

Outreach Encouragement Insert for April

Read Revelation 7:9, the first verse of today's second lesson. Does your congregation look like that great multitude that John saw gathered before the throne and before the Lamb? If your congregation does reflect the multi-cultural vision that God showed John, how did it get to be that way?

- Perhaps people came from historically Lutheran countries/cultures: German, Scandinavian, Brazilian, Malagasy, etc.
- Perhaps people from other cultures have connected with your congregation by marrying one of your members.
- Perhaps your congregation has opened your doors to a group of Lutherans from another ethnic group and welcomed them into your church family.
- Perhaps your congregation has sponsored a refugee family and witnessed to them the love of Christ.
- Perhaps your pastor and members of your congregation have intentionally reached out to people in your community regardless of cultural differences, invited them to worship with you, encouraged them by friendship, hospitality, and/or help in times of need.

If your congregation is quite mono-cultural, I encourage you to ask yourself why this is so.

- Do you live in a mono-cultural community?
~ Not very common today.
- Are you afraid they won't understand your worship style?
~ Sit with them, help them navigate the hymnal, assure them that you or your pastor will answer their questions.
- Are you afraid your congregation is too small?
~ Your numbers will grow as you invite more people to come.
- Are you afraid that people from other cultures will "change" your congregation?
~ Perhaps the talents and abilities they bring will strengthen and encourage the whole body of Christ that is your congregation.

Since the day of Jesus' return is coming ever nearer when we will all experience first-hand what John tells us of in Revelation, let's all prepare for that day by inviting everyone around us in our multi-cultural communities to come and hear God's life-giving, faith-creating Word and be washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Then we can cry out together, even this side of Heaven, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb."