



What's Your Favorite Memory of Our First Year in This Building?

This is a question someone asked when I mentioned that Rally Sunday (September 8) is also the First Birthday of our new building.

I didn't have an answer right away. There are so many great things that have happened this past year in our building. We hosted our first wedding: Kim and John England; our first baptism: Austin Hjelle; our first celebration of someone going to be with Jesus: Geneva Olson; our first Christmas program, first Candlelight Christmas Eve, first Easter (coldest Sunrise service I can remember!), first VBS, etc... We also hosted our first Tuesday's Table meal and served 170 people. I could go on with more "firsts" - kind of like proud parents celebrating all the firsts of their eldest child. They are all special.

One of my best memories doesn't come from any of the many "firsts" but from something that happens every time I walk into my office. I am grateful (a huge understatement) for every day that I get to come into an actual office *with a window* instead of a 'closet-masquerading-as-an-office' (as was the case at the school).

But maybe the thing that sticks out most for me - the memory I am most grateful for - is the erecting and dedicating of the cross that was donated by Randy Nissen's family. (A cross that has received many positive comments about from folks in the community.)

The cross is a symbol that identifies "this building that sprang up in the middle of an alfalfa field just south of New London" as a church building. More than that, the solid-oak, three-dimensional cross that dominates the front of our building identifies us as Lutheran Christians of the LC-MS variety. For people who pay attention to things like that, our cross speaks volumes about the kind of messages they will find inside the building. Messages centered around the belief that the Bible IS God's Word and that God's Word - not our ever-changing culture - is the true standard by which everything should be judged.

But our cross has an even greater significance. God has placed Living Word in this location to be a beacon of hope for our community. There may be no greater symbol of hope than the cross. It was on a cross about 2000 years ago that God demonstrated the depth of His love for us. Jesus didn't die for us because we were great and wonderful people. He died, taking *our* punishment for sin, while we were still *sinners - ungodly, powerless, enemies of God*. (Romans 5:6-10) That is the truly amazing depth of the love of our God!

That's the hope we have to offer. Hope that comes from the certainty that nothing you could do (or nothing that's been done to you) can ever take you out of God's love. Such is the Hope the cross shines for everyone who drives by our building. That's a Hope worth remembering. Always!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net