

From the Heart of the Pastor

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Wow, what a joy it is to be writing a newsletter article for Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Buffalo Center, IA. A call process that began before Easter and ended on June 13 with the congregational vote, is finally coming to fruition in a few, short weeks.

I know that this transition time for you has been challenging; any transition is. Normal (whatever that is) gets interrupted, changed and/or transformed. Traditions get altered or put on hold. Patience gets tested. But also, new experiences are revealed. New leaders are raised up. Eyes are opened to new possibilities. And faith is stretched, worked-out and strengthened. So much has happened and so much more is on the horizon. God is definitely doing something and will be doing something great.

Our moving to the Pacific Northwest in 2016 was not an emotional decision to move to a beautiful part of the country. It was not a mistake but rather God's providential hand at work. Our coming to Buffalo Center is not emotional decision to be closer to family and friends, but rather God's providential hand at work to glorify His awesome name. Yes, we are excited to be close to family and friends, but we are even more excited to serve in God's kingdom with you in the name of Jesus, knowing that this is God's doing and thus God will bless this union. God is great and I praise him for bringing us together.

In the meantime, as we wait out this transition, let us prepare for ministry together. *How will we do that?* That is a great question, I am so glad you asked



(1) Pray, pray and pray some more. Pray for my family and I as we wrap up loose ends here in Washington. Also, know that I will be praying for each of you and the leadership at Bethlehem.

(2) Get ready to, ***“Go therefore and make disciples...”*** I am not coming to preach to spectators. I will preach, of course, but we will be in mission together. Thus, I am coming to empower, to encourage and to join with you in mission, making disciples in our little spheres of influence.

(3) Pray, pray and pray some more. Wait, did I say that already? Oh well, it is worth saying again.

(4) Stay grounded in the Word. Satan is going to be working overtime to attempt to derail what God is doing (notice the word “attempt”, because Satan will fail). Satan will try to plant seeds of doubt, discouragement, fear, and hopelessness. Therefore, keep your soil watered with God’s Word and tell Satan to go back from where he came.

The time is inching closer and closer. Soon this long-distance relationship will be over. Soon, we will be joining hand in hand in mission, all in the name of Jesus. Soon, we will be seeing, together, the unfolding of God’s glorious plan. Are you excited? I am. God bless, and we will see you soon.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Eric