

September Pastor's Page

Time has a way of continuing to march on, doesn't it? Those with children are hesitant to admit how quickly they grow up, but our own parents or grandparents often are the ones to call it to our attention. Is that perhaps some sort of coping mechanism on their part?!? We recently celebrated my grandmother's 103rd birthday with a family gathering in Winnebago, and while she has aged only slightly in the eyes of most of us grandchildren during our lifetime, it's the changes and developments in her great-grandchildren (and the addition of four more this year) that all of us adults were talking about that afternoon.

Here we are at the end of another summer season, and I don't know about you but it often seems to me that New Years has nothing on a new school year in terms of change and growth. A passing calendar year seems almost inconsequential—just a number on a page—but a new school year, now that brings visible change!?!

Classmates who have been away from each other for a couple months eagerly reacquaint themselves, often marveling at who has grown or matured more than others over the summer. Teachers struggle with a whole new group of names, faces, and character traits as they pull their classes back into learning mode. Sports teams, musical ensembles, and other extra-curricular activities look for new members and try to sort out who will rise to be leaders in their organizations. All of these bring a chance for renewed self-discovery—of strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes, and a sense of who they are and who they will become.

Following the area school districts, autumn also brings the excitement of a new Christian education year for our church. It too is a chance for renewed self-discovery, and it's not just for kids! Sunday School will be having its annual Rally Sunday on September 10, featuring a breakfast party and a fun opening lesson for all in Heritage Hall at 9:30. Classes for various age groups will be in full swing the following week in the upper level Sunday School area. High school children and adults of all ages are invited to join us each Sunday at 9:15 in the main floor chapel for a varying menu of video-based biblical studies (and coffee). We do wrap up our main discussion in time for choir rehearsal on Sunday mornings, although those not in choir sometimes continue in conversation!

Confirmation classes will also begin in September, helping our 7th grade youth to explore and mature in their personal faith walk toward full membership in the church during their 8th grade year. Our Women's Bible study—well past Confirmation age but still striving for continued understanding of the Christian faith(!)—has continued to meet through the summer, and will continue on September 28 at 9:30 in the basement Fireside Room.

*** I would also be willing to begin a casual adult Bible study to examine and discuss the upcoming week's lectionary passages, meeting on Wednesday mornings over coffee at one of the local restaurants. Let me know if this would be of interest to you so that we can set a time and try out something new! ***

In his letter to the Romans Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith...For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'The one who is righteous will live by faith.'" (Romans 1:16-17, NRSV) Paul challenged the members of his early Christian churches to constantly strive for a deeper and better understanding of Holy Scripture and how it informed their walk of faith in an uncertain world. Some things, no matter how time marches on, just don't change! Each of us, no matter our age, should feel challenged to continue reading, discussing, learning, and growing through interaction with the Bible and fellow believers. We have nothing but sin to lose, and everything to gain!

Yours in Christ's service,

Rev. Cory Germain