

What We All Want to Do

(A Choral Reading to Celebrate Pastor G. Edward Whetstone's
32 years of Service at Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church)

After thirty-two years we haven't said it all,
And it's been thirty-two years since you answered our call.
It's time to step back and gently reflect.
There's a lot to consider as you might expect.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
We've enjoyed the differences that you brought with you.

There are a few things we noticed right from the start --
A love for people pumped through your heart.
You encouraged the gifts of the Salem people you met.
Encouragement of talent hasn't stopped yet,

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
Thank you for letting our differences show through.

You looked around and discovered a need.
The property committee revved up and roared off at full speed.
A lot needed doing; they weren't hard to convince.
They've been hammering away and haven't stopped since.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
The slates went flying and the organ pipes too.

Each room was baptized and given a new name
But, still in the same place, and it still looked the same.
"The Wittenburg Room; the parlor you say? Oh, you don't
need to show me. I know the way.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
We finally got used to the new names too.

It wasn't long before a butterfly became a newsletter.
Salem's communication soared and immediately got better.
A symbol of new life, the Monarch flew
Across our letters and stationery too.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
We're glad you brought a butterfly net with you.

A strawberry festival, a talent show, Salem Players, a bazaar
All of those things definitely are
Things that people had been yearning for;
Someone just needed to unlock the door.

Continued on next page

To make a difference is what we all want to do
We're glad you brought a key with you.

Knowing each of us by name
As to the communion rail we came.
Carrying the gospel down the center aisle
These were things that made us smile.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
The home-baked bread made a difference too.

Shepherds and sheep, a dandelion, an apple tree
All are part of your sermons' legacy.
Then there was the time you ate
An Easter lily without a plate.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
Garrison Keillor would like your sermons too.

An inspiration to Salem's musical spirit,
Salem sings as if the whole world could hear it.
Encouragement of our organist and choirs
Is something our Salem family admires.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
Thank you for writing a hymn or two.

Sitting by our hospital beds
And all of the comforting things you said,
And calling on people who needed to be
Comforted by your ministry.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
When we were sick, we were glad you knew.

For all the things we can't list here
We want to make it perfectly clear.
It's been thirty-two years since you answered our call
And we still haven't been able to say it all.

To make a difference is what we all want to do.
Let's just say, "We're glad you're you."

Jean Kohlenstein
and the Salem family
June 27, 2010