

Anniversary Celebrants

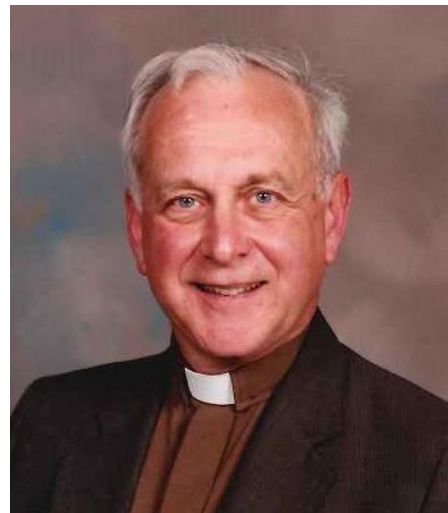
Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination The Rev. P. Richard Grove

Oh, the stories that old preachers could tell, but who cares about the past...

...Stories about Bob Neumeier, the development of Center City Lutheran Parish, and the origins of Urban Ministry in Philadelphia after 36 congregations closed between 1945 and 1965; about the growth of African American membership from 947 in 1964 peaking at 5,332 in 1989.

...Stories about the great suburban revolt in 1968 causing the ouster of Synod President Sam Kidd, followed by the election and rebuff of Bill Janson.

...Stories about the Lutheran Church sponsoring and financing the Council on Community Organization, with Dr. Martin Heineken as the keynote speaker at the organizing convention that resulted in free SEPTA fares now enjoyed by seniors and funded by the lottery.



...Stories about Black clergy and their wives trying to pull me out of the pulpit at Christ Church on Reformation Sunday, or the time that Lay Associate trainee Bobby Cobbs organized the black youth of Strawberry Mansion to firebomb the parish house at 30th and Diamond.

...Stories about organizing the second urban parish, Northwest Philadelphia Lutheran Parish and serving on the synod staff with responsibility for evangelism, NPLP, and IPEC (Inter Parish Evangelism Committee).

...Stories of congregational ministry beginning as an Urban Missioner at Mediator (1964-1966), then as a white pastor at Christ Church (1966-1970) and recruiting Grover Wright as a Lay Associate; from 1970 to 1977 Director of NPLP and synod staff; from 1977 to 1991 pastor of Trinity Church in Germantown with Sister Mildred Winter, and finally from 1991 to 2004 organizing a new congregation in a cow pasture in the Amish community of Honey Brook at the time of a cross burning in 1993.

...Personal stories growing up in the fields of Pennville where a cavalry skirmish outside of Hanover, PA set the stage for the Battle of Gettysburg, attending a four room school house, beginning my work career with released time from 7th grade classes to cut asparagus; meeting my bride to be in 8th grade; after my father's death at age 38 working for my 9th grade Sunday School teacher on a surveying crew, summer work in a paper mill, dish washing at Syracuse University (BA in philosophy), and driving an ice cream truck before seminary at Philadelphia, "the best seminary in the Lutheran Church" according to Paul Bosch, campus pastor at Syracuse who insisted that I just had to come to Philadelphia.

...Family stories featuring my wonderful, supportive, assisting-pastor and wife of 53 years, Nancy, a gifted teacher of the hearing impaired, a marvelous mother of our three children – Sarah, an organ builder, church musician, entrepreneur music teacher in Staunton, VA; Paul,

PHD classical guitar teacher and performer in Spokane, WA; and Steve, recently ordained Lutheran pastor, hospital chaplain in Minneapolis, MN and principal tuba for the Duluth symphony ; and two amazing granddaughters Sierra in Spokane and Maddie in Minneapolis.

...Retirement stories beginning with our move from Honey Brook in 2006 to the backyard of Independence Hall on the 16th floor of a one-bedroom condo, volunteering at the Constitution Center and the National Park archeology lab; working out at Silver Sneakers three days a week; walking to worship at St. Peter's Episcopal; traveling two or three times a year and reading a lot of good stuff; battling prostate cancer in 2010 and fighting shingles in 2013.

...Finally, there are the stories I would love to tell – stories of all the different people we have been privileged to know, and, yes, the joys, sorrows and regrets, but who cares... I do, after 50 years of ministry in Philadelphia, the birthplace of the Lutheran Church in the new world, and the birthplace of America. Thanks be to God and thanks for the memories.

Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination The Rev. George E. Keck

Unexpected Reflections after 50 Years of Ordination

It is curious that things in life never turn out quite as expected – by yourself or by others!

