

MISSION MOMENT

God's Love Lets Us Retire!

But What Does That Look Like for Retired Pastors and Deacons in Our Synod?

By Deacon Vicki Hanrahan

Don't let the word, "retirement," fool you. In our beloved community of our synod, our retired clergy hardly stop moving when they retire. Retirement seems more like a state of mind than a slowing down. In fact, retired rostered ministers in our synod continue to serve in many different capacities and we are very grateful for that. But to them, it is about serving in a gentler way...taking sabbath as they need it...and choosing to serve in ways that feed their souls the most.

Perhaps who has said it best is recently retired pastor, Rev. Ken Schaub. Last Sunday, the members of

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Reedsburg participated in a sending service for their interim contract pastor, Rev. Ken Schaub. Ken had finished his one-year commitment to the congregation for interim ministry concurrently with announcing his retirement. In his words, "Now I know that I am not done. I know I will be riding a circuit for supply preaching around the synod...but maybe not during the winter in the hinterlands." And that is true. Retired clergy can choose to say "no," if they don't want to drive to rural congregations during wintertime; they can choose the weekends in which preaching works for them; they can serve in short 5-week stints such as in teaching Diakonia courses. The beauty for our retired is that they design their retirement calls. Often time is spent in conversations with the synod staff person, Rev. Steve Kotte, who helps our rostered navigate the waters of retirement.

This is a joyous time for our retired as they get to combine all their passions...continuing to preach on occasion, (as exhorting the good news to their flocks is one of the things they often miss the most), but they can lean into other passions be it spending time with grandchildren, spouses, children, hobbies, travel, or just being!



I seem to be specializing in "sending services" these days and have in the past two months sent off two pastors to their retirement. Pastor Mark Peterson recently retired after serving as contract interim at Faith Lutheran Church in Columbus. During his final children's sermon, Pastor Mark shared that he was looking forward to spending more time with his grandchildren, but that there will be a little spot in his heart that will need a band aid for his missing the children of Faith Lutheran church who endeared themselves to Pastor Mark. Transitions can be bittersweet and we recognize that it's not easy for congregations and members to say good bye to each other. But say good bye we must as we send them on to other parts of God's kingdom.



Ways that retired pastors serve are numerous! They serve as:

- * Interim contract pastors
- * Synod Committees
- * Pulpit Supply
- * diakonia Instructors
- * [Synod's Speaker's Bureau](#)
- * Volunteer in the synod office
- * Guest Preachers for Thursday Worship in the Synod Chapel

To keep our rostered retired and those with spouses connected, quarterly gatherings are held that include a meal, fellowship and updates. Former Bishop, Rev. George Carlson is the chair of the retired clergy group and organizes these gatherings. Another way our retired serve!

Pastor Rich Johnson (formerly pastor of All Saints, Fitchburg and now retired) serves as a Diakonia instructor and recently taught an excellent class on Christian Worship.

God's love makes us new each day. For all of our retired, we continue to be grateful that they consider serving us in new ways. They are on our roster of ministers, are invited to synod events and are considered to be actively serving, until they tell us otherwise!