

Devotions – June 27 – July 3, 2021

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Sunday, June 27, 2021

Text: John 15:4

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.”

Pastor Michael Jannett, who served as the supervisor of my field experience, refers to the summer months as a “time of abiding.” During the long season of Pentecost, he proposes that June, July, and August provide a time of rest, plus an opportunity to prepare and plan for activities in September and beyond.

Don’t you love that concept? Here we are, in a time of abiding without the hustle and bustle of the holidays and holy days like Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter. That notion of abiding is especially appropriate for us in the Northern Great Lakes Synod. We savor these long summer days. Now an Assistant to the Bishop of the Southeastern Synod, Pastor Michael notes that while we rest, plan, and take a break from our busy schedules, we know that God continues to abide with us—at work in our lives, our community, and the church worldwide.

Let us pray...

Good and gracious God, we thank you for these days of rest. We pray that our summertime of abiding will inspire new and exciting ventures of service in the name of Christ, at home and across the world. Amen.



Monday, June 28, 2021

Text: John 15: 5

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

When I read the passages from the Gospel of John on abiding, I unconsciously begin to hum hymn #629 in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*: “Abide with Me,” penned in 1847 by Scottish Anglican priest Henry F. Lyte. Here’s a sample of the hymn’s powerful message from verse five:

*I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

For your own devotion and reflection, search for the hymn on the internet. Enjoy one of the hundreds of beautiful arrangements you'll discover.

We know that God is always with us. In response, may we strive to abide in the constancy, peace, and grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let us pray...

We turn to you, O God, our strength, our guide, and our redeemer. We thank you for your presence every passing hour, through cloud and sunshine. Guide us to abide in you. Amen.



Tuesday, June 29, 2021

Text: John 15:10-11

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Today we celebrate two great figures of the early church, Peter and Paul, who represent the spread of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles and, according to tradition, were martyred on June 29. The witness of Peter and Paul inspires us as we seek ways to faithfully proclaim the gospel in our contemporary context (from *Sundays and Seasons*, the ELCA worship resource).

Let us pray...

The Prayer of the Day for this special commemoration reads:

Almighty God, we praise you that your blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you by their martyrdoms. Grant that your church throughout the world may always be instructed by their teaching and example, be knit together in unity by your Spirit, and ever stand firm upon the one foundation who is Jesus Christ our Lord, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Text: John 15:9

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.

The website of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America contains Bible studies for our use, including *Daily Discipleship*. During the Easter Season, the study noted that “Abide is an ancient word not often used in daily conversation; yet, in John 15:9-17 we are invited to abide in Jesus Christ. Many times, we associate the word with staying close and connected with him.”

What does “abide” mean to you? These are some of the many possibilities suggested by Biblical scholars. Abide means to wait.... to remain.... to dwell.... to continue....to be present. In what specific ways do you abide in the love of Christ?

Let us pray...

Lord, Jesus Christ, hold us tight so we might abide in you, share love, and bear much good fruit. Amen.

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Thursday, July 1, 2021

Text: John 15:16

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

Towards the end of John 15, after those powerful words about abiding, Jesus emphasizes, “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.”

One year for Vacation Bible School, our team settled on a theme of “Growing in Christ.” One of our members, a master gardener, worked with the children each day to plant tomatoes, green peppers, and other vegetables in raised beds next to the church building. He taught them how to plant and nurture the seedlings, as a part of the daily program of activities and Bible lessons. In the weeks after VBS, the children enthusiastically checked on their vegetable beds when they came to worship. You can imagine the joy and excitement when they began to harvest and eat the fruits of their labor, thanks to the ongoing care of our volunteer gardener.

Every year, the gardeners among us, patiently abide through the season of growing and look forward to the harvest. Those of us who do not garden, look forward to the farmers’ markets!

Let us pray...

We thank you, God, for the gardens and the abundant fruits of our fields and forests. We thank you for the tomatoes, the strawberries, the blueberries, the mushrooms, and more. We thank you for those who grow the food and prepare it for our tables. Amen.



Friday, July 2, 2021

Text: Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread.

Martin Luther knew a lot about abiding – including times of exile and hiding. I treasure his Small Catechism, which I keep in the library on my phone. This is from Luther’s examination of the Lord’s Prayer and the petition: “*Give us this day our daily bread.*”

What does “Daily Bread” mean?

*Everything that nourishes our body and meets its needs, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, yard, fields, cattle, money, possessions, a devout spouse, devout children, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and other things like these. **

As we abide in our lives in the 21st century, Luther continues to speak to us—to shed light on matters of faith and the concerns of daily life, including good government, good weather, peace, and health.

Let us pray...

Good and gracious God, we thank you for your servant Martin Luther and the legacy of his writings which help us to understand your word, your will, and your abiding way. Amen.

*The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Small Catechism of Martin Luther by Martin Luther, translated by Robert E. Smith. This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org.



Saturday, July 3, 2021

Text: Philippians 4:4

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”

In 1900, brothers James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson wrote a song to celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln at an event organized by young men in Jacksonville, Florida: “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the stirring, inspirational Hymn # 841 in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. In 1919 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) dubbed it "the Negro national anthem" for voicing a powerful cry for liberation and affirmation for African-American people. This is also a song of abiding.

As we get ready to celebrate the Fourth of July, I encourage you to look up the lyrics to “Lift Every Voice and Sing” in the ELW or on the internet. Here is a song that envisions a better humanity and speaks to the stories of our family and the stories of ancestors in faith.

Let us pray together the lyrics of the first verse of this hymn:

Lift ev’ry voice and sing

Till earth and heaven ring,

Ring with the harmonies of liberty.

Let our rejoicing rise

High as the list’ning skies,

Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;

Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.

Amen!



