

*God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating... (1 Corinthians 12:28)*

During our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we set aside August to remember those who have gone into various church work vocations, particularly children of our congregation. Those who are pastors, teachers, musicians, deaconesses – anyone who teaches or serves in the Church – do not have ‘holier’ or more important vocations than anyone else. Yet, as Paul writes, *If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task* (1 Timothy 3:1). These are indeed noble and important vocations within the Body of Christ, because those in positions of leadership and teaching are meant *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love* (Ephesians 4:12–16).

Not everyone should be a pastor or teacher, of course. God is clear about who should be a pastor, for example: *A [pastor] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil* (1 Timothy 3:2–7). Likewise, teachers should enter into their vocations with humility and a healthy fear of the Lord: *Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness* (James 3:1).

All of us Christians, though, owe a debt of love to pastors, teachers, and all who lead us in the Body of Christ. God expects us to: Pray for them (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 1 Timothy 2:1–2). Listen when they speak the Word of God (Matthew 28:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:1). Support them (1 Timothy 5:18). Respect them (1 Thessalonians 5:12). Be at peace and love them (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

On the reverse side you will see a list of all those whom God has called from Immanuel to serve in positions of leadership within the Church. This month, give God thanks and praise for his good gifts to us given through these many selfless people!

-Pastor Squire

“That caring parents, gracious Lord, and faithful teachers find reward in leading these, to whom You call, to find in Christ their all in all.”

(“Lord Jesus Christ, the Children’s Friend” *LSB* 866, v. 3)