

Beloved Neighbors in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from the One who was, who is, and who is to come.

This month will bring some changes to our beloved Neighbors in Christ Parish. I want to remind you again that our relationship with Pr. Mahlon Bekedam and the family at St. Paul's in Stewart, MN has just ended. So, this summer, we are going to do something a bit different: On Sunday mornings, two of the three congregations will rotate each month and hold regular worship services at 8:30 am and 10:30 am.

The other congregation will not have regularly scheduled worships on Sunday, but instead will be celebrating on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm. We will give these worships a shot to see how they work, and how well you attend them. I ask you to please give this a chance and have an open mind...you may be surprised how well and how fun they turn out. I am very excited for this variation in our schedule. Please continue praying for our parish, the great things we continue to do, and our combined future.

I am also looking forward to this year's Southwestern Minnesota Synod Assembly located in Redwood Falls. This is a new location for the synod's gathering and will kick it off with various community outreach projects. I plan on being involved in food packing with other rostered and lay leader colleagues and we prepare meals for our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

In our world full of constant change, challenges, and upcoming opportunities I am thankful God is with us through it all. Through Jesus we know we are not alone in the midst of our life's and time's storms. Our God equips and calls us together in communities of faith, so we can gather around God's word and sacrament to share the Good News. After all, we are called to love and serve one another, and this provides great testimony to the callings we each are supposed to answer.

In our assembly we will worship God together, enjoy fellowship together, make decisions together and learn together. The formal work indeed matters, and the informal conversations often are even more important as God weaves our congregations and faith lives together. You are all synod ministers as you live out your baptism callings and live your daily mission trip in daily life.

Our loving God has a mission for this whole world. That mission has a church family in which we are a part. As we gather, we look forward to having leaders with us from our churchwide offices and we will also hear and learn from theologians in Bible studies.

In addition to the important work of gathering around our theme of "Embrace God's Mission + Equip God's People: Enhancing Local and Global Mission," we will elect leaders, make lively decisions, be equipped for ministry and mission, learn about our churchwide organization and learn about your synod.

I look forward to June and all that remains ahead. And I also look forward to bringing you back some great nuggets that can be shared by my friends and colleagues. Please pray for me, our parish, and the future that will soon be upon us all as a continued thriving Neighbors in Christ Parish.

God bless you and I look forward to seeing you in worship.

In HIS sake,

Rev. Erik Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish