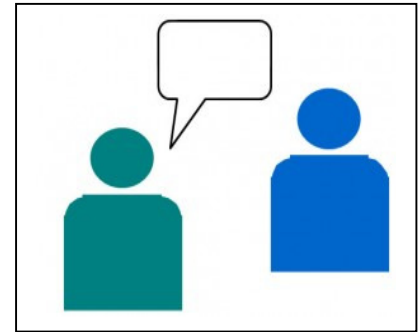


Hello friends and members of Salem; I hope you are all well.

I have been thinking about a conversation I have with lots and lots of people...maybe even with some of you. The conversation starts with: "I *should* go to church more often". Have you ever heard or said this, or even thought it? Here is what I have to say about this statement...



I think we'd be better off using the word "could" instead of the word "should". Each of us *could* do more of this or less of that. "I *could* have gone to service last Sunday." The word "could" indicates that we are capable of doing something and have a choice to do it; we *can* do (or not do) something versus *should* do (or not do) something. To me, "should" moves toward shame, and shame is not a very healthy feeling or emotion – it sets us up to be a victim.

By the way, shame is different than guilt; guilt is OK and shame isn't so much so. Guilty is how we feel when we have not made a good choice; we want to make good choices, and when we don't, we feel guilt. Shame, though, comes when we feel we *should* have done things differently, having in our mind that our circumstances victimized us. *Should* also seems to indicate that we're doing something because someone else wants us to do it. On the other hand, using the word "could" - or "can" - empowers us because we have made the choice based on our wants, desires, etc.

So, before the weekend, think about and make plans to attend (or not attend) our Sunday worship. If you decide you cannot (for whatever reason), then you simply know you can't attend and you can be OK with that decision. Don't say "I *should* have gone, but..." OR, if you decide you can, then do it! Pray about and ask God for help when making this decision to, too. Praying, thinking, and speaking about the decision as "I *could* have..." allows you to 'own' the decision. Then, you can feel good about the decision you made because you *could* or couldn't rather than feeling shame because, after-the-fact, you felt you *should* have done things differently. This is a subtle distinction, but a good one. I hope it helps you.

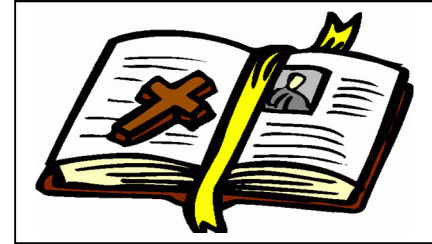
When you *are* thinking/praying about your decision, consider the following good reasons for coming on any given Sunday: to receive graces, to hear the Word, to learn about the Word and the Christian lifestyle, to feel the support of a community, to give of yourself to others, to be encouraged, to praise God, or to be challenged and supported to grow.



I also recognize reasons to NOT attend; I get it. I do hope that one of them is not the pastor, the way we worship, or the community. If it is, know that I am always ready to listen/talk, as are the members of the council and other attendees. We can't meet all the needs that folks have, but there is also no way we can ever meet any of them if they aren't shared.

Here are some of the things you *could* have done and/or *could* have attended recently:

- Participated in the Military Bible Stick funding, where the congregation collectively sent \$1555 to Faith By Hearing Ministries. This will provide the Scriptures to our service men and women via their MP3 players as well as send (if they choose) a CD of the Bible to their families back home.



- Been a part of our Date Nights, where parents can drop off their kids at Salem to have members watch them for a few hours – the kids and the volunteers have a great time w/ food, games, and movies while the parents get ‘a break’.
- Heard a presentation given by Margaret Butler (Joan’s granddaughter) on her medical and personal ministry/service to impoverished children in India through the Doctors In India program (to which the congregation contributed \$715).
- Came to the annual picnic to pray, worship, eat, and play along w/ about 150 other friends and families of Salem Church.
- Helped out the Gideons in their mission to bring the Scriptures to people. Folks gave about \$300 to this organization after a presentation the end of August.
- Sent aid to hurricane victims through Thrivent which matched our \$805 contribution.
- Brought your kids to Sunday School, kicked off on Sept 8th with a ‘bang’.
- Participated in a new Women’s Bible Study on every other Wednesday (started Oct 4th).
- Helped appreciate the EIGHT new households which have joined Salem in the last year.



some of the new members

And here are the upcoming events (through January) in which you *could* participate:

- Annual cemetery and grounds clean-up, Saturday, Oct 28th, 10am.
- Sunday services at 9:30 (Sunday School every week concurrently and communion on Nov 19th, Dec 10th, and Jan 21st).
- Women's bible study (Book of James), Wednesdays, Nov 1st and Nov 15th, 7pm
- Council Meetings, Tuesdays, Nov 7th, Dec 12th, and Jan 9th, 6:30pm.
- Date night, Friday, Nov 10th, 6-10pm.
- Thanksgiving Eve service, Wednesday, Nov 22nd, 7pm, with 'pie social' afterward.
- Advent services, Wednesdays, Nov 29th and Dec 6th, 13th, 20th, at 7pm (we'll be focusing on the early Christian Church from Christ's death through the 3rd century AD).
- Kids' Christmas Program, Sunday, Dec 17th, during the 9:30 service.
- Christmas Eve Candlelight service, Sunday, Dec 24th, 5pm
(NO Sunday morning service on Dec 24th).
- Annual Parish-wide meeting, Sunday, Feb 4th, after the 9:30 service.



Finally, if you'd like to contact any of us, here's how (or talk to us after a Sunday service):

Rob Krajewski, pastor: 651.261.7333, robkrajewski72@gmail.com
Kevin Almendinger, council president: 612.839.5991, kalmendinger@huntelec.com
Vicki and Duane Bengtson, council members: 651.706.4235 or 651.462.1178,
duane_bengtson@hotmail.com
Joan Butler, council member: 651.464.6304, jbutler8391@gmail.com
Emily Egan, council member: 763.400.6544, emilyb555@yahoo.com (also on FB for
Salem Lutheran Church, North Branch).
Karen Almendinger, council member: 763.350.3250, karalmendinger@gmail.com
Diane Youngquist, council member: 651.237.1003, diane.youngquist@gmail.com

As always, it is good to see you when we do and we miss you when we don't. Come when you can to be a part of our "Church"!

Praying God's blessings on each and every one of you.

Rob

