



“Does the Past Inform Our Future?”

Message from Pastor Dennis

Sometimes looking to the future can be a bit disconcerting. In fact, the future may be downright frightening. I mentioned before that I don't do uncertainty very well; and for me, that's what makes an uncertain future so disturbing—not knowing drives me crazy! Uncertainty leads to anxiety which may produce feelings of tension, frustration, and even anger. When a church is facing change, especially the change of pastoral leadership, uncertainty can produce those same unsettling feelings which may then ripple through the entire congregation. But there is good news—as we are reminded by scripture, we have a great cloud of witnesses who are ultimately guiding us from what was—the history of Peace Lutheran—to what will be—the future of Peace Lutheran. In other words, the past informs the future.

In the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples, “*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me.*” This is one of my favorite Bible verses—the confidence in Jesus' words are both powerful and life giving. Another favorite, Paul's words in Romans, chapter 8, verses 28-39. How could we let anxiety and uncertainty rule our thoughts when the Bible makes it so crystal clear that we have nothing to be afraid of—God is on our side and there is nothing that can or will ever separate us from God's love through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, we are human and often lack the confidence to trust. Fortunately, the Lord is well aware of our weaknesses and we are forgiven and even blessed because the reign of God does not depend on human effort. The future of Peace is filled with awe-inspiring opportunity that will bring blessings to all of you and the entire community of Deshler. The key to the future is the word of our Lord Jesus—“*Trust in God, trust also in me!*” And, I know you will.

I cannot adequately put into words how blessed I feel to have been given the opportunity to be here with you and to serve as your interim pastor these past six and a half months. You all have been gracious beyond words and your hospitality has rivaled that of Abraham and Sarah. The author of Hebrews tells us, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.” I have felt that perhaps it was the other way around—You have been the angels and have entertained me, the stranger. Thank you so very much!

Despite my limitations I felt accepted from the very first Sunday and so enjoyed the fellowship and opportunity to get to know all of you. Donna told me she felt the same way when she was able to attend. I am confident that Pastor Love will be surrounded by love and support just as I have been during my time with you. As I have told you, Peace Lutheran Church is an exceptional community of faith—in nearly 30 years of pastoral ministry I have not experienced a more committed and gifted congregation. Deshler is a great community with much to offer and it is made even better because of this congregation. I will continue to pray daily that God's richest blessings will be poured out in a double measure upon Peace Lutheran and all of you as you go forward into the future with new pastoral leadership.

Pastor Dennis & Donna Reich