

To the congregation of Salem Lutheran Church, the 2009 calendar year continues to provide challenges and changes and we have all had strong feelings regarding Pastor Schmidt's recent resignation; those feelings include sadness and happiness for the joy of Pastor's 20 years of service to the congregation, and all of us no doubt will wonder what comes next? Not to worry, Reverend Rita Gardner of the FL synod of the ELCA has outlined the process of transition which involves the following steps for our congregation; first will be a farewell to Pastor Schmidt (more details will follow on these events) followed later by the reception of an assigned Interim Pastor whom will lead the congregation during this transition period, then a discernment process to understand where we are headed as a congregation and what our needs are, and lastly the Call Committee process itself to select a permanent pastor to lead us into the next decade.

In August the Mission Team will meet with Reverend Gardner to start our work together. It will be necessary to be patient and to properly plan for a successful transition and this will require strong leadership from our Mission Team and a mutual commitment by the congregation to stand firm on their support of the church. We are fortunate in that we have a great strength in Pastor Cox and through this transition period he will continue in his leadership duties as Associate Pastor. As needed, and until an interim Pastor is selected, we will also have the support of a guest Pastor for our Sunday service. Pastor Luther Kistler, well known to our congregation will join us as guest pastor on August 2<sup>nd</sup> after Pastor Schmidt's departure on July 26<sup>th</sup>.

Certainly 2009 is a year of change but we are extremely fortunate at Salem because we have a dedicated staff and Mission Team, active and very involved committees, an emerging and exciting vision for the future, and a strong and caring congregation which is perhaps our greatest strength. Reverend Gardner was quite excited to hear our good news and as a veteran of helping churches through the transition process thought Salem to be in an outstanding position to work through this change process.

Remember to thank God for what we have! Our future is bright and we stand on the threshold of truly becoming the programmatic church that Pastor Schmidt often challenged us to become. Now is the time to make that happen. And don't forget to join in the fun of celebrating Pastor Schmidt's 20 years of service to our church, your Fellowship Committee is hard at work planning for what will become a very memorable event.

Sincerely,  
Scott Fetterhoff  
President, 2009 Mission Team