

June 2017

“For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” – Acts 3:39

Grace and peace to you, Neighbors in Christ!

Wow, this year has flown by. As your pastor, I am so very thankful for all the great accomplishments we as a parish have done together in the last five months. We have come together numerous times to worship as one during Lent, have watched two of our youth affirm their baptismal faith together, praised God for an empty tomb, and given our time, talents, and possessions to the numerous congregational events held since the beginning of the year. And now we turn toward a new liturgical season and concentrate on the promises that the Triune God has offered to us.

What promises, you ask? It is the promise that you are called, named, and loved member – individually – of God’s holy church. Through the repentance of the sins we have done wrong to one another and to God, that as members of the body of Christ we have been baptized and have received the Holy Spirit. Saint Peter reminds us in the Acts of the Apostles that this promise is for all people – adults and children alike. In the waters found at the baptismal font, and with God’s word, we are given promise of forgiveness and salvation, to be the greater church, and to share that with others. God wants us to go into the world and let others know of these great gifts and grow our congregations too.

The church was born on the Feast of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon those fearing for their lives because their mentor Jesus had ascended to God’s right hand and they did not know what to do next. The small group questioned all that they had learned up until that point and needed a new direction. The Holy Spirit came into them and instantly all knew what they had to do: repent of their sins, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and receive the Holy Spirit. And they went out and told the simple story and promise given to them, just as we should do to.

So, God’s promises are there for you. But you must decide whether you will accept the gracious opportunities that a loving God has given you. Will you openly invite the Holy Spirit into your life and receive the simple story of love and forgiveness given you? Will you hear the gospel calling you by name and let God into your life? Will you listen to the biblical principles taught during worship and guide your days ahead? And will you invite others into this beautiful story that needs to be shared, just like it was during the early days of our new church?

The example has already been given to us and now it up to you in what you want to do next. Tell a friend. Tell a family member. Tell someone that is new to you and invite them to worship. And I look forward to seeing you – and your new friends – on Sunday morning.

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you...always.

Rev. Erik Karlson
Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish