

What Make The Church

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who came to give you life, Jesus Christ, our Savior, Amen.

Have you ever noticed some buildings are single purpose buildings. That's an actual construction term, I'm told. I watched 12 O'clock High a while back and noticed the hangers from the old Air Core days. (SLIDE) They were all sort of like a half circle tunnel. Even many modern hangers are still these huge tunnel-shaped buildings. They might be big, but for the most part they serve one purpose. They provide a space to maintain the airplane. On one of my many trips over to Fairborn I often pass the C-17 cargo hangers on the back side of the Air Force Base. Those buildings were constructed precisely to the dimensions of the C-17. (SLIDE) The building is actually shaped specifically to allow one and only one C-17 and even then the hangar door close around the back part of the fuselage, leaving the tail of the plain sticking out. There is most surely only one purpose for that building. In the more traditional style hangars they can be repurposed for special occasions like Change of Command ceremonies. (SLIDE)

The scripture for today is called King Solomon's prayer of dedication for the very first Temple to the God of the Hebrew people. All this time God had been still utilizing the Tabernacle or large tent. (SLIDE) Now, for the first time in Israel's history the sacred Ark of the Covenant was finally resting in a "permanent"

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home and God's people would now have a "permanent" place to go to worship their God. (SLIDE) It sounds a bit strange to me, but that's what ancient people thought about their God. I'm not completely convinced we modern day Christians have our doctrines and theological dogmas totally in line with what the Bible actually says about God. We're still mostly tied to our buildings. The truth is God isn't interested in having a permanent place to dwell. As much as we love our Church Buildings, as Solomon declared in his prayer of dedication even this beautiful Temple isn't big enough or Holy enough to house the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Besides, God has taken up his dwelling place within each and every one of you. In your Baptism God poured out his Holy Spirit into you and you became God's Child. Each of us are temples built to house the Lord. Put another way in the Book of 1st Peter it says, "Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:4-5 NRS)

Friends, we are God's living stones. Each of us is a part of the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth. The temple Jesus is constructing is single purpose, just like Solomon's Temple or the hangars at Wright Patt. The purpose for your life is to glorify and give honor to God. How, you might ask can I do that, Pastor Mel? Well your single purpose is to glorify and honor God, but you get to pick how you

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do that. Some might decide the best way they can honor God is to help heal other's Body, Mind, and Soul as a tender loving Nurse or Doctor. Others might discover their talent for music. They might honor and glorify God by playing each and every song as if they were playing it for an audience of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. I don't think it matters if you're an electrician, a barber, or a door dash driver. (SLIDE) What matters is that you do everything as if you were doing it for God alone. When you receive compliments on your work, remind yourself it was God who created you and it was God who gave you the ability and the talent to do whatever it is that you do every day.

It's so appropriate to be talking about living stones making up the Church on the very day God is adding Braxtyn to the Church as another stone in the Church. All those long years ago, King Solomon, Israel's 3rd king, said the prayer of dedication. The story of God's people has never been one of happily ever after. Yes, Solomon humbled himself in recognizing the enormity of God and his comparatively tiny house. He asked God to hear and answer the prayers of anyone who even prays in the direction of the Temple. That started the whole annual trip to Jerusalem for all the Jews. Their religious life was completely tied to the city of Jerusalem and to the one and only Temple. Let us not forget this is the same city Jesus lamented over, saying Jerusalem was the place where they beat and murdered

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God's prophets... There had to be another better way... That better way is through Jesus Christ.

For those who were here 2 weeks ago, we read how God promised to build a house from David's descendants. My friends, in faith in Christ Jesus and the Grace of God Almighty, you and I, we're all David's descendants and part of the house or the Kingdom God is building right here and right now, using you and me. Braxtyn, I hope and pray you are up to living out the life calling you are affirming to God today. You are about to become one of God's living stones in today's Church. Through you God will do great things! In this building where so many of you celebrated significant events in your lives, (SLIDE) God is still in our midst and doing even more and greater works. Today, Braxtyn is living proof God is still calling new servants and equipping them for service in His Name. (SLIDE)

Today is also significant in another way. We recognize the very foundation of the Lutheran Church. On the eve of All Saints Day, October 31st in the year 1517, Martin Luther nailed those 95 debating points to the door of the town church in Wittenberg Germany kicking off a firestorm of debate, controversy, and eventually denominational diversity. (SLIDE) We set aside this one Sunday each year to remember not just the contributions of our dear Martin Luther, but also

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many other reformers of the Church who sacrificed and risked everything to make certain the Church is still following our true head and leader, Jesus Christ.

Now a word or two about this building we call our Church. (SLIDE) The brick and mortar don't make this our Church. The beautiful Sanctuary we all love so much doesn't make this our Church. The Sunday school classrooms nor the Fellowship hall where we learned about God and celebrated so many meals together don't make this our church. What make this our Church are all of you who come her. You are the living stones that make this our Church. This building is the facilitator or the tool that makes our gatherings special. It is the place where you might have heard God's still small voice for the first time. It might be where God first called you to follow Jesus Christ and dedicate you life to serving Him. God's presence among us here in this place. That's what makes this our Church!

One final word for Braxtyn. God has made you. God has claimed you as His own. Today, you become one of God's precious living Stones in God's Church. He didn't make you into just "Another Brick In The Wall" as the famous song goes. Rather you are beloved, you are forgiven, and you have eternal life within God's Kingdom now and forever. I pray you will never forget this day and how much God and all of us love you!

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May God's presence be with us whenever and wherever we gather in His Holy Name. May God continue to bless us with opportunities to serve Him and to demonstrate our love for Him. May God continue to raise up from among us living stones, like Braxtyn, to expand and include all people into this new kind of single purpose building we call Our Church. Amen.