

Neighbors in Christ – June 2016

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 4:4-7

Friends in Christ,

I chose these very verses specifically for the time of transition that the Neighbors in Christ Parish enters into again. We have just said goodbye to Pastor David Winterfeldt, and we wish him Godspeed in his next journey; he begins a new chapter in his life as a part-time hospice chaplain in the New Ulm area. With Pastor Dave's exit, it also opens up a place and time to try new things, and adapt to the way we worship and experience fellowship and companionship with one another, especially in a rural parish setting.

The summer months bring warmer temperatures, longer days, children playing in the parks and in the streets, and opportunities for vacationing with family and friends. School work is put away and books are to be read as we enjoy the Lord's beautiful Creation that we are each charged with taking care of. The summer months also often allow each of us to personally make changes in our own lives and transition from one thing we like, to something else we may like. And Neighbors in Christ will witness these transitions too.

One of the transitions that you will notice immediately is the change in worship schedules we will have for the summer months ahead. The Neighbors in Christ Parish Council has agreed to try something new – each of the three congregations will worship on a Saturday evening at 5:00 pm for a month's time. I expect these Saturday worship services to each be a little more relaxed and comfortable. Shorts and sandals may replace slacks and dress shoes, and you may even see a few Hawaiian shirts thrown in there sometime. But this also means that Sunday morning will have to adapt as well. With the changes coming on Saturday, there also comes changes with a rotating 8:30 am and 10:15 am Sunday schedule. An extra fifteen minutes was added before the second Sunday morning service allowing me as pastor to meet-and-greet a little while longer before heading to the next worship. This will also assist me in preparing to bring you the Good News and not feel rushed as I run from place to place.

But we will still seek the great importance of finding a half-time pastor to fill the role that has left us. You will undoubtedly hear about bringing on or contracting a new pastor, Call Committee members preparing themselves for interviews, and the normal business of parish life continuing on. Things will change and adapt, but I truly believe in my heart of hearts that they will change and adapt in positive ways...not negative. I chose these verses from Paul's Letter to the Philippians as a meditation on not forgetting why we each come together each week, or in the ministries that we are a part. God, through the Holy Spirit, calls each one of us to love God and to love ourselves, as Christ has loved us.

And we must remember that as a parish – a combined Neighbors in Christ Parish – that we will carry on and succeed in our endeavors so long as we keep Christ in our hearts, and Christ at the center of all that we do. So I say “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice!” and pray for our parish, the wonderful ministries that we enter into, and the future of calling a new pastor to us as we continue marching on.

In Christ,

Rev. Erik Karlson