

“THE FAÇADE WINDOW- This is Your Church”

First United Methodist Church of Wausau

Guest speaker: Lay Leader Mike Zahn

November 26, 2017

1. History

- a. Our dog Jack is really smart. Diane and I are sure he understands everything we say. And he is awesome at catching a Frisbee! But Jack has never paid any attention to the beauty of a sunset; he never looks up in the night to ponder the stars in the sky. And he has never shown the slightest interest in creating a piece of art.
- b. We are made a little lower than the angels. . .
- c. First Church and its art: Chapel painting, Façade Window, Chancel Mosaic, Wesleyan Room Mosaics, Classroom Mural. . .
- d. The Façade Window: read from history. . .
- e. Other facts:
 - i. Donated by Alexander family (who also donated the chapel painting in 1917). Cost of this Façade Window was about \$20,000 new in 1966 , now worth \$500,000-\$750,000!
 - ii. The original section of building (Fellowship Hall, offices, chapel) was built in 1959, this Sanctuary- first service was Christmas Eve 1966.
- f. But as Shakespeare said, what’s past is prologue. . . fast forward. . .
 - i. Now the façade that was once brilliant as it faced McIndoe and 4th Streets is kind of cloudy. It’s hard to tell what or who it is.
 - ii. Any asset requires maintenance. The chapel painting has had restoration work done. The Façade Window will require work soon. Protective cover added in 1968. Has become hazy, strength compromised. Will need to be replaced.
 - iii. Of the more than 50 people who were on the original building committees in the mid-1950’s, only Bob and Grace Wylie are left. So where does that leave us?

2. This is your church Part 1—First United Methodist Church

- a. Sometimes we get stuck in the past, (50’s, 60’s,70’s), and we think the best is behind us.
- b. Never gave up on finding someone. . . Diane
- c. I will never give up on believing that this church’s best days are yet to come. . .
- d. I’m going to give you all permission right now to do something. This is your church; this is your building. This is not your parents church, your grandparents church—this is your church.
- e. Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. John 4:35. You may not know it yet, but our church is poised for growth. Are we ready for it?

- f. Look at all the development going on right around here!
 - i. Residential developments on Scott St, River area, all around us
 - ii. I remember praying about the River area 17 years ago, and seeing visions of that area being developed.
 - g. All of these people need God, whether they know it or not. And how will we be prepared to meet their needs? We have some nice programs, we're pretty good, but. . .
 - h. First--First impressions—Bulletin boards, display cases
 - i. Second, intentional welcoming
 - j. Third, reaching out. Some things to consider from the Wisconsin United Methodist Conference:
 - i. Who are our neighbors?
 - ii. What will we do to love our neighbors and connect our walls?
 - iii. What if we do something fresh and wonderful to love our neighbors?
 - iv. Where can we join Christ who is already working outside our walls?
 A different kind of church—a mobile church—you!
3. This is your church Part 2—You
- “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s spirit lives in you?” 1 Corinthians 3:16
- a. There was a skit on Saturday Night Live where Will Farrell played James Lipton of “Inside The Actor’s Studio” and he was interviewing Charles Nelson Reilly (Alec Baldwin). James Lipton says, “If you haven’t seen ‘A Troll in Central Park’ . . . you must. It is like looking into the face of God and seeing Him smiling back and saying, “You are my most wondrous creation.””
 - b. You are the church—John Machek quote in Charge Conference book
 “within the community there are numerous opportunities for curb side ministry whenever one is identified as clergy.” Change that last word to Christian.
 We are all the church, mobile churches. . .
 Romans 12:9-13
 - c. Getting back to the Façade Window. . .
4. This is your church Part 3—The Church of Jesus Christ
- a. On this Christ the King Sunday, never forget that this is Christ’s church.
 - b. We have a magnificent piece of art, a 35 foot high reminder of Jesus shining down on us.
 - c. Look how valuable Aaron Rodgers is to the Packers. How much more important is Jesus to the church than that? Where would we be without Jesus-- Jesus is greater than Aaron Rogers. . . greater than Brett Favre. . . greater than Bart Starr. . . greater than Vince Lombardi. . . greater than Curly Lambeau. . . combined!
 - d. Read a Gospel

5. Conclusion—Here’s my challenge to each of you—every time you see that façade window, think of what Jesus said, “. . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses. . .” If we are full of this spirit, this church will grow. Amen.

THE CHAPEL PAINTING

- Officially called “If Thou Hast Known, O Jerusalem”. It shows Jesus sitting on the Mount and looking at the distant city of Jerusalem and sorrowing for its past and future (Mt. 23: 37-39) and His lament over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44).
- The painting was a gift from Walter Alexander (whose family later donated the money for the Façade Window).
- Painted in 1917 by an Italian artist, Louis Amorosi (he looked like an artist), it portrays Jesus sitting on the mount (Rib Mountain) and looking at the city of Jerusalem (Wausau).
- William Zimmer from Zimmer Paint and Wallpaper store was in charge of the redecorating of the 1904 church building. He sat for the artist on Rib Mountain so that he could sketch the hands and feet.
- Fortunately the painting was done on canvas and not directly on the wall. . . because. . .
- The canvas painting was moved here in 1959. It was cleaned at that time and in 1996 the Conrad Schmidt Studio (which is now in its 5th generation) restored the canvas.
- When the painting was first mounted in this Memorial Chapel, the surrounding sections were covered with a blue material. Certain individuals were quite upset because the color “did not go” with the painting, or the marble altar, or the carpeting, or the As a results the sections were removed and reupholstered in the current “beige.” Bob Wylie has a colored slide of the original panels. The radiating lines on the surrounding frame are to help draw our eye to the picture.