



# 'Till We Meet Again!

Week of August 15 and 16, 2020

## REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020:

***<sup>27</sup>And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit] intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.***

***<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.***

***<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?***

**Romans 8:27-31**

**together** [tə'geTHər] ADVERB—with or in proximity to another person or people; into companionship or close association

Greetings my sisters and brothers in Christ!

Today my thoughts and my prayers have focused on what it means to be “together.”

“Together” we the people of St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church and Light of Christ Lutheran Church have come “together” on a holy pilgrimage and formed the United Proclamation of the Gospel Parish (UPG) in Bethlehem.

“Together” the people of the UPG Parish have come “together” with the people of St.

John’s Windish Lutheran Church to join us on this holy pilgrimage during the global pandemic of 2020.

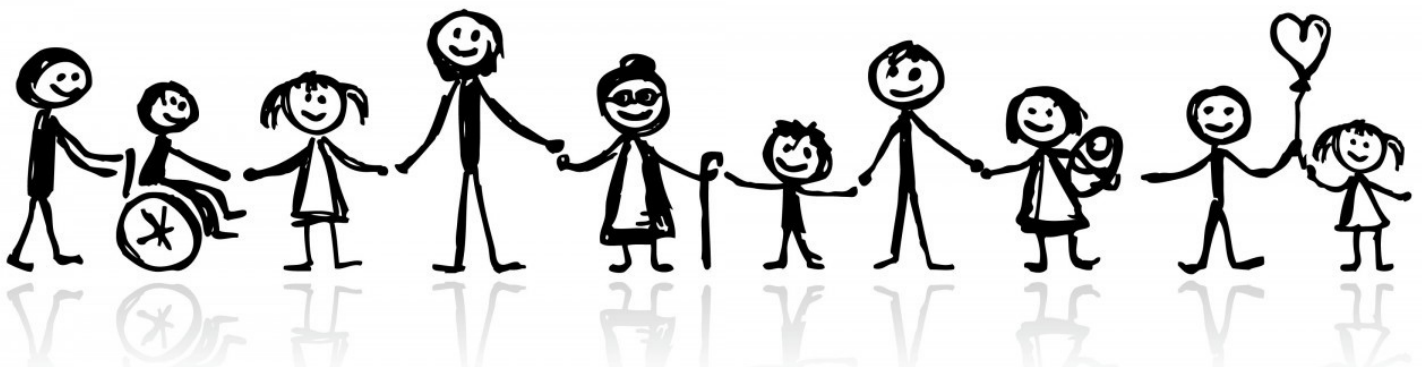
“Together” the people on this holy pilgrimage have been proclaiming the love of God with a larger expression of Christ’s Church on earth through the Northeast Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA.

“Together” this pilgrimage has led us to share resources; the gifts and talents of fellow disciples, the facilities that our Lord has bestowed upon us, various “tools” used in our shared proclamation, and many other resources that help the people who walk this pilgrimage “together” to share God’s great love with one another and with the world around us.

“Together” we have faced an unparalleled time in our lives, finding new and innovative ways to try to build a community when we are not able to gather in person always seeking to share God’s love for the world as we form this community.

“Together” we have faced these times and shared our resources with those around us who are suffering. Suffering from a loss of economic stability, suffering from a lack of respect and value from the greater society, suffering from a lack of food, and suffering from illness and chronic disease.

“Together” we have not only endured during these unprecedented times, but in many



ways have flourished. Relationships with our God in many cases have grown and strengthened. Relationships with sisters and brothers in Christ whom we knew well before the pandemic and sisters and brothers in Christ whom we are getting to know since the beginning of the pandemic are growing and flourishing during these strange times.

“Together” we have felt God’s presence among us! We have felt God continuing to dwell among us during our worship celebrations. We have felt God drawing near to us when we gather for Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, Bible Studies, coffee and conversations, meetings, and social justice ministries such as food banks, gatherings to uplift equality, and other advocacy ministries. We have known God has been utilizing our bodies at the food pantries, the phone calls, and the innumerable acts of kindness that continue to grow and flourish in these unusual times.

“Together” we have learned anew that the “Church” is not built of brick, mortar, stone, and wood, but rather on human flesh, bone, blood, and the Spirit that dwells within those whom gather together in Christ’s name.

Where will our pilgrimage ultimately lead us?

How will we functionally get there?

Who will be on the road with us when we arrive?

I honestly do not know the answers to these questions; but I do know that we will find out “Together.”

Until next time.

Keep trusting God, keep washing your hands, and be at peace.

PJ

## REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020

*Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”*  
**Matthew 18:19-20**

Greetings and peace to you my friends!

