

Haircut, Cinnamon rolls, and the Building Faith in Youth Award

Find out what they have in common!

What a grand and glorious day for the congregation of the Zion Lutheran Church (MO Synod) in Brainerd, MN on September 8, 2019 for three very distinct reasons.

First, before the service Pastor Steve Benson announced to those in attendance that he would not take the call to Long Island, NY, which was followed by thunderous applause.

Second, Pastor Benson announced that after fulfilling his commitment of three years of letting his hair grow it was finally the proper length for donating it to the children's "wigs for cancer" foundation. Following the service for all to witness he was going to get it cut today.

Pastor Steve then began the beautiful Rally Sunday service while whiffs of homemade cinnamon rolls waffled through the sanctuary to be served after the service. Following the benediction Pastor Steve announced the singing of the closing hymn but no organ began playing.

Third, Congregational President, Randy Herrlick, went to the pulpit and began:

Children are a gift from God, and it is our duty to bring them up to know and to love God. The Bible tell us to 'Train our children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it.' We gather here today to honor an individual who strives to do just that. Today we celebrate our Pastor, Steve Benson. Pastor Benson has blessed the lives of countless children and families through the Bible training he offers through the P.R.A.Y. series. This series involved Game Boxes, pizzas, photo albums, and videos, but the real reason that Pastor Steve teaches P.R.A.Y. classes year after year is that it involves Bible study, prayer, and service to others. It is appropriate that we as a congregation recognize Pastor Steve's work and encourage him in this ministry. The Minnesota North District of the Missouri Synod's President, Pastor Donald Fondow embraces this award by the signing of his certificate. It is with great pleasure that we present Pastor Benson with the Building Faith in Youth Award.

And during that reading Scoutmaster DJ Collins of T43B and Cubmaster Joe Johnson of P43 [sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church of Brainerd, MN (ELCA)] along with Loren Meinke, National Lutheran Association of Scouting board director, went forward to assist with the congregation's bestowing of the Building Faith in Youth Award to Pastor Steve. At the appropriate time Cubmaster Johnson presented Pastor Steve with the Building Faith in Youth ribbon and Scoutmaster Collins then presented him with the certificate. Both Johnson and Collins are recipients of the Servant of Youth Lutheran Religious Emblem. President Herrlick then introduced NLAS board member Meinke who presented Pastor Steve with NLAS' congratulatory certificate.

After the service and the shaking of hands at the back, Pastor Steve then came forward for pictures. It was at that time that he told Meinke, "You guys got me!" And when asked about the program, he shared that he, himself, just loves to teach the classes to the youth in his church. He does that for all of the children but he is especially emphasizing it with the confirmation class this year.

After a mad dash by the presenters to the cinnamon rolls and coffee (of course) everyone came back to the front again to witness the cutting of the "locks of love" for children with cancer.

Gosh, what a wonderful day for all.



Left to right: Cubmaster Johnson, Congregation President Randy Herrlick, Pastor Steve Benson, NLAS director Loren Meinke, Scoutmaster DJ Collins