



## *Celebrating the Future by Remembering the Past*

Looking to the future is something many people enjoy doing. When we are young it seems we do that a lot. The next birthday, next school year, next Christmas, even down to the next day. I remember when I was young thinking about getting old enough to do the things I really wanted to do, like drive a car, go on a date, eat at the restaurants I liked, go on vacation to places I wanted to go instead of going to uncle George's in Oregon—his house always smelled like mothballs. I believe looking forward is part of our human DNA. If we didn't look to the future we probably would still be living in caves and cooking over a firepit.

Even as Lutherans—you know the people who don't like change—we still look to the future. We look forward to the return of Jesus and his eternal reign. As Christians we are always looking forward to all the blessing we receive from God—that is why I believe looking forward is part of our DNA.

At the same time we, especially as Christians, are always looking backward, to the past. We look back to what God has done for us in creation, back to the birth of Jesus (while at the same time looking forward to his return) and to his life, death, and resurrection. We look to the past and are grateful to our ancestors for forming our community and the church. Looking to the past is probably part of our DNA as well. Looking only to the past or only to the future is where we get ourselves in trouble. You may hear a person say, "well, we've never done it that way and we are not about to start now!" Or you may hear someone say, "we have to change the way we are doing things or else!" Both of those statements are classic "tunnel vision" views. If we only look backward sooner or later we are going to run into the wall and if we only look forward sooner or later we will find ourselves lost in the wilderness or in the same place as where we started.

Peace Lutheran is today in the perfect position to celebrate both the future and the past. Looking to the future and all the possibilities that come with new pastoral leadership while at the same time building on over 135 years of ministry to this community. It truly is a time of celebration—by remembering the past the congregation has the opportunity to gather the hopes and dreams of all the ancestors and infuse them into the shaping of the future as you move forward with a new pastor. How wonderful it will be to unwrap all the possibilities of both the past and the future.

As I have told many of you, this is a great congregation. Your next pastor will be blessed by committed and compassionate people in a community that has so much to offer. To paraphrase the words of Jesus, 'Love your pastor as he or she will love you.' Work together to develop a solid vision of the future while building on the foundation of the past—all of you will be blessed by the work the Lord has called you to do.

*Pastor Dennis*