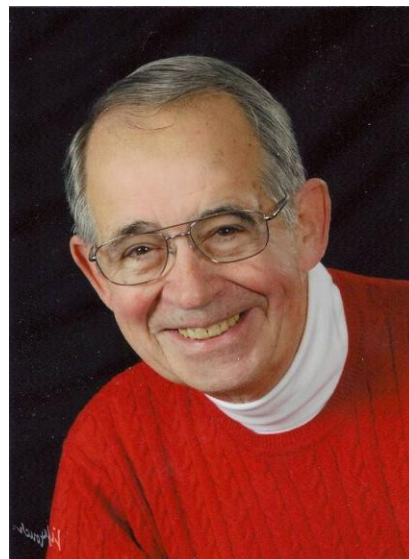
But somehow, along the way, loving hands mold and shape our clay jars - *“we have this treasure in clay jars, so it may be made clear...that the power belongs to God and does not come from us. [II Corinthians 4:7]”*

My reflections about being ordained 50 years are best summarized in words spoken by another retired person in the delightful movie “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. *“Nothing has worked out quite as I expected...sometimes what happened instead is the good stuff of life.”*

Born during the Great Depression in rural Western Pennsylvania, my early life was a bit like Garrison Keillor's “Lake Wobegon – basic with no frills and low expectations.

Few of you reading this may have ever attended a one room school complete with a pot belly stove inside and two, two-seat, outhouses outside. In high school, I played football and expected to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers. That never happened. Instead, I was a high school dropout, began to learn the plumbing business, and got married.

Fortunately, a new young pastor came to our country church. Bill Kuhre changed all of my expectations with many late-night discussions. It was Bill who urged me into taking night classes at a local college. It was Bill who challenged me with the possibility of being ordained even though, by then, I was married and the father of two daughters! Then two major things happened that I never expected – graduation from Thiel College and the Lutheran Seminary in



Philadelphia. All of these unexpected experiences resulted in my being able to give 50 years of ordained service that I would never have expected to happen to a high school drop-out.

- First call to be Associate Pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Greenville, PA.
- Senior Pastor, at Holy Trinity, Greenville. PA
- Synod Staff, Western Pennsylvania- West Virginia Synod, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Director of Leadership Development, LCA, Philadelphia.
- Director of Admission/Continuing Education, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

Unfortunately, Minieres's Disease resulted in an unexpected early retirement. However, after surgery and therapy, the good news is that Betty and I have found living at Peter Becker Community, Harleysville, Pa., to be a wonderful place in our retirement. Another example of the unexpected "good stuff" of life.

Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination The Rev. Raymond M. Kvande

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.”

(Isaiah 43:1b)

Pastor Clarence Carlson gave me this verse on the occasion of my confirmation at Messiah Lutheran Church on Staten Island, NY. It has remained with me and figured significantly in my journey of faith and service.

I was born in Brooklyn, NY, and grew up there, in Mt. Lebanon, PA, and Staten Island, NY, where I was educated in the public schools. Sometime during high school, my involvement in church activities at Messiah gave me a glimmer that I myself might be called to ministry. After graduation, I went to Colgate University and pre-enrolled at Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, IL. My first year at Colgate went well, but I realized, during my second year, that Colgate was not right for me. So I returned home before the end of my fourth semester, found factory work, and struggled with



questions of my faith and my vocation. During the Maundy Thursday worship service that spring, I gained clarity about my faith and found a renewed call to ministry. That fall I entered Upsala College, resumed my pre-seminary college education, and met Carol Anderson, an English major from New England. We both had parts in a student production of The Sign of Jonah, a play by a German Lutheran pastor wrestling with German guilt for World War II. We became close that semester and soon realized we were meant to enjoy a life-long loving relationship.

I received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Upsala in June 1958 and that fall I began my studies at Augustana Theological Seminary (now part of LSTC). Carol and I were married by her father, Pastor Frank A. Anderson of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Bridgeport, CT the following summer. In 1962, after receiving a Bachelor of Divinity (now M.Div.) degree, I decided to pursue

graduate studies in the S.T.M. program at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, rather than seek a parish call. In addition to my full-time studies there, I also worked part-time as assistant to the pastor at my home congregation in Staten Island. Those two years were remarkably rich and full. My father was chair of the Christian Education Committee and Superintendent of Sunday School, and my mother was one of the teachers. As part of introducing new Sunday School curriculum materials, I taught leadership education classes. My parents were among the students in the classes, and it was a wonderful experience to work as an adult with them and to have them accept me as their teacher.

After two years of combining graduate studies and parish ministry, I was called to serve Grace Lutheran Church in Malvern, PA, where I realized that I loved parish ministry more. During my eleven years of service at Grace, we constructed the congregation's first building and established a nursery school. Our son Thor was born on our eleventh wedding anniversary and our daughter Marta came two years later. Their arrival made our family full and complete.

My next parish call was to Calvary, Bustleton, where I served for two years before taking a Leave from Call. I became the family's homemaker and Carol became the breadwinner, working as Managing Editor of the Division of Parish Services of the LCA. My leave from call was not renewed, so for the next several years, instead of Ministry of Word and Sacraments, my serving Christ took other forms: refugee resettlement, coordinating a neighborhood preaching outreach mission, and organizing a feeding ministry. These ecumenical activities involved congregations as varied as Mennonite, Roman Catholic, and many mainstream denominations. I am particularly proud of my work with the Northeast Committee on Homelessness, an ecumenical effort to serve the needs of homeless and hungry people. With the help of local pastors and lay leaders, I started a Saturday Soup Kitchen that served 100-125 people each week. Twenty-five years later, that ministry was still active in feeding hungry people of the neighborhood, thanks be to God!

