

Pastor's Page for November 2016

Dear Saints,

As we transition from October's stewardship emphasis to November's theme of thanksgiving, I can't help becoming nostalgic. There are ongoing stories throughout the changing seasons of life and faith, and families & church communities should create collective memories to define and remind us who we are and whose we are. This includes the highs and lows, times of crises and celebrations of grace, and lessons learned in discerning when to embrace the new and let go of the old. Personally, I would like to embrace the future and the past ... but our most essential task is figuring out how to embrace the present. In doing so, we should include the visionaries and the historians. I find it helpful to connect with people I can remember with ... sustaining memories and encouraging storytelling to shape paths of continuity. Even the theme of "reformation" must carry history lessons to give contrast to present-day blessings we take for granted.

Currently our leadership is interviewing candidates for our church office Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper position, as Debbie Pett concludes her 10 years of service in this role on October 27th, having been on staff for 13 plus years. She, Ron and family, have certainly helped to define the ministries and congregation of All Saints. In addition to many leadership roles, attending many committee meetings, and being the face of hospitality in the office, Debbie has been active in WELCA, youth ministry, Confirmation, Sunday School, liturgical dance, Bible Studies, vintage clothing fashion shows, "Schmoogieland" and music ... to name a few. Ron, of course, has also been active in many roles, Council president, property chair, fellowship, Bible Studies, "Schmoogieland", evangelical outreach & parade floats, youth chaperone, the food pantry, Christmas caroling ... you get the idea. Their kids were certainly active in Sunday School, Confirmation, youth services and activities. Their granddaughter, puppies and chickens have been frequent visitors to All Saints. So, I just want to publicly say "Thank you" to them, acknowledging twenty years as active members in our congregation, sharing many blessings through the years. Let us wish them well in their transitions of life and faith!

There are so many memories of relationships within All Saints for me in my 24 years as Pastor. There are a few active Charter Members whose faithful witness through 55 years humbles me, such as Audrey Roettiger, Audrey Morin and her family, Joyce Church Reese and her family. Hey, I'm their eighth pastor ... and some of you thought I've been here forever.

We have members who prefer behind the scenes role of volunteer ministries, God bless them, and others who don't mind the limelight with their outgoing personalities and talents. Each helps to define our sense of identity and mission, praying "Thy Will be done" somehow to us and through us, as imperfect as we are. Some New Members and visitors grow into roles, while others immediately jump in with both feet. I'm grateful for both approaches.

I think of members who moved away years ago, and other who have died. I miss them, and somehow they remain a part of the congregation in my heart and mind. To start naming names would make a long article! The first person I met from All Saints is our current Council President, Michaeline Witt, at a single's retreat at LOMC in Oregon, Illinois in January 1989. I

was impressed with her musical talents and outgoing faith. Little did we know as we shared songs, how we would share the next couple decades of All Saints' ministry and church family.

Changes are inevitable. Some are exciting, like the building's 1994 remodeling addition and the next one in 2006. I'm grateful for the 15 years of our Little Saints Preschool and saddened by the need to close it. Everything has a season, just like the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiastes reminds us. We've had ministry highlights which remain in our past, and others which continually resurrect to the present.

On Reformation Sunday, we celebrated Austin Layton's "Affirmation of Faith" at the 10 a.m. Service. On November 12th, we share our annual Stewardship Dinner at the Fox Lake Country Club ... and I hope you're able to be present. Our Thanksgiving Eve Service will be Wednesday, November 23rd at 7 p.m., followed by the pie fest. You're invited to share your favorite kind! Advent begins Sunday November 27th, and we invite those of you who like to decorate for the season to help us on Saturday morning, November 26th. Our Advent Midweek series will be "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem," starting Wednesday, November 30th at 7 p.m. A special Thank You to Pastor Sue Ellen Grudt for her preparations with our Worship and Music committee. I continue to hear so many compliments of her talents and ministry leadership. While I'm thanking people, Phil Donner led a wonderful morning & evening Bible Study this past month, and I encourage our members to participate and express interest in more to come!

I will be gone a few days in December to attend a second memorial service for my mother Delphine, this time in her home congregation in Gold Canyon, Arizona.

I presided at Alex Travers' Eagle Court of Honor at Wauconda's Forest Preserve Jamboree on 10/1, Annaliese Joe Steier's Baptism on 10/2 (Hyde family), Sally Canko Sullivan's funeral at Hamshers on 10/4, Marge Langer's memorial on 10/14, and Cody Matonik's Eagle Court of Honor on 10/29. Year ago, I remember doing Cody's Cub Scout religious "God and Me" achievement with him. We're still hoping the new road sign will soon be installed, but await its arrival.

Keep our Church Council and Mutual Ministry committee in your prayers as we seek a new staff Administrator Assistant/Bookkeeper. I announced a hire in mid-October, after which the candidate decided to rescind her acceptance. So currently, we've scheduled more interviews. "Thy Will be done!"

Love in Christ, Pastor Nathan