

Kizuna February 2022
Pastor Sarah Wilson

The English congregation has almost completed our Audio Outreach Project! We are excited to share the results with you very soon.

In the meanwhile, I want to let you know about two other projects of the English congregation.

1. I have started a lay preacher training program. The idea came from my realization that there are very few English-speaking pastors available on Sunday mornings in our area. If I have to be gone for a longer period in the U.S., travel for other work or vacation, or get sick, it will be difficult to find a replacement. To help the long-term sustainability of the English congregation, I realized that we should have lay preachers ready if we need them.

But this is only a negative characterization of the problem. Positively, I discovered, our lay members have great gifts for preaching! It has been a wonderful experience for me to discover the depth of our members' engagement with Scripture. I asked each of them to choose one passage from the Old Testament and one passage from the New Testament to prepare a sermon on. They shared the reasons for their choices and their passion to share God's Word with others.

Now, I will be sad if I'm away when these lay preachers preach. I'm excited to hear their finished work!

2. I have also started a Small Catechism class. We meet on the third Sunday of every month after the English service.

Up till now, I have offered the class only for people who wanted to join the church. However, I realized that there was a lot of interest in learning more about Lutheran theology. So, I opened up the class to more people. We have people who want to join the church, people who don't want to join but want to learn more about Christianity, and people who are already members—eleven people in all. It's a good mix!

The class runs from January to June. In each of the six sessions, we cover: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Communion, and Confession. We spend one hour focusing on each of these topics and Martin Luther's explanation of them. Then we have 30 more minutes for open discussion about any topic related to the Christian faith. This is very helpful for me, because I don't always know what kinds of questions people have. It's a good opportunity to share ideas, concerns, and deeper questions.

In June we'll welcome the new members. Maybe we can even have a celebration with food! We are all praying for a return to normal church life as soon as possible.