

Changes are afoot at Salem

Summer is over and the new school year has started. Very soon the leaves will begin to change color. Changes happen all the time, all around us. There are many changes underway at Salem too.

On Sunday, August 22 at our called congregational meeting after worship, we did vote to accept the prerequisites of the loan from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA. While we do not have to borrow the full amount of the loan, it will be handy to have this built in cushion in case our expenses come in ahead of our receipts. Still, that is good incentive for us to keep up the great work on our financial giving commitments toward this new building. There will soon be a change in the look of the property as construction equipment and trailers become the norm on the back side of our building. Once construction begins please use caution as you drive or walk around the back of the church!

Some changes are joyful; other changes are bittersweet. We said goodbye to both the Harters and the Halls in the month of August. Dale Harter served on Christian Education committee and was beginning a term on Mutual Ministry committee as well. Tracy led our Bible Explorers group for 3rd – 5th graders, and Lauren would've been joining us in Youth Group. John Hall was a behind the scenes guy who would do whatever you needed done (like setting up tables and chairs!). Terry served as Treasurer the last year and a half and got the accounting books streamlined into a computerized program. Many thanks to all of them for their specific areas of service, but most importantly I want to thank them for their commitment to worship attendance, Sunday school attendance, and financial stewardship. They will all be sorely missed and we wish them God's richest blessings. Both of these families demonstrated that you

don't have to have grown up at Salem to be active and involved members of the congregation.

Since their leaving decimated my Sunday school class, it was a great time for a change there. Starting September 12, Hank Kowalla and I will be offering a Sunday school class in the social hall called The Divine Drama. This is a wonderfully visual 30 unit curriculum that teaches the biblical story (units 1-16) and then our story (units 17-30) as it relates to the biblical story of God's great desire to be in relationship with us. It is great for either the beginning Christian, or for those desiring a review of biblical themes. Most importantly, it connects the dots of all the things we have learned along the way, helping us to make sense of God's plan by seeing God's big picture. I hope you'll join in.

Stephen Ministry is another big change underway. Our team of Stephen Leaders is already interviewing potential Stephen Ministers and scheduling the dates for the 50 hours of Stephen Minister training. Please watch and listen for more announcements about this in the weeks to come, and please pray about whether God might be calling you to this ministry of intentional one-on-one Christian care-giving.

As in any dynamic and active congregation, there are more changes in the works (the Youth Group will be leading us in two Youth Sundays this year instead of one, for example). They cannot all be named here. But we celebrate most what does not change – that we gather around Word and Sacrament to experience Jesus as the gathered body of Christ – that we come to receive grace and we leave empowered to go share faith.

Come receive grace, go share faith,

Pastor Chris