of covering expenses. As a result, special benevolences are still suspended.

Song of the Month

By Tom Glasser

Take My Life and Let It Be

Lyrics: Frances Ridley Havergal

Music: William Henry Havergal

Have you ever stopped to ponder how life and the world around us are full of mysteries, conundrums, and paradoxes? Here are just a few that come to mind:

- * Light can act as both a wave or a particle, depending on how one constructs the experiment.
- * Am I my body, or do I have a body?
- * An object appears red because it actually absorbs every wavelength of light except red.
- * The more we learn, the more we realize how little we know.
- * “My power is made perfect in weakness.” – God

After selecting “Take My Life and Let It Be” as the topic for this month’s article, it occurred to me that it too illustrates a great paradox. Consider, side by side below, an excerpt from Luther’s explanation of the first article of the Apostle’s Creed and excerpts from Ms. Havergal’s hymn lyrics:

I believe that God has made me and all creatures;
That He has given me my body and soul, eyes,
ears, and all my members, my reason and all my
senses, and still preserves them; also clothing and
shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and
children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He
richly and daily provides me with all that I need
to support this body and life.

Take my life . . .
Take my hands . . . Take my feet . . .
Take my voice . . . Take my lips . . .
Take my silver and my gold . . .
Take my intellect . . .
Take my will . . . Take my heart . . .
Take my love . . .

Everything we are and have was given to us by God, and yet the prayer of this hymn is that God would take it all back! Therein lies the paradox. Only to the extent that we learn to offer back to God in worship and service all that He has given us do we find true fulfillment and blessing. The more we give away of ourselves, the more we are filled up. The more we selfishly cling and hoard, the emptier we become.

In past articles I believe we have had a couple of husband and wife collaborations, but with “Take My Life” we have a father and daughter team effort. Frances’s father William, who was an Anglican clergyman, writer, composer, and hymnwriter, provided the tune we have in our hymnal. In closing, I want to confess that as a sinner I’m not so good at this “giving back to God” thing. That’s why I like the way Ms. Havergal’s prayer emphasizes God’s role in “taking.” We pray with her that God would help us do what we cannot do ourselves!

Grieving?

Know someone who is?



When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Our ***Surviving the Holidays*** seminar helps participants prepare for the holidays and even discover hope for the future.

SURVIVING THE **HOLIDAYS**



www.griefshare.org/holidays

Monday, October 21, 2019, 7p.m.
at Ruthfred Lutheran Church
Register by e-mail: rjskurtz@yahoo.com
or by phone: 412-835-7140 Ext 226 by Oct. 14

Announcements

Women's Planning Meeting — October 8, 2019 from 7 to 8 PM in the church conference room. LADIES — this is a terrific opportunity to be involved in exciting events being planned. We are all busy; however, now is the best time to share ideas and talents to benefit our church. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Submitted by Bev Rowan

New Arrivals in the Library can be found on the island in the center of the room that we call the family life center. We have several new arrivals that might interest you. Max Lucado has a three-book trilogy: *Traveling Light*, *A Love Worth Giving*, and *It's Not About Me*. Be sure to check these books out. Also we have a six-book set of classic C.S. Lewis. This is also worth a look. We have several new devotionals available. This is only a small part of what our wonderful little Library has to offer. Stop in and browse when you are here at the church. We gladly accept newer Christian books in good condition. See Pat Lutz or drop them off in front of her office or in the Library.

XYZ will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Friday October 25, 2019. Our own Tom Leech will be giving a presentation — “Gospel Music and the Irish Whistle.” He will bring us a small concert on the Irish Whistle featuring Gospel Songs from the 17th to 19th century. Please come and enjoy a wonderful lunch provided by our own Peggy Cox of Cox's Market Catering. Sign-up sheets will be available on the bulletin board outside of Pat's office. Please be sure to come and enjoy a day of fellowship and entertainment.

Submitted by Pat Lutz

Coming to Ruthfred Sunday School, beginning October 6, 2019

A video-based class featuring Dr. Kevin Leman, who is an internationally-recognized Christian psychologist, author, and speaker, known for his common-sense psychology and wit.

ALL parents are invited to attend this 7-week series. (Targeted for children aged 3-12). In order to ensure adequate supplies of participant booklets, please register either on the church website at www.ruthfred.org, or at church on the sign-up sheet outside the nursery. Come to learn valuable tips for your parenting journey, as well as to get acquainted with fellow Ruthfred parents.

Dr. Kevin Leman

value-packed
parenting

Raising Rock-Solid Kids in a Pleasure-Driven World





2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Worship Team 7:00pm	2 JTTW 9:15 am Children's Choir 5:45 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm JTTW/Kids Time 6:45 pm Confirmation classes 6:45 pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	3 Career & College Group 7:00 pm	4 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 am. @ Panera's <i>Happy Birthday</i>	5 HAPPY 91 st BIRTHDAY PAT LINDAUER <i>Happy Birthday</i>
6 WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY Holy Communion 8:30 am Sunday School 9:45 am Holy Communion 11:00 am Holy Communion 6:00 pm	7 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 am Craft & Sew 9:30 am Elders' Meeting Time 7:00 pm	8 Worship Team 7:00 pm Women's Leadership Team Meeting 7:00	9 JTTW 9:15 am Children's Choir 5:45 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm JTTW/Kids Time 6:45 pm Confirmation class (Jr & Sr) 6:45 pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	10 Knit Wits 10:00 Ruth 2:00 Career & College Group 7:00	11 HAPPY 91 st BIRTHDAY TIMMIE LANGKAMP Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's <i>Happy Birthday</i>	12 Mary Circle Bible Study 9:30 Family Fall Festival Cox Farm 1:00p.m. 7:00 p.m.
13 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00	14 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 am Elders' Prayer Time 7:00 pm Council Meeting 7:30 pm	15 Worship Team 7:00 Men's Night 7:00	16 JTTW 9:15 am Children's Choir 5:45 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm JTTW/Kids Time 6:45 pm Confirmation class (Jr & Sr) 6:45 pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	17 Career & College Group 7:00 <i>Happy Birthday</i>	18 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's	19 HERALD ARTICLE DEADLINE
20 Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 Evening of Prayer & Praise 6:00	21 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 am Craft & Sew 9:30 am GriefShare-Surviving the Holidays 7:00 pm	22 Worship Team 7:00	23 JTTW 9:15 am Children's Choir 5:45 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm JTTW/Kids Time 6:45 pm Confirmation class (Jr & Sr) 6:45 pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	24 HAPPY 96 th BIRTHDAY LOUISE HUGHES Knit Wits 10:00 am Career & College Group 7:00 Benevolence Meeting 7:15	25 Men's Prayer Group 6:30 a.m. @ Panera's XYZ noon	26
27 REFORMATION SUNDAY Worship Service 8:30 Sunday School 9:45 Worship Service 11:00 GIFT Bible Study 6:30	28 JTTW Leaders Meeting 9:15 pm	29 Worship Team 7:00	30 HERALD MAILING JTTW 9:15 am Children's Choir 5:45 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm JTTW/Kids Time 6:45 pm Confirmation class (Jr & Sr) 6:45 pm Senior Choir 7:30pm	31 		

October 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	2	3	4	5
6 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	7	8 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	9	10	11	12 Family Fall Fest 1-7pm @ Cox Farm
13 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP 6-7:30pm @ Church	14	15 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	16	17	18 2019 SWAP	19 Retreat @
20 No SWAP <u>Seneca Hills</u>	21	22 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	23	24	25	26 <u>TNT costume Late Night. 6-11pm @ Church</u>
27 Sunday School 9:45am SWAP Costume Party 6-6:30pm	28	29 TNT 7-9pm @ Church	30	31		

Ruthfred Youth Ministry Calendar