

February, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

Here in Crow country, life has been rough for many. While the U.S. economy rebounds, ours continues to sink. Many struggle with basic living expenses so that their families can have food and shelter. The health situation is also declining because chronic illnesses are increasing in the population. In addition, the local Indian Health Services hospital and clinic are providing less and less services. Therefore, people must travel to Hardin, Billings or Sheridan for care. This, in turn, requires gasoline that many don't have. Deaths have been numerous since September. All of the old problems that lead to death are still common. The economic and health care troubles only compound things. It can be quite discouraging.

Weather (bad roads and cold) and sickness have impacted church attendance in a negative way. Some Sundays, only one person comes. Yet, as a woman said on one such occasion, "You, me and Jesus make three." And of course, the Father and the Holy Spirit and the angels are always there. So is the Word and Sacraments which carry on no matter how the enemy tries to stop us.

And the Lord is faithful. He does provide. The Sunday Schoolers come steadily. The youth group finds the Bible interesting and exciting. So they invite friends. The confirmands press on in their studies even when tired.

Also, the Lord is using the hardships to wake some people up. Some who have gotten lost in very dark places are coming into the Light. A man in his late 20's is growing well. He is not only a spiritual head in his household, but is seeking to lead his extended family into the Light as well. The enemy fights him a lot, but he stands his ground in the strength of the Lord by the sword of the Spirit, God's Word.

The Lord also provides some surplus in material things like food, money, blankets and warm clothes that we can share with one another. Thus, we can help shoulder each other's burdens. We pray for one another. We weep with those who weep. And yes, there are still times when we all rejoice together.

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? In reality it is neither; it is full—full of water and air, which are the basics for life. So, too, it is here. It is simply that, like air, it can be hard to see all that the Lord provides.

Walk with Christ in beauty all around.

Rev. Dan Jacobs