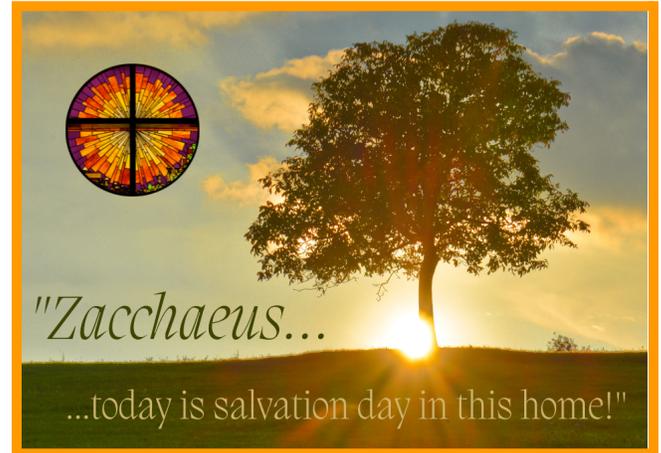


November 4, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul Lutheran Church,

In the nineteenth chapter of Luke's gospel Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. Being too short to see over the crowds, he needed to get higher. He saw a sycamore tree alongside the parade route and climbed up it. Sure enough, here came Jesus. Just as planned. But not as planned, because Jesus all of a sudden stopped, looked up into the tree and said, "*Zacchaeus, you come down, for I'm coming to your house this day.*" Zacchaeus, in that moment, likely thought to himself "*How does he know my name? How would he know me? Why me? What does he want from me?*"



In the next scene, the two of them went into Zacchaeus' home, and in a few moments, Zacchaeus was going to come out of that house a changed man. We don't know what Jesus said to him in that house, but whatever it was, it transformed Zacchaeus from a greedy man to a generous man, from a selfish man to a selfless man, from a man who was despised as a thief to a man of integrity and honor. Zacchaeus and Jesus walk out to address the crowds, arm in arm, I imagine. Jesus quieted the crowd and concluded the story, saying "*Today, salvation has come to Zacchaeus' house. He has become a true son of Abraham. I have come to seek and save the lost. Zacchaeus has been found.*"

A beautiful story, but the nagging question remains, "*What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus in that house?*" If only we knew, then perhaps we too would be changed and become equally generous. However, regardless of knowing exactly what was spoken in that house, we do know that Jesus transformed Zacchaeus' way of thinking, and can do so for us too.

**Enclosed is your Intent of Giving card for 2023.** If you haven't filled out and turned in an *Intent of Giving card* to the church before, I encourage you to do it this year. For those who have, I expect you'll do so again. Be thoughtful, intentional and prayerful as you decide on the amount to give. Above all, be open - open to what God may be nudging you to give this year. Jesus didn't simply come into Zacchaeus' *house* that day. Jesus entered into Zacchaeus' *heart* that day. *That's* what changed him - *that's* what changed his mind - *that's* what changed his heart. No one is ever changed to be a generous (or more generous) person unless Jesus gets into their heart; and when Jesus gets into our hearts - look out! - our living and our giving *will* be changed. I have witnessed this in my own life and in the lives of others.

In addition to your **Intent of Giving card**, on the back side of this letter is a **Guide to Proportionate Giving chart** to help you in your discernment of your giving. Also enclosed is a **Time and Talent Response form** to help you determine additional ways to give back to St. Paul Lutheran. Please complete both the *Intent of Giving card* and the *Art of Giving: Time and Talent response form* and return them during worship on **Commitment Sunday, November 30.**

I pray that Jesus may show up in each of our homes (hearts) this season, and that we too, may be inspired in our understanding and practice of stewardship!

With Joy and Gratitude,

Pastor Dale