

Zion Lutheran Church, Grant Park, IL
Pastor Cory Estby
“Will I See Them at Church?”

“...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:25)

The sound of dozens singing “The Gifts Christ Freely Gives” (LSB 602) a few Sundays ago is still fresh in the memory bank. Our opening hymn centered the members’ thankful hearts upon the gifts flowing from the baptismal font, the words of absolution spoken by the pastor granting forgiveness that we need, the peace renewed once again for us in the body and blood of Christ at His Table. The flock gathered together. What a way to begin the Divine Service in the Lord’s holy house where His glory dwells!

And then I saw the young man in one of the front pews. He’s there practically every Sunday (and faithfully lets me know almost in tears when he won’t be!), but especially this day--he was looking around during the hymn while humming and chiming in on the familiar phrases. After the service, I discovered what he was doing. He was looking for his friends, not a single one in attendance that day. It shook him. “Where’s <fill in the name>”? “Where’s <pick another name>”? Certainly, he wanted to rejoice with and share the Special Olympics medal around his neck, but more importantly, it was a weekly opportunity to hear the Word together, pray, sing, and give thanks. “Will I see them at church next week?”

Maybe someone has looked for you at church and missed you. Your family in Christ yearns to see you in such a blessed place. Maybe you’ve attended and looked for others and have been placed in the encouragement role. I hope you let them know they were missed.

The Day of the Lord is drawing near. Repent and rejoice. On the cross, God’s justice was served. Christ has saved you. His words give you life that restores and refreshes each day. Your sins are forgiven.