

Dear Friends in Christ:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20

As our Lord departed from his disciples following His earthly ministry he gave them the commission above, quoted from Matthew's gospel. This commission contains both a purpose and a promise. The purpose is to "make disciples", "baptize" and "teach". The promise is "I am with you always".

Last month we noted how the church is the "Body of Christ" with many parts. Now this month, based on the Great Commission, we look at one of those parts. It is timely that as we gather for our annual meetings where we focus on reviewing the past year's ministry and looking forward to a new year "teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you", is central to Jesus' commissioning of the disciples.

Part of the baptismal promise made by parents, sponsors and the people of the congregation includes these ministries. It is a well worn and used phrase but so true that "it takes a village to raise a child". This is especially true in our present time.

Thus these ministries of learning and growth are commanded by our Lord himself as he was given authority and then passed it on to his disciples. When we neglect to provide these opportunities and when we neglect to support and participate in them we negate the commission that Jesus gave to the church.

First, I want to commend to you for prayer and encouragement all those who take to the task of teaching. These people give of their time weekly to prepare, plan and practice what the Lord commanded us to provide in the church.

Secondly, I want to exhort and ask you to be faithful in bringing your children to Sunday School to learn, grow and share in fellowship with other children. In addition to that, take time each week to ask them what their lesson was about, and reinforce the lesson that was taught as you apply it to situations during the week. Such connections are good lessons for life.

A CONCERN OF MINE

Sunday School attendance usually drops off after the annual Christmas program, this is heightened given the current wave in a pandemic. But even before that our staffs were very concerned with inconsistent attendance. In fact in some instances a teacher would prepare only to have one student or even no students in class. This continues to concern me. Not only is it inexcusable but it violates the working of the body of Christ to nurture and sustain us all. All of us ought to pray about this. I encourage you to be faithful in this baptismal charge to "train up your children in the Lord".

Beyond this adults need to nurture their faith. The Tuesday evening bible study, is now on Zoom format and you can log in at 7:00 p.m. using the ID: 772 709 5654 and the passcode: 915168. Personal devotions using Christ in our Home or others of your choice sustain and keep you connect with God's word. We purchase these devotionals and most of the time they remain on the table in the narthex.

When the education part of the body is working and supported we not only learn the great truths of the Lord, but we obey everything he commanded us. If there is a "be it resolved..." for you this year may it include growing in the Lord through word, worship and service.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Hal