

Spring 2019 President's Letter

Finally, yes finally! Spring is here, and it is time to get outside. For me, that means I am delighted to ride my bicycle. I enjoy the exercise, the time to meditate, and the sites to see. Living in a small town means it does not take long to get to the country. I love to look at the farms, the crops, and the cattle.

But in town there are the houses and the people who live there—or used to live there, including Sydney's house. She was a young lady who grew up in the congregation I served. She attended the Lutheran School. She was confirmed in the congregation...and attended less, as did her family. But often we would run into each other.

She and her parents drifted from life in the church, and there was a divorce. Everyone moved away. No more contact with these very nice people. But their former house always represented the family and the relationship.

Some years later a mutual friend reached out that one of her parents suddenly passed away. Would I be able to help with services some distance away? Well, of course! With the compassion of Jesus, we bring the truth of Jesus, both Law and Gospel.

There was Sydney, no longer a young adult, but a woman, living in a big city. But when I saw her, she was grieving. Death. Tears. Loss. And I was able to proclaim what she had been taught about sin, the wages of sin, and the Savoir. The only Savior. This Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

After the service I told her that every time I saw her old house, I would pray for her. I don't know if she would remember, but I do! It's been 10 plus years, but I am still riding by her home, praying for her life, and especially her life with God. Wherever Sydney is today, she is being prayed for by me and hopefully others. Like you, my prayer life falls short.

Please do not miss out on the promise that your prayers for others are heard as you pray in the name of Jesus, our Great High Priest. You can pray for the missing, lost, and erring. Many of us are troubled by loved ones no longer in the faith or far from the Church. We are not sure where to start.

We begin with prayer...persistent prayer. We set an example: our words and lives overflow in what the Lord has given us through His gifts empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Recently, I was in a conversation with a Pastor in our District. He was speaking of the passing of his father. His father, for most of his life, was not a believer in Jesus. But this son told me that he had been praying for his father for 50 years...that he would know Jesus as his Savior. Then, to his joy, the father confessed Jesus as His Savior.

Persistent Prayer! He died in the faith and knows Christ face to face. The Lord is at work through the prayers of His righteous people. (James 5:16)

One final thought on prayers—please pray for your Pastor, his family, your teachers, DCEs, Deaconesses and all your professional workers. Even if your relationships are strained at times, lift them up in prayer. This is for their good, your congregation's or ministry's good, and this is what we do in the Church. Even the Apostle Paul said, "Pray for us." (Colossian 4:3) As you read in this issue, we joyfully remember everyone can do something! These prayers are a big deal, because we are invited to pray and also commanded to pray by our Lord.

The Church Fathers used to say, Ora et Labora (pray and work). Please notice the order.

Some years ago I was preaching for another Pastor who was out of town. In the Prayers of the Church, I prayed for the Pastor of the congregation by name. After the service a well-meaning attender asked me why we prayed for the Pastor. "What's wrong with him?" "Well, nothing that I know of, but we pray for our Pastors." We pray for all the servants the Lord has given us. I am trusting that Pastors are praying for the people they have been Called to serve. I want and need you to know that I am praying for you, your congregation, and the Called workers of the NID! Thanks for your prayers for our work together and for me and my family.

All and Only because of Jesus, He too is praying for you and me, at the Right Hand of God, as our Great High Priest.