

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you..." Philippians 1:3

When I read this, I think of you dear members of St. Paul. You might think, pastor just got here why use this verse of Scripture? Would a different verse be more appropriate for this first newsletter article? Would this verse **"to remember you"** be better suited for a time in which we knew each other better? Yes, this verse is most appropriate for such an occasion, but it also fits the relationship between Pastor and his congregation from the very beginning. Paul is speaking about the faith and support from the Philippians which encouraged him. Your faith and support, your faithfulness to God's Word and to the ministry of the Gospel of Christ has already encouraged me as your newly called and installed Pastor. We enjoy a relationship together even before we met through Christ our Savior as members of His Church because we belong to the Communion of Saints through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Paul begins the letter to the Christians in Philippi by reminding them of who they are. As a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul desires to be nothing but faithful to the ministry entrusted to him. That is my desire as your pastor here at Beach. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he gives great encouragement to everyone to whom he is writing; indeed to us in today's church as well. The Philippians had given him great joy by joining with him in the work of the Gospel to a world that needs its Savior. Indeed, my joy is also with you, and I am encouraged by all of you in our work here in Beach serving our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

The Philippians greeted the Gospel of Jesus Christ with joy and worked together with him in a most willing manner to proclaim the Gospel to others. Throughout the letter, Paul speaks of the joy and gratitude he has in Christ for the blessings bestowed on him. Paul directs his readers to the sacrifice and death of Jesus and His Exaltation which followed the cross. Further, Paul reminds them and us, the readers of today as well, that we are declared righteous in God's sight by the merits of Christ our Savior. By this, both the Philippians and we who believe in Christ our Savior are eternal members of God's kingdom.

All of this encouraged the Philippians, even as they encouraged him by working with him. Paul encouraged them, which applies to us also, as saints of God, who are given peace through Jesus Christ. Now we too as believers today can see how God works in our lives, using our gifts and abilities to the glory of God. We are called to a life **“worthy of the Gospel” (Philippians 1:27)**. We have confidence through our Lord Jesus Christ that He will bring to completion the work He has begun in us as we are justified before the Father by the redemption of Christ.

With joyful confidence, Paul regards the Philippians as his beloved joy and crown. Paul is confident in God’s abundant grace and thanks God for their faith each time he is reminded of them. He is grateful for their partnership and the Gospel and he cannot forget how they stood by him and supported him in every situation.

We are drawn together, people and pastor, by God’s call to a pastor through the congregation to proclaim Christ to a world that needs its Savior, in this time and this place according to the will of Him who sent Christ by His institution of Word and Sacrament ministry. Paul’s relationship with his people is a loving relationship with people and pastor. Our relationship, people and pastor together, begins in the Priesthood of all believers 1 Peter 2:9 as we have been baptized into Christ and become believers by God’s grace in our Savior Jesus Christ.

By God’s grace we are His and by His call we are brought together to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. With great joy, we serve Him and His church to the glory of His Name for the furtherance of His Kingdom by proclaiming the Good News about Jesus! Yes, Indeed! Reformation 2017 in November and the days following, **“It’s Still About Jesus.”**

Thank you for all your help as we continue to get settled and do the work of Christ our Savior here at St. Paul. We are truly blessed to be here among you, God’s people, as **“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you.”**

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt