

Winter of 2006 / 07

I am thoroughly enjoying getting to know you all. Saint Paul Lutheran Church membership is complex; we have about 61 households but we affect directly or indirectly, I would estimate about 70 to 75 households. We have a church membership of 125 but we touch the lives of untold numbers through our daily interface within our community. I have visited fifteen households and at my current rate of visiting should have an opportunity to visit with most of you by the end of the year. If you are wondering “when will the Vicar get to me” just look at your last name, if your last name starts with an “A” then I have visited you already but if your last name starts with a “Z” then I will not be calling on you for a while. However if you haven’t heard from me yet, don’t worry I will be calling you soon to set up a visit that will be convenient for you.

The city of Sevierville has an estimated population that is just a few thousand more than the total number of taxi cab’s in New York City. However we can also say that we see 2 or 3 million more people come through our community every year than the total population of New York City. What does this mean? It means that every day is an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with an ever changing audience. So next time you are in line in the store, strike up a conversation and share your faith.

Tennessee, Wisconsin, Michigan, Virginia, Ohio, Louisiana, California, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Illinois, North Carolina, Indiana, Kentucky, Hawaii, Florida, Mississippi, Nebraska, Washington, Arizona, Oklahoma, Missouri, Alabama, and Georgia. I have had the honor of visiting with over half of the congregation and these thirty households come from or have lived in the above listed 25 states. There are even a few foreign countries that could be added to the list.

Carpenters, Domestic Engineers (once called Housewife but this work field has been opened up to men as well), Shop owners, Clerks, Tellers, Teachers, Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines, Farmers, Ranchers, Cable car operators, Trolley drivers, Servers, Musicians, Students, Office managers, Hospital technicians, Construction workers, Sub Contractors, Landscapers, Performers, Machinist, Factory workers, Executives, Politicians, Dog trainers, Accountants, Hotel owner / operators, Electricians, Policeman, Restaurant owner / operators, Truck Drivers, Secretaries, and I have probably missed a few. This is a random list of all the professions that those I have visited have or have had over the years.

So what do these two random lists tell us about ourselves, and why is the vicar wasting ink to tell us all this? Well, first of all, I am amazed at just how talented, intelligent, gifted, and hardworking this congregation is. You are all very blessed people and I hope you all take a little time every day to thank God for just how blessed you really are. Second, I observed three things that we all have in common that are as equally impressive as your above listed skill set.

1. While we come from all over the country and even the globe, we are all equally proud of now being Tennesseans!! Or East Tennesseans!

2. While we all come from many religious backgrounds, we are all equally committed to the truth proclaimed about Gods’ Word in the Lutheran confessions. So that while being a Tennessean is important to all of us, being Lutheran is even more important.

3. While we are all very proud to call ourselves Tennesseans and glad to call ourselves Lutherans, we are all most joyous about our title of Christian; because it is in this title that we find our identity as members of Christ invisible church here on earth. It is in this title that we identify ourselves as members of the body of Christ, children of the one and only true living God.

So go out today and where your Tennessee orange and your Purple Lutheran cross with pride, But most important of all share the love of Christ that you carry in your heart every day, that those who are lost might also believe.

In Christ
Vicar Robert Portier

Minnesota, can you believe it, I listed half the United States last month and I missed one of the most Lutheran states in the country. To all of you Minnesotans I extend my sincerest apologies. That puts us at being from or having lived in 26 of our 50 states, if I have missed your home state and I have already visited you, please let me know because I do not wish to slight anyone’s home state.

In Christ
Vicar Robert Portier