

# The Second Saturday in Lent

## 23 February 2013



### Scripture Text

**Ephesians: 2:13**

*“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*

### Prayer

Dear Jesus, walk with us today and this Lenten Season. Through your love strengthen the bonds of spiritual friendship and cooperation that we share with our partnering congregations. Amen.

### Companions Bonded Together in Christ’s Love

Our church has been richly blessed by our 19-year relationship with St. Catherine’s Lutheran Church of St. Petersburg, Russia. Change has been a central and constant theme in the lives of both of our congregations over these years. For St. Catherine’s.

it has meant opening the church doors again and experiencing freedom of worship;

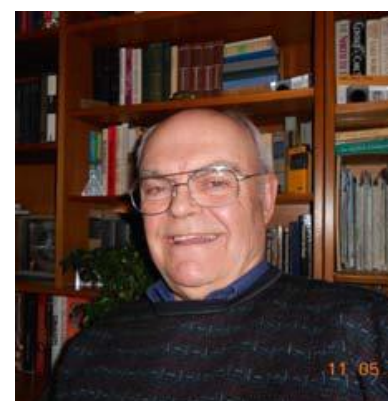
regaining possession of the church building from the government;

losing members to both age and emigration to the West; and continuing to struggle with financial challenges.

For us, we have been buffeted by an aging community and benefited from a more recent infusion of younger members amidst a struggling economy.

Through it all, our partnering is undergirded by an unchanging and eternal God, who comes to both congregations, secures the bonds between us with his love, and walks with us on our Lenten path. Jesus promises to never separate us from His love. This promise extends to all near and far. Both congregations realize that through Him, who gave himself for us, we are His children and related as brothers and sisters in Christ. Both congregations pray for each other during this Lenten walk and throughout the year.

### Companion Partner



**Gary Lehr** has been a member of Calvary Lutheran Church in Edina, Minnesota for over 30 years. He has been involved in Calvary’s partnering with St. Catherine’s Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg, Russia since its inception in 1993.

Lehr’s background is in business, which included international assignments. He has visited St. Catherine’s four times during this relationship.