



November 2017

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our LORD and Savior. As I write this, it is a cool, crisp October morning. The leaves are bright and pumpkins are everywhere. I sure love the fall, but I can't believe it's almost November already and that it's been just over a year, already, since I and my family arrived in Richland Center. In the past year I have gotten to know many of you well and have made strong connections. Others of you, however, I have only met once or twice, and some of you maybe not at all. This grieves me. A pastor friend of mine, who has many years of experience, once said to me that the most important thing you can do in the first year of a new pastorate, is get to know your congregation. I admit that I have not done very well at that, and I am sorry. I ask that you extend to me some grace, just as God's grace is extended to each and every one of us.

The pastor's life is quite full of many competing interests and obligations. Having responsibility of two congregations while being a father of two small children, one with autism, can be challenging at times. (To get an understanding of how stressful a pastor's life can be at times, please read an article by Thom Rainer at this website: thomrainer.com/2012/05/a_day_in_the_life_of_a_pastor/). However, this is no excuse for letting visitation and pastoral care fall to the wayside in the ministry of the church. This is a key part of the role of pastor.

We have a small but dedicated group of women who help me by making visits to sick, elderly and homebound members of our congregation. Thank you, Sandy, Linda, and Rosie, for all you have done; I have thanked God for them many times. This group is led by Tricia Holley, who attends worship at Peace church and also leads the Tuesday morning study group at Trinity church. Unfortunately, our visitation team has had a few setbacks this year with illnesses, of members or member's families, and efforts to recruit others into this ministry have been fruitless thus far. Therefore, we currently we do not have anyone to do regular visitations. This ministry is an important priority for the church leadership and for the congregation.

Therefore, to put emphasis on this priority, and to help me fulfill this part of my ministry, the SPRC is happy to announce that we are recognizing and affirming Tricia's ministry by conferring her with the title of "Minister of Pastoral Care." We have a very capable and well-trained leader in Tricia Holley. She is theologically trained, more so than many pastors in our state, having a Master of Divinity degree, from Dubuque Theological seminary, with a focus in pastoral

care. She works as a spiritual care provider (chaplain) for SSM Health at Home - Hospice. She is a very capable, well organized, and Spirit filled woman who God has called into ministry, and we recognize and validate her calling by bestowing upon her this title.

You might be thinking that this is an effort to merely take responsibility off myself for doing visitation; Not So! As I said above, visitation is a key part of my responsibilities as pastor, and I do not intend to shirk that responsibility. Tricia will assist me by helping prioritize visitation needs, recruiting folks to serve in the visitation ministry, training volunteers for this ministry and coordinating the visitation team's efforts. She and the visitation team will continue to visit folks and care for them, thereby taking some pressure off of me to see everyone so often. In this way, I can be sure to see the folks I must see in a timely manner. It is important to remember that it is the responsibility of the whole congregation, not just the pastor, to care for members of the congregation. In Exodus 18:13-26, we read of how Jethro advised Moses to appoint helpers in fulfilling his responsibilities as leader and judge of the people of Israel. By doing this he was "able to stand the strain," and all the people were satisfied. We read in Luke 10 of how Jesus sends out the 72 disciples, two by two, to do the work of the Lord. Jesus says here that "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Brothers and sisters, the work of the church is much too great for one man, therefore I am grateful that the leadership of the church has seen fit to appoint Tricia in her role. I would also encourage you to attend the training and information session we will be having on Nov. 9th for the visitation ministry. The need is great, but the workers are few.



Tricia Holley
Minister of Pastoral Care

Here you will find a picture of Tricia. When you see her, take a moment to thank her for her willingness to serve our congregations in this way and to get to know her better.

God bless you all and see you soon.

Rev. Wiley Gladney