



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Messenger

625 W. Gibson Road, Woodland, CA * Phone 662-1935 * April 2017

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear St. Paul's,

What is Church? The easy answer is we are. We are not the building; the building is where we gather. Jesus said, *"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."* Mt18:16 We are a gathering of people with a shared belief/faith in Christ Jesus.

Jesus also asked, *who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* (Matthew 16:-18)

Jesus makes several points in this verse. First, Jesus is building a church, a church built on a confession of faith: the confession that Christ is the Savior who we call on to be saved, and by faith in him we are saved.

Second, this faith/belief is a gift from God. Jesus said to Peter, *For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.* Faith is something we share, but faith is a gift from God. If I share my faith, God gives you your faith in him. (See also Eph 2:8-9)

So this makes the Church two things: people who gather to share and encourage each other's faith, and people who go and share what they know so that God will give and create faith in them.

So I ask you to do what someone once did for you, share what you know and encourage others with the Good News message of Christ. What does that look like? It looks like people loving and caring for each other, asking people how they are doing and listening to them. Encourage people who struggle; be friends. It is being a friend with others, and sharing the Joy of Christ you have been blessed with. Church is having Christ-centered relationships.

Blessings in Christ Jesus,

Pastor David Hardin