

May 2019 Newsletter Article: "Our Lord Does Not Dwell ..."

A very sad event that took place this past month was the massive fire that took place at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France. The building was gutted and priceless works of art were destroyed. Already hundreds of millions of dollars have been pledged towards rebuilding the cathedral. This tragedy has even been felt in our own household as our daughter Rebecca, as part of a tour this coming month to France, was scheduled to sing at Notre Dame as a member of the Chorale group at Roberts Wesleyan College of Rochester, New York.

The Notre Dame fire does make us think how important our Church buildings so often are to us. In our own minds, they are "priceless"—a sacred worship space that we've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to build and then maintain. We hate the thought that, like Notre Dame, our buildings would be destroyed by fire or some other disaster. Some of you, I would guess, couldn't imagine either of our two congregations apart from their present building sites.

I will admit that, at times, I've been in awe of certain building sites where Christians have worshiped. In the Cleveland area alone, I've marveled at buildings and their use in worship in Armenian Apostolic and Eastern Orthodox settings. I've also wondered what it must have been like to have, in years past, worshiped at either of our buildings at St. John and Zion when their sanctuaries were full. On the other hand, I've been just as moved—maybe ever more so—by small intimate "worship room" settings such as at several local hospital chapels and at St. John's mid-afternoon Fourth Saturday services that are held at the Abbewood Chapel in Elyria.

As much as we might value our Church buildings, Our Lord tells us clearly that He does not dwell—that is, restrict Himself—to a house that is built with human hands (Acts 7:48-50). Our building sites—even with as much attention as we might give to them—are ultimately temporary. Both of our congregations—possibly even in the not too distant future—may well be worshiping in different settings than we are now. But wherever we might worship, God will still be with us through, as we Lutheran Christians confess, His Word and Sacraments and the mutual comfort and fellowship that we share amongst each other.

May God bless us all—not only where we worship, but far more so when it comes to who we worship—the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ!

Your Fellow Worshiper in Christ,

Pastor Bill