My experience resettling refugees from Viet Nam and Hungary led to a brief and enjoyable period of employment with Lutheran Children and Family Service as their Refugee Resettlement Director. Later I worked for the LCA's Department of Information Services to prepare for the merger that formed the ELCA. I also had the privilege of serving on the board and as the chair of the Northwest Philadelphia Lutheran Parish, up to and through the transition from LCA to ELCA. It was a privilege to work with many capable and devoted leaders as we faced the challenge of change in our local structure and to reimagine our mission as the national church underwent major changes.

In February 1993 I began serving as a supply pastor at Our Saviour, Kensington, then became the Interim there and subsequently at Peace as well. My call to a three-year term of service restored me to the clergy roster. Sadly, Peace had to close after those three years, and three months later, I was asked to preside over the closing of Bethel as well. Virtually all the members of Peace, and a few members of Bethel came to Our Savior, strengthening the congregation for mission and ministry. In order to serve the Spanish-speaking majority in our neighborhood, we used seed money from Bethel's closing service to begin to form Nuestro Salvador. For our first step, creating a summer day camp, we had the assistance of LTSP seminary student Priscila Curet. Thanks to funding from the synod and ELCA, Priscila served her internship as Mission Developer of Nuestro Salvador under my supervision. In 2003 we fulfilled the transition plan:

Priscila was ordained and called to serve as Mission Developer of Nuestro Salvador and Pastor to the Anglo congregation and I retired from active ministry.

Eight months after I retired, Carol suffered a disabling stroke at work, and I began caring for her at home and in the nursing home. I could not have done so without the loving help of a pastoral colleague, former parishioners of Our Saviour, and many members of our home congregation, University Lutheran Church of the Incarnation (UniLu). Carol Kvande was mercifully recruited to the heavenly choir on April 27, 2006.

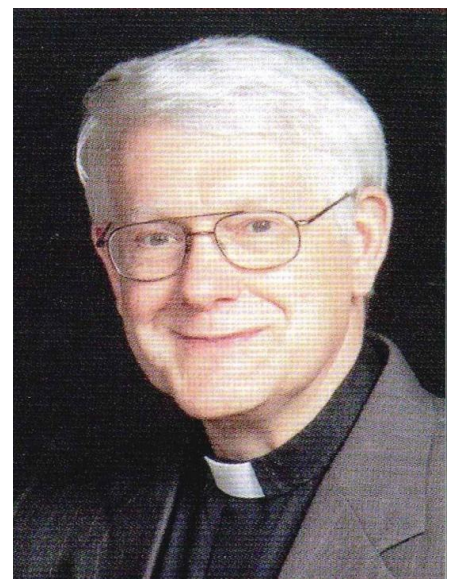
A few years ago, a member of UniLu who was beginning to discern a call to ministry invited me to hear her story. That first lunch about discernment, call, life as a pastor, and faith led to many more wonderful conversations and eventually to the realization that I was finding love with another wonderful life partner. In April 2012 Alexa and I were married at UniLu. I enjoy being the stepfather of her two teenage children and accompanying her through her seminary studies. I used to say that when I grew up, I wanted to be a retired Lutheran pastor. Now that I *am* a retired pastor, I have a new goal -- to be the *spouse* of a Lutheran pastor!

Retirement has given me the opportunity to serve Christ in the church and in the world. I continue to be blessed as a "Minister Without Portfolio" in these years since my retirement and Carol's death. My early work feeding the hungry has stayed with me; now I enjoy serving at Feast Incarnate, UniLu's feeding ministry for people affected by HIV and AIDS. I am part of our synod's Evangelical Outreach Team focusing on Transformational Ministry, serve as coach for one T/M team and their pastor, and as mentor for one of our urban pastors. I also lead Morning Prayer one Friday a month at the Senior Center of Lutheran Settlement House, as I have done since my time at Our Saviour and Peace. Fifty years after I was set apart for the ministry of Word and Sacraments, I am grateful that God continues to give me the strength to participate in God's work in the world. To God be the glory!

Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination **Rev. D. Craig Landis**

The blessing of this 50 year journey of ministry began with my graduation from The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and then my ordination on May 24, 1964, at St. Luke's Church in Reading, PA. The following week I began my ministry as Assistant Pastor at St. John's Church in Hamburg, PA, where I served for 3 years.

In 1967, I was called to St. John's Church in Richlandtown, PA, where I served as Pastor for 19 years, until health concerns required that I reduce my pastoral responsibilities. In 1986 I began serving as Assistant Pastor for 13 years at Trinity, Perkasio, and as Visitation Pastor for 9 years, until full retirement in 2009.



Since 2009, I have enjoyed my new role as an active layman at Trinity, Perkasio, where I lead a team of money counters, serve on the Endowment Committee, and sing in the choir.

Looking back on 50 years of ministry, I am grateful for the many blessings our pastoral ministry vocation provides in sharing in all phases of members' lives—the best and worst times, their joy and sadness, births, griefs and deaths, and through the in-between times in their lives as well. Through the many challenges life presents, I have been able, with God's guidance, to bring the message of the Gospel for celebration, healing and hope in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Thanks are to God!