

+++++

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

St. John's Strategic Planning Committee, the group that visioned, designed, and ultimately built our new church has officially disbanded. But our architect asked that the group get together this past week to briefly review the entire process and to give him opportunity to give us gifts of framed photographs of our new building – one of the inside of the sanctuary and the other of the exterior of the building from the front. These pictures will ultimately be hung along with other pictures of the congregation's previous buildings that we are planning to have redone - to help tell the story of our congregation.

In the course of the two-hour breakfast, members of the Strategic Planning Committee remembered many things. But one thing that was remembered was how a church planner, who helped us hold congregational meetings toward the very beginning of the process, told us that in order for a project as complex as the one we were contemplating to happen, it would require that a number of miracles take place along the way. And the members of the Committee remembered with pleasure some of those miracles that did, indeed, in their estimation, happen along the way.

The miracles were many, big and small. Not least of all, the church planner had said, was the required miracle of the sale of a church building to some interested buyer. Church buildings are not sold every day. And the buyer group for church buildings is very small. How amazing it was to me that the buyer ended up being a church whose pastor was a pastor I ate with every month - as a part of our monthly Lakeville pastor's get-together. I had no clue that he or they had any interest in our building at all.

Over and over again as leadership groups in our congregation got together during those years we prayed for God's guidance, wisdom, and will to be accomplished among us. As miracles happened, those same groups bowed in prayers of thanksgiving for events that moved us forward. Those unforeseen events that helped us along our way were perceived to be moments in which we could see the glory of God working among us.

Unforeseen events along life's way in which people of faith believe they can see the glory of God in daily life. The Gospel reading for this festival day was just such an event in the lives of Peter and James and John. The three of them were on an outing with Jesus which had included a hike up a mountain. And while they were on the top of the mountain, Jesus' face began to shine as if sunlight was beaming from it. And at the same time Jesus' clothes became dazzling white. And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared and began to visit with Jesus.

It truly was a miracle, but the disciples didn't know what to make of it. They offered the thought that perhaps they should get three tents and pitch them there so that the three men would have separate dwellings while they shared this time of visitation. What was happening through it all, of course, was that the very presence of God was making itself known through this miracle.

And God made the miracle clear by sending a bright cloud to overshadow all six of them. And God spoke out of the cloud saying, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" And the Bible says that the disciples recognized the awesome nature of the event and they fell to the ground, overcome by fear. They had experienced an unforeseen event along the way through which they had opportunity, they now realized, to see the glory of God.

Dear friend in Christ, it is my prayer that you have had such events - and that you will continue to have such events - along the way of your life. I know it may not be the sudden shining of the sun beside you or the appearance of ancient personalities before you. And yet, it is my prayer that you know of what we speak when we speak of unforeseen events that help us along our way. And it is my prayer this morning that you would not need a voice speaking from heaven to recognize the glory of God present with you in such events.

Debbie has a quaint little habit that sometimes rubs off on me such that I find myself doing the same thing. It is that when something good happens in her life, be it large or small, she responds with a "Yay!" I mean that even something so small as me walking in through the door at the end of a work day elicits a "Yay!" Or, if we are waiting for a phone call and the phone finally rings it elicits a "Yay!" Or, if we are working on some kind of big project and we make it successfully all the way to the end and are able to put the final, finishing touches on it, that final moment will elicit a "Yay!"

“Yay!” moments – sometimes big moments – sometimes small. “Yay!” moments in life. Through which, if we only have the eyes to see, we are able to see the power of the glory of God among us. The disciples were about to enter into the most difficult experience of their earthly lives – the suffering and death of their leader. And yet the “Yay! moment of this mountain top experience would remain in their memories. To help make sense of the difficult times that yet lay ahead. May God richly bless you through the “Yay!” moments of your life. May you see the glory of the Lord also with you. And may his presence, known through the “Yay!” moments of life have the power to carry you through the “Yuk! moments of your life which we all know lie ahead of us along life’s way as well. Amen.