

Pastor's Annual Report April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Beloved of Christ at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church,

The Old Testament book of Ezra is about the time when God's people came out of exile, returning to Jerusalem after having been scattered by the nations that conquered them. It was a time of great transition. The first temple had been desecrated and destroyed by their conquerors, but when they returned, they rebuilt it. Ezra 3 reports that when the foundation of the second temple was laid, many of the people who had seen the first temple "wept with a loud voice" but also that many "shouted aloud for joy" so that their mourning and celebration was mixed together.

We are also in a time of great transition as God's people; the church we know is changing rapidly. And there is room for grieving – our budgets and attendance numbers are not as big as they once were, shrinking along with our cultural influence. But there is also much to be celebrated – Prince of Peace is a shining example of how the church can deepen and adapt to be what God is calling us to be: living together in God's grace and working for both peace and justice in the world.

Prince of Peace has spent the last year welcoming newcomers, sending beloved friends to new ventures, all the while dwelling together in the temple of Christ's body wherever we go, gifted by grace. I shout out in celebration to be able to share this holy community and calling with you! And I grieve with you about all the things in the church and world that are not as they should be. I live in hope that God is building new spaces for renewal through Jesus Christ, even among us!

I have seen Christ at work as you welcome one another, serve in your daily lives and areas in which you volunteer, and the joy with which this community of faith carries out its vocation.

Finally, thanks be to God for you. Thank you for your willingness to invest in God's work at Prince of Peace and in the Rocky Mountain Synod of the ELCA and in our homes and community. Thank you for your many gifts – of time, energy, talent, and finances. God hears your cries of mourning and shouts of joy and is at work in you, bringing the gifts of grace to a world in need.

In hope,

Rev. Scott Thalacker

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Scott Thalacker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.