

**WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, September 15, 2020**  
**Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN**

**“Every Time I Remember You”**

**READING: Philippians 1:3-6 – I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**

**A week ago, Sunday, you folks mostly surprised me with a luncheon and a “roast” commemorating my 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of service to Grace, New Albany. Sometime around the 20<sup>th</sup> of August in 1990, my family and I arrived at Grace, and I started my learning experience as your vicar. Little did I know that I would still be here, serving as your Senior Pastor, after 30 years. And, little did I realize just how fast those 30 years would go! ZOOM! We’re here!**

**In my remarks on the 6<sup>th</sup> I mostly concentrated on thanking the congregation as a whole for their love, support, kindness, and friendship over these years. The whole bunch has become not just parishioners, not just friends, but very truly family. I thank God frequently for calling me to this congregation and giving me the privilege of being their pastor.**

**Today I want to take a moment to thank and laud individuals who have made this long pastorate possible. See, I don’t do everything around Grace. I am and have been assisted, supported, and challenged by some of the finest staff members any Senior Pastor could ever hope for. I started with Curt Peters as my “assistant” pastor, but he was a lot more than that. He was my mentor and my confessor, and he’s my good friend to this day. His wife, Pam, was our first Music Director and did much to make my life easier.**

**And then, there’s our secretary, Karen Meredith. She was here when I came, and she has pulled my bacon out of the fire a hundred times by reminding me of deadlines, dates, times, and procedures all with a marvelous sense of humor and tremendous patience and ability. I had a Youth Director second to none in Mitzie Lyon Schmelz. She did youth ministry exactly the way I always knew it should be done, and I’ve never seen anyone do it better. My second Music Director is still my Music Director! Helen Bohannon has so much talent, so much energy, so much love for Godly music, and she has taught me so much I didn’t know before I met her. And, I have some new help on the scene in our Children’s Minister, Sabrina Haug, and our Interim Youth Director, Rose Ebling. Both of them have already demonstrated creativity and a dedication to our young ones from cradle to young adulthood. I can’t wait to see what blessings they will be for Grace. And, not to forget, a treasurer in Bob Alles who has kept us on the straight and narrow while making himself available time and time again.**

**And, of course, I dare not leave out Pastor Woods. For over 19 years he has been my strong right arm. Not only is he a good, caring, energetic and creative pastor, but he is my good friend, my confidant, and the hammer to my anvil! We are kindred spirits in so many ways,**

yet complimentary in so many others. Team ministries are often either “made in heaven” or “smoldering in the pits”. I’m most happy to report that ours is decidedly the former!

You might also imagine that there have been individuals in the congregation over my years who have had a big impact on me by their involvement, their wisdom, their humor, and their companionship. Names come to mind like Jeff Olson, George Gebhardt, Ron Dietrich, Ron Jenkins, Frank Appleby, Mildred Lewellen, Erna McIntyre, Frances A, B, and C (Anderson, Borkenheim, and Conrad), Chuck and Elaine Osburn, Roxie Minter, Bob Hunt, and so many, many more. I’ve laid to rest so many of the family here. I look forward to when I can see and visit with them again. Each one left an impression on my heart. I miss them.

And finally, I must also laud my wife, Becky. Had she not given me permission I might never have come this way. Being a pastor’s wife, by its very nature, requires sacrifices of time and presence. She spent a lot of weekday evenings at home alone with the kids and by herself when they were all gone. She has always supported, encouraged, and been my sounding board, and I love her very much. Having mentioned the kids, Andy, Dan, and Christa also receive my thanks. When I attended the Seminary and then came to Grace, they attended three different schools in each of three consecutive years. New homes, new places, new friends and at an age when those transitions can be very hard. They all did well with it and always seemed proud that their dad was a pastor. I love them very much.

So, having started with Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi, I understand EXACTLY what he was saying to them. Ministry is a partnership of pastor and parish in living out, proclaiming, and celebrating the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul thanked God for their faith and their faithfulness. I do the same in my prayers. We have shared much together: births and baptisms, confirmations and weddings, troubles and tragedies, losses, reverses, and frightening diagnoses, and through it all we have kept the faith and trusted in our Heavenly Father through his Son by the work of the Holy Spirit. I don’t know just how many more years I’ll hold this seat, but trusting in His promises, you and I will walk in The Way together. God bless you all. I love you very much. Amen.

#### PRAYER:

#### ANNOUNCEMENT(S):

Saturday, September 19, 5:00 – we are planning a drive-in worship service in place of the usual Saturday night service. You’ll be able to park in the lot, see the pastors from your car, and tune in to the service on your FM dial. At the end of the service, Holy Communion will be celebrated and distributed as you drive out the exit past the gym. In this way we hope to give those who have stayed out of the building for five months for fear of COVID the opportunity to safely and meaningfully worship AND RECEIVE COMMUNION. More info will be coming, so stay tuned!

We would once again put out a plea for those who are “techies” to consider volunteering to learn from Ryan Dietrich the process by which we broadcast our service on the Internet.