

MISSION MOMENT



Atonement Lutheran Church: When One Door Closes, God Opens Another

By Deacon Vicki Hanrahan

A service of holy closing was held on October 3 for Atonement Lutheran Church in Beloit. Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe, the Rev. Steve Kottke, Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership Support, Synod Vice-President, Jane Cahill Wolfgram and Cheryl Ramczyk, Atonement Church Council President led members of the congregation through a bittersweet process of closing the church.

“It’s hard to think of this as a day to celebrate, but you have 115 years to celebrate your ministry in this place and through it all, God has been with you,” said Rev. Kottke in his message. “Through all the ups and downs, through all the joys and sorrows that are part of our life together, God was with you...and God is with you now. God is calling you to new ventures not yet seen.”

Jane Cahill Wolfgram thanked the congregation and assured them that their legacy will continue, “As we look at the church closure, there are many sad moments, but there is also the joy of knowing that all the work and all the effort that has gone into this church will be used to continue to make disciples, to plant new churches, and to carry out God’s great commission.” Money from sold assets including the church building will be used for planting new churches and for supporting seminarians with educational assistance.

Bishop Mortensen-Wiebe punctuated this, “Indeed the assets that you use to support seminarians will be put to good use by bright, energetic, called pastors who will be coming into the search for calls and some who will be starting brand new congregations. So, I hope that can fill your heart with some new joy that is mixed with some sorrow for this closing.”

We give thanks for the ministry that has happened in this congregation and for the people who have been fed and nurtured in the Christian faith there. Even as we mark the end of an era in one place, we acknowledge we are all participants in God’s mission that continues beyond this day and beyond the church’s walls.

If you were unable to watch the live stream of the service of holy closing, you can view it here. Please hold the people of Atonement in your prayers as they work through their emotions and find a new place of worship where they can be fed and continue to use their gifts for ministry.

<https://www.facebook.com/AtonementBeloit/videos/1523700571147506/>