



Have you told them that?

Four times a year Pastor Strohschein from the District Office hosts a conference for pastors who are planting new churches. He started this week's meeting by telling us that he has a new appreciation for how tough the task of starting a new congregation can be. (His son was recently put in charge of planting a new congregation in Arizona.)

Pastor Strohschein shared how his son was frustrated with the reality that planting a church at times can seem to be "one step forward and two steps back." He'd recently been through one of those "two steps back" times. Some folks who had been part of the core group involved in founding the church had left. He said it was apparent that they had an agenda of things they wanted to have happen in the new church, and when those things didn't come about the way they wanted, they left - and tried to get others to leave with them.

I commented that I think pretty much everyone has some kind of "agenda" - things we would like to see happen. I said that I greatly appreciate the people of Living Word, because I see how they have been willing to set aside whatever agendas they may have in order to follow God's agenda (which most often isn't the same as ours). I see a definite willingness to set aside what you want and instead seek to find out what God wants.

I continued by saying that I feel greatly blessed to be leading a congregation where people have been very committed, dedicated and have "hung in there" in those "one step forward and two steps back" times. I told the folks at the conference that I get paid to persevere and hang in there when things don't happen as fast or just the way I want. You don't. And I greatly appreciate the fact that you hang in there anyway.

Pastor Strohschein's response was the "Question for Pastor" at the top of this article.

October was Pastor Appreciation Month, and it was so neat to have you show your appreciation to me and my family with the special gift certificate and cake after worship a couple Sundays ago. But the phrase "Pastor Appreciation" could also mean: Pastor expresses appreciation. In some of our Elders' Team meetings I've expressed my appreciation for your commitment to Living Word and to following Jesus Christ. But now you've all had a chance to hear it. THANK YOU! God bless you for seeking God's agenda!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net