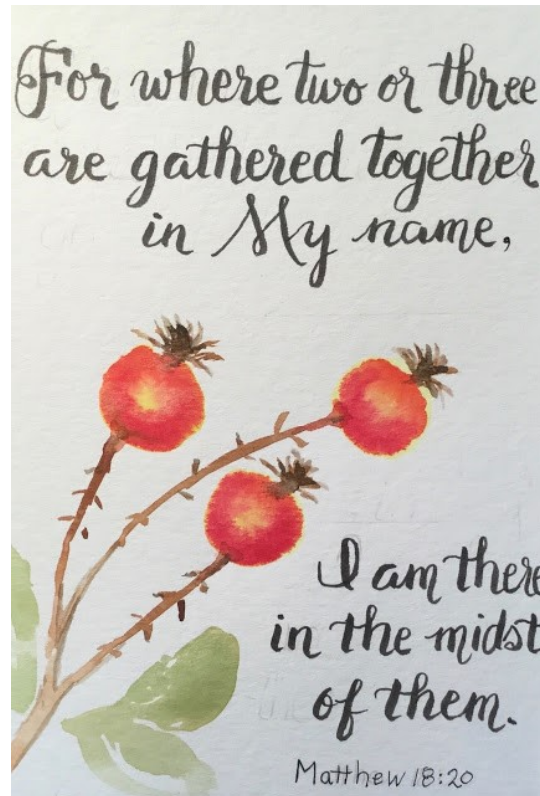
God’s creation herself adorned our gathering place. Views of resting places of saints who have come before us. A “house of prayer” which serves as a centerpiece for witnesses to Christ’s love in our time and place. A limitless ceiling with moving clouds and beautiful blue hues above our heads.

Bright green grass to serve as carpeting under our feet. So, it was as our community gathered to worship “in person” for the first time since the last week of February.

The piano shared story after story of our Lord’s graciousness, yet audible human voices did not accompany her tune. Family and friends, gathered behind masks, where smiles though hidden, were present and alert. Prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of repentance were offered to our God. God’s Word was read and heard. The Spirit moved among us and the Holy Meal was shared.

Our mere presence on the front lawn of the Lutheran Center on Grove Road proclaimed Christ’s disciples are alive and well. The bonds of fellowship were renewed among the 65 who were able to be present.

There were no parades, no great festal shouts were heard among the neighbors. But there was a bold witness that we, the children of God who gather as part of the United Proclamation of the Gospel Parish and St. John’s



Windish Lutheran Church continue to count ourselves among those who feel blessed by a loving God and serve as witnesses to God's love in this time and place.

Indeed, the entire worship celebration felt foreign, yet comfortable because we gathered among friends. Indeed, the celebration was quiet, even though our hearts rejoiced. Indeed, we prefer to be singing and rejoicing aloud, yet we remain blessed by the gift of one another's presence.

In the history of the world, there will unlikely be a mention of how it was God's children of the UPG Parish and St. John's Windish Lutheran Church gathered in worshipful celebration of 10th week after Pentecost on August 9, year of our Lord 2020, but for those of us who were honored to be there, it will be a memory that will last a life time!

I wanted to thank all who did not join us in person on this day out of concern for your safety and concern for others regarding Covid-19. I wanted to thank those who did join us on

this day for wonderfully keeping your masks in place and maintaining proper social distancing from one another. I want to thank our staff and volunteers from our community of faith who safely gathered together to prepare our worship space, who worked together to provide bulletins, music, elements of Holy Communion, sound systems, and even designated spaces for our children. Truly we are blessed by the gifts each of you share with our community.

Blessed by our God and blessed by one another.

Our first of prayerfully many outdoor in person worship celebrations is now complete. We will return anew next Sunday, the Sunday following that and so on and so on, if weather and conditions allow. But for now.

We continue to trust God, we continue to wash our hands, and we continue to be at peace with God and with one another!

PJ

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# ***In Person Outdoor Worship***

**Sunday, August 16, 23, & 30 at 9:30 AM (weather permitting) at the Lutheran Center in Northeastern Pennsylvania, 2354 Grove Road, Allentown PA 18109-3044**

## **Things to Bring:**

- Chair (or you may stay in your car.)
- Face mask
- Sunscreen or umbrella for shade
- Water or refreshments

Restrooms will be available to folks attending worship.

## **Directions:**

Exit Route 22 at the exit for the Lehigh Valley Airport, Route 987 north. Drive 1.5 miles to Grove Road on the right. Turn right on Grove Road. Drive approximately ¼ mile, and the Lutheran Center will be on the right. (If you are coming from Schoenersville Road, turn left on Grove Road. The center is located between Schoenersville Road and Airport Road.)

Call either of the below church offices with any questions:

Light of Christ Lutheran Church 610-691-2321

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church 610-867-0519