



'Till We Meet Again!

Week of February 13 and 14, 2020



REFLECTION FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020

¹⁴Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News. ¹⁵"The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

Mark 1:14-15

Good morning my friends!

The time promised by God continues to be in our midst! The Reign of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!

Sometimes the very thought of this proclamation swells my heart! The knowledge that God is among us, the ability to see God's divine hand working in the world around us, the call for myself personally and all of us collectively to "turn back" to God, and the reminder to have faith and believe in the Good News!

But what "Good News?"

Let us be honest, you and I live in a world that is often driven by media information. Daily, hourly, sometimes minute by minute our minds are "bombarded" with information. Information about events occurring in the world around us. Information that is often passed on to us in the form of opinions. Sometimes the perception of the reporter on the

information becomes the news itself.

David Loose, one of my favorite theologians, once said that by the time the average American reaches the ripe old age of 14 that this young person has been exposed to more information than most people received over the course of their lifetime during the 1500's. Think about that little factoid for a moment.

So, amid a world that literally transmits and receives information moment by moment filled with both objective news and people's opinions, filled with information of suffering, on dissension, on scandals, on violence, betrayal, and corruption, where is the Good News?

The "Good News" my friends is that the God Who created the earth along with all the cosmos is the same God Who formed and fashioned each of us. The "Good News" my friends is that this same God gifted each one of us with unique and special gifts and talents. The "Good News" my friends is that this God, loves us beyond any standard that we can imagine. The "Good News" my friends is that this God walks with us each moment of our lives, knows us better than we know ourselves, rejoices with us in times of celebration, mourns with us in times of sorrow, and promises never to leave us. The "Good News" my friends is that despite the many times we make wrong minded decisions, the many times that our feet stray from the path, the many times we allow ourselves to be deceived, that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The "Good News" my friends is that our Lord loves us all SOOO much, that Christ willingly and lovingly went to the cross to demonstrate once and for all how much we are loved! The "Good News" my friends is that through the

resurrection of Christ any barrier that might have stood between ourselves and our God has forever been removed. The “Good News” my friends is that our God promises that we will forever, as in eternally, as in till the end of all time, that we will be in the presence of God!

Now, with all this “Good News” why allow our hearts to be troubled with the momentary passage of time with its hearts, trials, sufferings. With all this “Good News” doesn’t it make more sense to continue to pass on the light that God first shared with us? With all this “Good News” doesn’t it make more sense to keep the current momentary news of the day in its proper perspective?

Indeed, the Reign of God is near! Believe in the Good News!

Until next time,

Trust God, keep washing those hands, wearing those masks, and keeping socially distanced, and hold on to the “Good News!”

Peace,

PJ

REFLECTION FOR TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9, 2021

WORKING TOGETHER!

1 Corinthians 1:10

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of one Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

As I write this reflection more snow is in the forecast. I guess if you enjoy winter, this one is for you. As for me, I am dreaming about warmer weather. As we approach the season of Lent, I am taking time to reflect on my relationships with each of you and I invite you to do the same.

Two weeks ago, I talked about the future directions for Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America (ELCA) and specifically looked at the congregational vitality data. Last week I addressed the first goal of vital congregations and it is strengthening their relationship with God. The second goal is to nurture relationships.

The three objectives within this goal, center around working together. The first objective is the development of relationships among leadership, pastors, and staff, and members to create a loving community with good communication. Good communication is so very important for any organization and the church is no exception. Personal experience has taught me that good communication involves open and honest conversations at every level. We are trying to keep communication going even when we cannot be together face to face. We use email for daily communication and send information in the mail for those who do not have computers and/or internet access. We also post everything on our two websites, www.upgbethlehem.org and www.stjohnswindish.org. We are trying to make good communication a priority as we are working together and looking at what one single congregation would look like in the future. If you have questions or concerns please communicate those to me, Pastor Jerry, or any member of our staff. We are available and willing to address your questions and concerns.

The second objective is to ensure that people work together respectfully through successes and challenges. Needless to say, the pandemic has challenged all of us. It has also given us great opportunities for success. We livestream worship, we have one joint staff meeting, our standing committees are working together, and we are doing several wonderful ministries together. Using technology, we are getting to know one and another whether it is through a zoom meeting, zoom



bible study or coffee and conversation over zoom. I am constantly amazed at the wonderful connections we already had and how we are now building on those connections and moving to deeper levels of respect and togetherness.

The final objective is to enhance a sense of ownership and belonging that drives the commitment and engagement in the mission of the church. As we get to know each other and help everyone develop their gifts and talents we are doing some amazing ministries. Overall, I sense a commitment to working together in ministry so that we can better serve God and our neighbors. Together we can do so much more than we could ever do alone. Think about some of the wonderful ministries we have done so far. We have the bringing it home ministry so that everyone can join us in worship. We made and delivered season's greetings to every nursing home resident in our area, that is over 1500 cards! We have almost finished 50 sleeping mats for those who have no place to sleep. We have volunteers serving at several food banks and the Bethlehem Emergency Shelter. We are doing bible studies, book studies, and started a social justice team. We have youth activities and zoom events for those in third through sixth grade and our junior and senior high youth. There are so many more ministries that we are doing together.

I pray that working together we can strengthen our individual and corporate relationships with God and build nurturing relationships within our community of faith. Together we can be God's hands and feet for each other and for our community. Stay safe, wear your masks, get your vaccines and if you must shovel be careful!

In Peace,
Pastor Suzanne

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Hispanic Community Center on 4th Street, Bethlehem, is in need of volunteers to help distribute food on the 3rd Thursday and 3rd Friday

of the month. If you can help, please contact Pastor Suzanne at St. John's Windish (610-868-3282).

Thank you for sharing your time.



HOLY WEEK PHOTOS NEEDED

Please send photographs from inside the church building during Holy Week to Rich Hawk at Rich.Hawk@cai.io by March 6. Thank you for your participation.

FROM THE MAILROOM

January 25, 2021

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Joseph Bleier



Dear Joseph:

Thank you for your thoughtful gift of \$111.25 received in the KidsPeace Foundation on 1/20/2021. Since no goods or services were exchanged, your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. You should retain this letter for tax purposes.

The children, families and communities we serve are able to make enormous strides in the quest to find hope, help and healing thanks to your support!

Knowing that someone cares about them -- that someone values them -- our children succeed. You are helping KidsPeace to make that difference.

Again, thank you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Ann McCauley

Vice President of Development

President, KidsPeace Foundation

January 29, 2021

St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Dear Friends at St. Peter's Lutheran Church,

Thank you so much for your recent donation of \$111.25 on 1/29/2021 to Turning Point of Lehigh Valley, Inc. The support we received in 2020 is a testament that our community cares about the safety and wellbeing of survivors. We look forward to 2021 as we continue to grow and expand our services to meet the increased needs for survivors of domestic and intimate partner abuse.

Your continued support is the reason our life-saving services can reach thousands of survivors in the Lehigh Valley every year. Last year, Turning Point was able to deliver safe housing, counseling, 24/7 helpline service to 3,186 survivors and their families. Moreover, your generosity ensures that our life-saving services remain at no cost to survivors looking to escape the cycle of abuse. We simply could not do this important work without the support of community members like you.

We invite you to save the date to join us on Sunday, March 14, 2021 when our first ever Virtual Auction will go LIVE! Our inaugural theme, Home Safe Home: A World Without Domestic and Intimate Partner Abuse, will showcase original art from local artists as well as a variety of unique merchandise items. We are currently accepting auction donation items and sponsorships through February 5, 2021. Visit our auction page to learn more - <https://bit.ly/tplv2021auction>.

*In peace,
Lori Sywensky
Executive Director*

February 6, 2021

I would like to thank everyone that sent a card to celebrate Eleanor's 100th

birthday. A very special day was enhanced by the thoughtfulness and love expressed by those cards. Thanks again! Bob Moyer



THIS WEEK IN THE UPG FEBRUARY 13—FEBRUARY 21

Saturday February 13

4:45 PM Worship—Transfiguration
("LiveStream" Facebook
from St. JW)

Sunday February 14

Worship available on YouTube
10:30 AM 46ers Zoom

Monday February 15

7:00 PM Coffee and Conversation
(Zoom)

Tuesday February 16

9:00 AM Staff Meeting (Zoom)

Wednesday February 17

12:01 AM Ash Wednesday Worship
(All UPG Social Media)
7:00 AM Imposition of Ashes
(St. JW Parking Lot)
Noon Imposition of Ashes
(St. JW Parking Lot)
Noon Ash Wednesday Worship
(Available on Website and
YouTube)
5:00 PM Imposition of Ashes
(St. JW Parking Lot)

Thursday February 18

6:30 PM Bible Study (Zoom)

Friday February 19

Saturday February 20

4:45 PM Worship—1st Sunday of Lent
("Livestream" Facebook
from St. P)

Sunday February 21

Worship available on YouTube