

Devotions – August 15-21, 2021

By Pastor Diane Srutowski
Trinity Lutheran Church, Stonington
Bethany Lutheran Church, Perkins

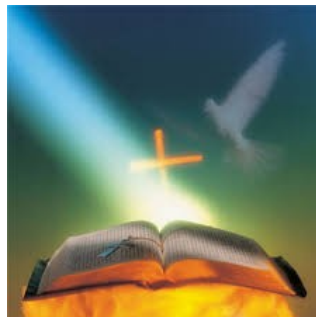
Sunday, August 15, 2021

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Since this week includes the anniversaries of both my baptism and my ordination, I thought I would focus this week's devotions on what it means to be a member of God's family. Paul writes the Book of Ephesians from prison in Rome probably in the early part of the A.D 60 decade. In this letter, Paul takes us to the mountain tops of Christian truth and invites us to see Jesus Christ breaking down the wall between God and humanity. We see Jesus creating the church, a new social order of love and unity that transcends racial, ethnic, and social divisions. I find this theme to be particularly poignant now as we continue our synod conversations working toward racial equity after the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery vote at our synod assembly. This is what God calls us to do. I give thanks to God for the efforts of many in this synod who work toward God's vision of justice and equality for all of God's people.

Let's pray: *Thank you God for being with us as we work toward your vision of one body and one Spirit. Help us when we grow weary to persevere in this very important work. In Jesus' name we pray.*



Monday, August 16, 2021

Text: Luke 3:21-22

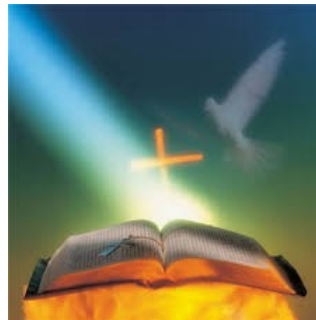
²¹ When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

On August 16, 1957, I was baptized when I was 10 days old in a baptismal gown that was hand sewn by my great great-grandmother Todd for my great-grandmother, Bertha. This dress was

lovingly worn by all the babies born into this family since the late 1800's. Every time a baby is born, my mother carefully washes the pristine white cotton gown and gently presses it for the special day of baptism.

This gospel text reminds me of my family tradition. All the family members have been baptized in this gown with water and the Word. In baptism, we are called by name and dearly beloved by God. What a beautiful gift we have been given through baptism. On this day, I remember all the babies who have entered into God's family wearing a beautiful gown lovingly made by my great great-grandmother. We have all been blessed abundantly.

Let's pray: *Thank you, God, for the gift of baptism. You open your arms and welcome us with love into your family. We are grateful. Amen.*



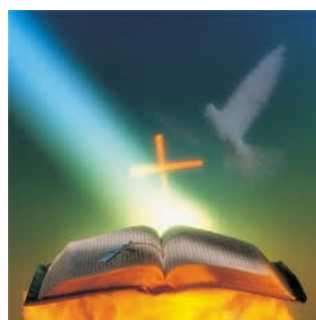
Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Text: Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

On August 17, 2014, I was ordained at First Lutheran Church in Gladstone, Michigan. I was born in 1957, and I was 57 years old when I was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. I had wanted to be ordained on the anniversary of my baptism, but Bishop Skrenes wasn't available that day, so one day later it happened in my home congregation. I remember that day like it was yesterday, especially the laying on of hands. I remember responding to the charges with "I will, and I ask God to help me." This text from Matthew reminds me of my responsibilities in my call as a pastor. As baptized children of God, we are all called to love God and love our neighbor, and we are promised that God will be right there with us to guide and help in our journey of faith.

Let's pray: *Gracious God, we give you thanks for the rite of ordination, one of many ways we are called to be disciples of Christ. Help your people to discern and answer your call, if it is your will. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*



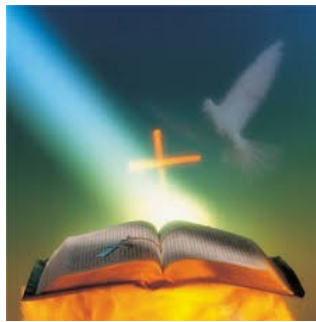
Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Text: Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

As a baptized and beloved child of God, what does God ask of you? I think that Micah 6:8 in the Old Testament answered that question very succinctly. I have always liked this text for its simplicity and straight-forwardness. If we follow these very clear instructions, our walk of faith with our neighbors will be peaceful and fair. That would be a very good thing.

Let's pray: *Dear God, help us in our faith journey to always remember to humbly submit to your will and work toward justice and mercy for all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*



Thursday, August 19, 2021

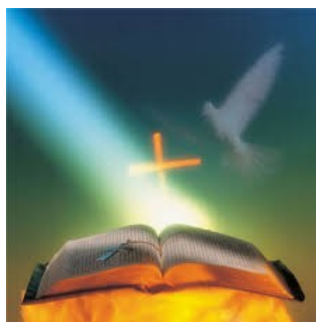
Text: Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

This verse from Jeremiah 29 is what I used for my installation as a Licensed Lay Minister at Trinity in August of 2011. I also enrolled in seminary in 2011, and the rest is history. As a baptized child of God, I did not know the plans that God had for me, but what I did realize is that everything I have done in my life has prepared me for my calling as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The past fifteen months of this pandemic have certainly been challenging. However, I have kept this verse in my mind, clinging to God's promises that give me hope and a future.

Let's pray: *Loving God, you promise us that you have plans for us to prosper. Help us to keep strong our hope for the future. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*



Friday, August 20, 2021

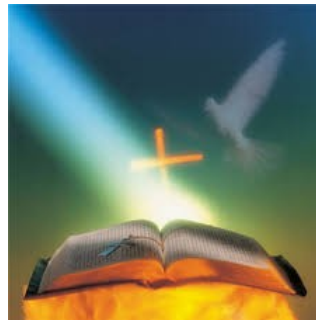
Text: Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

This text from the 4th Chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians was the verse I used for my ordination and installation at Trinity in Stonington and Bethany in Perkins. It was only with the guidance and strength of Christ that I was able to finish seminary while serving at Trinity and keeping the home fires burning, in my fifties.

Always be open and willing to answer the call, even when you least expect it. If you observe gifts in someone, encourage them to consider discerning the will of God.

Let's pray: *Strengthening God, help us to discern your will in our faith journey. Allow us to recognize in ourselves and others the gifts to serve your people. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*



Saturday, August 21, 2021

Text: 1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

In one of my first classes of Lay School for Mission at First in Gladstone, Pastor Jonathan Schmidt, my mentor, stressed the importance of always being prepared to profess your faith in Jesus as the reason for your hope. I really like the last sentence of this translation. You can gently and respectfully answer the question.

The registrations for the fall Lifelong Faith Formation classes are now open on the NGLS website. Sign up for a class or two and enrich your faith, get to know people from across the synod and learn something new. You will be glad you did!

Let's pray: *Gracious God, we give you thanks for the hope that we have in Christ Jesus. Help us to profess this good news to all who ask. Amen*

