

*“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” – Colossians 3:15-17*

Neighbors in Christ,

Greetings my beloved family and friends. This month is so filled with changes and adjustments as we go from the summer months and prepare for the coming of Autumn that is peaking just around the corner. Our youth are heading back to school with new and greater opportunities that lie ahead; our farmers prepare for the final weeks and months of their crops getting ready for harvest; Christian education is gearing up for another exciting programming year; we notice the crisp air in the evening and mornings; and our worship schedules in our respective congregations are rotating to new times.

I understand that there are some questions and concerns about the changes in worship times, so I wanted to address some of the reasons why these are occurring. We have gone into a three-year cycle where each church will be scheduled in an 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 rotation. This is being accomplished in fairness and equity for each of the NIC congregations where no one single church is given a better time than another; each church will be at each time equally over this three-year period. We have already been through the first year of the cycle and this month we begin the second year, and continue on.

Additionally, we will also have a combined Neighbors in Christ service each month, generally at the end of the month. This is where we will all come together and worship as a true parish. I look forward to these worships especially because they allow for relationship building, seeing family and friends we normally may not see, and also rejoice and praise our loving God in a common place. When I look at the full sanctuaries during these combined worship services, I am so proud of what I see because that is what being a parish is all about...being together and putting Jesus Christ ahead of all that is involved in our lives.

These combined services absolutely remind me of the Colossians text I have chosen. We are called to love and serve the Lord, one another, and no matter what we do, we “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (v.17) This is why I encourage you to attend these combined services and give them a chance to help your faith grow in Christ and enjoy the harmony of our unified parish in the same time and at the same place. I find these to be such joyful occasions and invite you to share in the same experiences as I do each time.

My beloved family and friends, I look forward to seeing you all at the new times and again encourage you to open your hearts and minds by coming together for these combined services. I look forward to seeing you all very soon, and may God continue to bless you.

In Christ,

Rev. Erik Karlson  
Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish