

Prairie Light

*Come, Journey in faith to Proclaim
the Love of Christ*

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Dear friends in Christ:

We have the beginning of Lent in the month of February. Ash Wednesday is February 22nd. We will have our Ash Wednesday service at 7 p.m., followed the next Wednesday (February 29th)

when our Lenten Suppers begin at 5:45 p.m. with devotional services at 7 p.m.

I was asked this time to write about the stain glass windows in our sanctuary not so much about their significance, but rather, in terms of maintenance. As beautiful as stain glass can be, there is a price to be paid for having them. In my very limited understanding, stain glass windows are pieces of glass held together by lead based materials. So, part of the stain glass window is the pattern created by this lead based material that is used to keep each piece in place. Over time, apparently there is a deterioration of this material which causes a lack of integrity for the window as a whole. That is, pieces of stain glass can loosen from this deteriorating lead based structure used to support each piece. I have heard that the life of a stain glass window is about 100 to 150 years. My understanding is that we are reaching that point when we need to "re-lead" the windows.

This is a rather large project, because the windows and framing need to be taken down and the hole that is created is filled so that the weather elements stay out. John Hahn has graciously volunteered to help in this endeavor. The council has decided to go ahead with monies already designated for this purpose as well as pursuing memorial funds in order to do one of the windows on the north side of the church. So, be prepared some Sunday to see a missing stain glass window. It takes a month or two to do

one window. It doesn't seem they are that big just looking at them, but each one does cover a large area. Once the window is out, it will be out for some time.

This is also a very costly project. In general terms, each window is about \$8000 to \$10,000 to redo. The total cost of the entire project is somewhere around \$80,000 to \$90,000. We obviously cannot do the windows all in one year. It will be over many years, and when the funds are available from memorials or designated gifts. We will do the windows most needing repairs first.

This is an area where wills or special gifts can come into play. Maintaining a building like Jefferson Prairie can be very expensive over time and this is one of those costs. Yet, the windows are not falling apart as we speak. However, for us not to reach a crisis concerning them, it is something we need to begin addressing now and continue plugging away over the years. Unfortunately, when people make out their wills, they often times do not address their own congregation in them. This is an opportunity to suggest that in your planning processes, you may consider Jefferson Prairie whether for this project, endowment, or other projects which are costly.

Our general budget is usually not of the nature to be able to take on these larger projects. In fact, with the tightening of the general budget for this year, there is almost no room for taking on added projects. The ways these larger projects can be dealt with is through gifts and bequests. It takes a lot of money for a church to function, and I suppose in talking about the stain glass windows in particular, we can all be sensitized to the general scope, need and costs involved in supporting our congregational ministries.

Peace, Pastor Tom

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin Assembly May 5 and 6

The synod assembly will be the first weekend in May. We are looking for one male and one female voting member to attend. It is at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. Also, being over 175 baptized members, we can have two people who are less than 30 years of age come and be voting members beside the other two who would be going. If you are interested in attending this assembly, please let us know in the church office. Peace, Pastor Tom