

Living Out Our Lutheran Identity

Finding Our Voice

September 15, 2020



1. Share one thing Pastor Schroeder said that resonated with you.
2. Share one thing Pastor Schroeder said that you found to be thought-provoking (for whatever reason).
3. Describe how God has involved mankind in his plan to save the world.

Jeremiah 1:4-9 - ⁴ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” ⁶ “Alas, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” ⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. ⁹ Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth.”

Jeremiah 15:19 - “You will be my spokesman” (lit., you will be my mouth)

Acts 1:8 - ⁸ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Romans 10:13-17 - ¹³ for “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” ¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

4. What is the impact of that truth on you personally? on our congregation?

5. In what ways is 21st century A.D. America like 6th century B.C. Babylon?

6. Pastor Schroeder mentioned three ways to react to life in "Babylon." Explain each briefly.
 - a. Imitate the Jews of Jeremiah's day: "The temple, the temple"

 - b. Recreate a Jerusalem culture in the middle of a Babylon society.

 - c. Recognizing we are in Babylon, find and use our voice to this culture, at this time.

7. Give evidence of ways we (personally, in our congregation, in our synod) have been guilty of the first two reactions.

8. How do Jesus' words lead us to live out the third reaction?

John 17:14-19 - ¹⁴ "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."

Matthew 6:13-16 - ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

9. What was your reaction to the way that Pastor Schroeder pointed out perceptions of the WELS?

10. What did Pastor Schroeder identify as the problem with those perceptions, especially when they are held by those within our church?

11. Pastor Schroeder identified four key characteristics of our WELS church that make it appealing to those from outside our fellowship.

- Worship centered on means of grace
- Authentic relationships
- Bible-based knowledge
- “Gospel served neat”

What do you think hinders us from seeing these as blessings?

In what ways can we better emphasize and take advantage of these blessings at Riverview?

12. Based on the passages below and those listed under #3 above, describe the two Lutheran truths that often create a tension, and explain why that tension exists.

Jeremiah 23:29 - ²⁹ “Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?”

Hebrews 4:12 - ¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Isaiah 55:10-11 - ¹⁰ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Romans 1:16 - ¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

13. What was surprising about the findings of what ministry approaches were most likely to attract the unchurched?

- 1) Children's programs
- 2) Community service
- 3) Learning about God
- 4) Bible Study
- 5) Social activities
- 6) Support programs
- 7) Marriage groups
- 8) Contemporary worship

What was comforting or encouraging?

14. "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Church culture thwarts any strategy that is incompatible with its culture. How can we work together to effect any necessary cultural changes at Riverview?

15. Brainstorm ways we might use our corporate outreach efforts to establish a culture of outreach and invitation that builds on our strengths and provides the context for FRAN witnessing.