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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

August 30, 2009

Greetings and Blessings,

This week we look forward to new beginnings. We all like the freshness, the possibilities, the surprises of a fresh start. Children's eyes sparkle as they look forward to the start of a new school year, to meeting new friends and a new teacher. Teachers look forward to the clean slates of a class of eager minds to work with. People in various occupations often see this time of year, after summer holidays, as the start of a new work year with new opportunities for growth and development. And this year at Knox we look forward to the arrival of our new minister, the Rev. Johan Olivier, to new relationships, the hearing of fresh expressions of God's truth, and the excitement of the whole getting-to-know-you adventure. I know from past experience that Rev. Olivier feels the same anticipation of new challenges, new opportunities for sharing God's message, and new relationships and friends.

And God likes new beginnings! As Paul writes "Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone, a new life blossoms forth!" (II Corinthians 5:17, Peterson's The Message) "All this comes from God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationship with each other." It is significant that when talking about new beginnings and new relationships we at the same time are reminded that we may have some lingering issues with others that need to be settled. Just as we are invited daily to enter into the newness of a walk with God, so we are called to deal with old baggage we may be dragging along with us. The road forward can be significantly lightened when we extend forgiveness and seek reconciliation *before* setting out. So I encourage you to make that phone call you have been putting off, or write that letter that will start the healing process for hurts that have been allowed to fester too long.

As people of faith we ought to take the first steps to seek relationship restorations even if we don't think it was "our fault" in the first place. 'Humble pie' can be quite delicious when lost friends or relatives are approached with the view that we have let the strains cost us too dearly and love ought to prevail.

My dear friends, get ready to rejoice with God in September's new beginnings and make it possible for joy to be complete by the gifts of love and forgiveness.

May God grant you His Peace!

(Rev.) John McGurrin