



***First of the Month @ CLC***

October 1, 2022

Dear Christ Lutheran Church,

*With the eyes of your heart enlightened,  
you may know what is the hope to which he (Jesus) has called you,  
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,  
and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe,  
according to the working of his great power.  
Ephesians 1:18-19*

When I was in high school I had a baseball coach tell us at the beginning of the season, “You boys don’t know how good you are.” I guess it was his way of telling us that when he got through with us, we would be the champions we were made to be. We finished the season second to the bottom of the standings. Either we weren’t good at all, or he didn’t bring out the champion in us.

When it comes to our faith, the reality is that we are always a work in progress, always a diamond in the rough. God is forever inviting us to go deeper, always wanting us to discover (as the passage says above) the hope, the riches, and the power of what lies within us. While we may never fully grasp everything this side of the grave, there is always more God has in store for us.

I mention this because I have a concern that, for many, as we move into and through our pastoral leadership transition, our focus as a church is not on what God is leading us toward, but on what we have been comfortable with. My worry is that my pending retirement occupies a lot of collective thought, worry, and concern. I know that there has been a lot of energy given to meeting with consultants, creating teams, and planning for change. This has been important. But I encourage our members to see this time of transition as a personal invitation by God to go deeper in faith. This is not the time to wait around, wondering what our next pastor is like. This is not the time to be complacent, or worse, apathetic. This is valuable time that God is asking us to draw closer to him and to discover the “working of his great power.”

In regard to the transition work being done, I hope every member is planning to attend the October 9 presentation from our consultants, Jeff Kjellberg and Rick Heltne. We are so blessed to have their guidance through this process. The presentation will begin at 11:00 and offer a light lunch (there is no charge). They will not only share their findings from the 100+ interviews they did last month, but also field questions. I believe, like before, we will be done by 12:30. The event will be videoed and archived on our church website.

In addition, the Church Board approved the Call Committee this past Tuesday. They are Donna Rix, Jennifer Newell, Jill Yohannes, Jane Dutton, Patricia Jordan, Kevin Northcraft, and Luis Belman. They will be meeting with our consultants soon, as well with the Bishop's Assistant from the Synod office. Please pray for them in the important and exhaustive work they will be doing. I might also add that Michael Xiong has joined the Transition Team.

In so far as each of us are asked by God to have "the eyes of our hearts enlightened," I hope you have signed up to be in a small group this month. The five new small groups will be important places where folks will learn about each other, learn about God more intentionally, and learn (in part) the "working of [Jesus'] great power." The theme of our small groups, and worship, is "The Wisdom of Jesus." Now, perhaps like never before, we are being called to trust the wisdom of our Savior and Lord.

I am excited to announce that for those who desire to take a step forward in their faith by joining CLC, there will be a New Members' class offered on Sunday, October 16 and 23. Both classes are in the Community Connection Center and will run from 12:00 to 1:30. Lunch is provided. Call the church office if you are coming, or if you have questions.

Also in October those who have a heart for the CLIPArts ministry (Christ Lutheran Institute of Performing Arts) can make a pledge to sponsor a student, or many! Watch and listen for the ways you might impact the life of a child by supporting them with this amazing ministry. There is nothing like CLIPArts anywhere else in the city...and maybe nowhere else in the state!

Later this month you will hear about our 2023 pledge campaign. The theme will be "Giving For Our Future." I promise, this will be a campaign unlike anything we have ever tried before. Watch and listen for more information beginning Sunday, October 23.

And finally, thinking way forward in the future, I want to whet your appetite for a Christmas project that will be a blessing to our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Plans are under way for us to be a part of an exciting outreach that be as rewarding for those who participate, as it will be for those who receive.

My hope you take away from this letter this month is that *you* are deeply important in the unfolding life and ministry of Christ Lutheran Church. The future of CLC is full of promise, and that is because *you* are full of promise. My sense is that you have yet to even scratch the surface of how God can shape your life, discover his power, or use your gifts and talents to benefit others. God has planted in you a champion-size faith that is amazing!

The Apostle Paul went one step further in his letter to the Ephesians to tell them of his prayer for them. It is my prayer for you, too.

*I pray that, according to the riches of his glory,  
God may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being  
with power through his Spirit,  
and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,  
as you are being rooted and grounded in love.  
Ephesians 3:16-17*

Peace,

*Pastor Brian Malison*