

Temple Talk – Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church – March 19, 2023 – Pastor Herb Spomer

Several weeks ago, Phil Lobaugh approached me and asked me to participate in our stewardship emphasis by offering a temple talk on one of the Sundays. Tells us what your membership at Trinity means to you when it comes to stewardship.

Well, that's today, and I will give it a try.

Because the Spirit led me in many directions since birth, my family members and I participated in at least 17 Lutheran congregations for extended periods, teaching, preaching, and ministry of music. I also taught in a Lutheran college and two Lutheran seminaries. These locations were in the heartland of our country and points up north, out east, and down south. But nowhere have I stayed as long as I have here at Trinity. We are/I am in the twenty-fifth year of Trinity's being my church home. Each year was unique; each contributed to growth, understanding, and service.

In the interest of brevity, let me reflect on the last five or six years, and especially when the world seemed to stop right about this time in 2020. Trinity was then served by a succession of five pastors. Each had unique gifts and talents and pastoral styles they shared with us.

Pastor Sharon, from the African-American community, offered us perspectives on Baptismal gifts and promises. Pastor Aaron led us through thoughtful studies on community, biblical imperatives in preaching, and intense grappling with Covid-19 protocols. Pastor Arlyn was known for his pastoral care, educational work, and extemporaneous preaching. Pastor David piloted us ably as part of another interim, caring, listening, teaching, preaching from the heart, often in tandem with his wife Renee. And all that while, Pastor Ruth, visitation pastor, preacher, soft-spoken, insightful – continued to serve us.

Just as for all of you, so I also could see God's had leading and guiding the "people of God" here at Trinity, to use Pastor David's appellation. I think he was addressing not only those present here on Sundays, but those listening from afar, and in fact all those whom God claims as his own.

It is out of a sense of thanksgiving to God and deep gratefulness to be a participant in this assembly of the people of God. As the psalmist says, "What shall I return to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"