

Time is a strange thing. It plugs along at a methodical pace but yet it seems to slow down at the most inconvenient times. You might be going through a particularly difficult time of your life or maybe you are listening to a dull speaker. In such cases you might say that time has slowed down. We know that is not the case, but rather we are more cognizant of time's slow and relentless passage. And then there are those moments when you suddenly become aware of your surroundings and wonder where time went. In such cases you might say, "time flies when you are having fun" or "I blinked and now my children are in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades". Recently, I had another one of those where-has-time-gone moments. I received an invitation to a graduation open house for a young lady from my first call congregation - who was my very first baptism. In case you are counting, that would be eighteen years ago. And so that got me thinking some more. June 1 marks my eighteen-year anniversary of beginning my pastoral ministry and July 2 will be my ordination anniversary. Eighteen years! It is weird to type that, I mean, where has time gone?

A lot has changed in eighteen years. I can still remember my first week in the office at Salem Lutheran Church in Jackson, MN. My head was swimming with do-to list items, very few of which were things I learned in seminary. I was trying to get to know people. And to top things off, on my first day a council member came in with an issue she was having with an anonymous critic (unsigned note). What a way to begin. But time flew at Salem, and twelve years later, now with two children in tow, we packed up to move to Western Washington.

Now it is 2022 (after 5 years in Washington that flew by) and I am far from being wet behind the ears, even though someday it feels that way. I have learned a lot through the many mistakes I have made and through the many incredible people I have met along the way. I have grown in my faith through the highs and lows of life that were faithfully guided by my Lord and Savior, Jesus. And, dare I say, I have gained some wisdom (at least the gray hairs that would signal said wisdom).

Yes, the slow and methodical march of time has seemingly moved into a dead sprint recently, and before we know it, the summer will be done. But remember to slow down and take in the sights. Enjoy your moments but do not forget who you are and who's you are - a child of God. Slow down and worship. Slow down and pray. Slow down and reflect on God's promises. Slow down and "Be Still",

just “Be still”. Enjoy each and every moment of time that slowly, and methodically marches on, taking in all the sights, because it will never stop to allow you a “do over”.