



November 2017

A Word from the NWC Superintendent Mark R. Stromberg ...

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

As you prepare to meet for your congregational annual meeting, I want to extend a word of greeting, challenge and encouragement as you reflect back on the ways that God's Spirit has been active in your midst in the past year; even as you have sought to be faithful in your calling to be salt and light in your community.

As ECC President Gary Walter has observed, ministry has never been easy. However, we all sense that the incline has become even steeper in recent years. Those entering ministry (and the churches they serve) are facing challenges that were not even on the radar in the past. As such, we are mindful of our need to seek God's presence and guidance with all of our hearts.

Yet, we are also called to persevere and to overcome in the midst of these circumstances. If we examine the words given to each of the churches at the beginning of the book of Revelation (chapters 2-3), we are told that each was promised something, but it was conditional upon those individual churches being "overcoming-ones." And this notion of overcoming is a powerful one for us, as it implies that there will be great challenges and obstacles while serving Christ.

The Apostle Peter admonishes believers to not be surprised by the fiery ordeals they are facing, as if something strange were taking place ... that this is normal and natural in this world as we are in a spiritual battle and wait for Christ's glory to be revealed (1 Peter 4:12).

Further, the Apostle Paul speaks of his own journey of being an overcomer in II Timothy 4 when he writes, *"For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."*

In your church and ministry, may you display that kind of resilience and tenacity, remaining true to your first love of Jesus and your commitment to share the witness of His Word with those around you. Know that the Holy Spirit is with you to guide, admonish, encourage, challenge, comfort, correct and lead you until the day of Christ's appearing. In the meantime, fight the good fight and be strong in the Lord! For it is only in this that we, too, can be overcomers!

Mark R. Stromberg
Superintendent