

Dear members and friends of St. John,

The end of August is the time in which we recognize our new members. It's always an exciting time for me. It's always interesting to see the gifts and talents that come into our congregation, knowing that God has a plan to equip His church with members that complement and build-up each other.

Knowing that each of us has a part to play, that each of us is part of the Body of Christ – it's important to periodically ask, "What part do I have in this symphony that is God's church in this place – St. John Lutheran of West Branch?" Have you ever seen an orchestra that has only violins, or only flutes? The music will sound pretty dreadful. **God is careful to arrange His church with people that round out and complement each other.** God provides the woodwinds and the brass, the stringed instruments and the percussion. When we're all playing on the same page, all using our instruments to bring glory to His holy name – I can assure you that the sound that comes from this symphony will have a lasting impact on each one of us, and future generations to come.

So what part of the symphony does God have in mind for you? Maybe you have a gift for working with youth? Maybe it's small children? Maybe you are good with financial figures? Maybe you like to work with your hands, making crafts or artwork? Maybe you like to sing? Maybe you are good at fixing mechanical or electrical systems? Maybe you like to organize parties or dinners or picnics? Maybe you have a gift for leading Bible Studies? Maybe you like to do office work? Maybe you like to clean? Maybe you like working on websites? Maybe... maybe.. maybe...

Whether you're new to St. John, or have been here for 60 years, when is it going to be **your time to step forward and contribute to the symphony** that is St. John Lutheran? We can all claim busyness as an excuse – but God knows just how busy you really are! We can all claim that our gifts are not that special – but God knows how talented you are! When you come to church on Saturday evening, or Sunday morning, and quietly exit the building, ignoring the notices in the bulletin to get involved – prayerfully ask yourself: "Is that what God has in mind for me at St. John?"

This final note that I'm going to sound, you may have heard before, but it bears repeating: **Jesus Christ has placed you in this church for a reason.** He created and built this church with His blood – He died so that you can come here and receive His blessings, His forgiveness. He gave up everything so that you could live in a state of "grace," a blessed existence that is free from the terror that death holds over those who do not know God's forgiveness. So how do you respond to the greatest gift ever? It begins by praying for help in seeing clearly how **you can step-out in faith** – trusting that God can use one or more of your many gifts and talents for the good of His Church. Then answer the call when an opportunity presents itself. That's right – it's really not that hard. And watch how God will use your gifts and talents for His kingdom.

Finally, you can always stop by and talk with me about how to get involved. Ask me after worship. Because God really does have a plan for you in the symphony that is St. John Lutheran!

Pastor Travis