

Proposed Small Engine Ministry – “Tune-ups and Resurrections”

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Background.

All my life I have enjoyed working with my hands. During my (predigital) teenage years I worked on cars like many of my peers. In the relative isolation of the Covid pandemic I decided to learn to tune up my several pieces of aging gas-powered lawn and garden equipment. I consulted the world of YouTube videos and went down the rabbit hole learning about small engines. My neighbors noticed me tinkering and brought me their equipment. Project by project, I've accumulated experience and tools such that I can now diagnose and repair most issues with riding mowers, push mowers, generators, chipper-shredders, snowblowers, leaf blowers, hedge trimmers, or pretty much anything else with a two- or four-cycle gasoline engine. My shop is in my garage at home. I have space to work on two or three machines at once. Some parts come in quickly, others take several days, so I can stagger the work on different projects.

How might this relate to St. Martin's?

It occurred to me that, like my neighbors, members of St. Martin's might benefit from having someone to work on their gas-powered equipment. Some machines that are used regularly are likely to need only a tune-up: change of oil and air- and fuel-filters plus sharpening of blades and carburetor cleaning and/or adjustment. Others that have had hard use over many years or have been sitting inside or outside for extended periods, won't start, belch smoke, or do other scary things might need more of a resurrection. I'm up for all of it.

How would this work?

After we let it be known that this service is available to church members, people can sign up – first come, first served. If people need a repair urgently, I'm not their guy. I work systematically and thoroughly, but not quickly.

I have a steel platform (with ramp) that mounts on a trailer hitch behind my Subaru Outback, large enough to accommodate equipment the size of a snowblower or smaller. I'm happy to pick up and return machines to peoples' residences. I live in Wayne but come to Chestnut Hill/Mount Airy on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings, so can combine those trips with pickups and deliveries to folks who live close to St. Martin's. Larger machines like riding tractor mowers can be transported via a rented flat-bed trailer by special arrangement.

Tune-ups and Resurrections

My suggestion is that for each piece of equipment I contact the owner from the sign-up list, arrange pick up and get the story, bring it to my shop and diagnose any issues that need work. I'll contact the owner and explain what is necessary for function and safety, what is optional, and what is probably not worth fixing. I'll estimate a budget for parts and we will reach an

understanding on how to proceed. If major unexpected issues (e.g. lack of compression, needs a head gasket) show up during repair I'll get back in touch to discuss and decide next steps.

I propose that owners pay for parts (I use the most cost-effective, not necessarily the cheapest available) plus a \$10 fee to cover my shop consumables (gloves, carb cleaner spray, rust remover, etc.) plus a \$100 donation to St. Martin's. I will provide an invoice that lists the work done and parts used to help owners document the history of their machines.

Potential Benefits

I get to interact with and get to know more people at St. Martin's.

Equipment owners get their stuff put into good working condition for a bargain price (no mark-up on parts, no charge for pick-up and delivery, \$100 gift to church as a flat fee for labor).

St. Martin's gets another revenue stream.