

Devotions – May 1-7, 2016
By Denise Laakko
United Lutheran Church, Crystal Falls, MI

Sunday, May 1, 2016

WORSHIP

Text: John 4:23-24

“But the hour is coming and is now, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship spirit and truth.”

The Merriam-Webster definition of worship: “The act of showing respect and love for a God especially with other people who believe in the same God.” In the first verse of *The Church’s One Foundation*, “She is his new creation by water and by word,” we are called to share in the creation of the church of Christ through the sacraments Baptism and of Communion. We are called to worship

Let us pray: *Lord, come into our hearts, come into our minds. Open our ears so we hear and respond to your voice, calling us to worship. Amen*



Monday, May 2, 2016

STRENGTH

Text: Exodus 15:2

“The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him.”

Why do you worship? There will be lots of answers, mine is because I need to be fed. I am in need of strength and that need is fed at worship. One of the most faithful women I’ve known is my husband’s Aunt Aina. The prayer I’m sharing was written by her many years ago.

Let us pray: *“To my existence on earth and in eternity. I thank you for loving me personally and individually, enough to care what comes to my life to cause shadow, sorrow and pain. I thank you for granting sufficient grace for every need. I thank you to have the faith to believe that you do all things well.” Amen*



Tuesday, May 3, 2016

SUPPORT

Text: Matthew 19:14

“But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.”

Are you a Godparent, parent, grandparent or a church member who has responded during the Service of Baptism to “People of God, do you promise to support _____ and pray for them in their new life in Christ?” How are we doing? Whose job is it anyway? There are many ways we get our children ready for life. We have three grown children so it’s a journey we’ve been on and questions we have searched our hearts to answer. Is an early morning basketball practice somehow more important or easier to handle than worshipping at the same time on a Sunday morning? Can our children lean on a faith in those hardships of high school and college if we don’t give them a good start on their spiritual journeys?

Let us pray: *Lord, help our congregations to be people of action. Help us be a church filled with the laughter and joy of children. Amen*



Wednesday, May 4, 2016

CONSOLATION

Text: Psalm 94:18-19

“When I thought, ‘my foot is slipping,’ your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.”

The gifts God so lovingly showers upon us each day, and especially in times of deep distress and sadness, are impossible for us to understand. When we were lost and alone, God found us. The promise that the love of Christ will never leave us, the power of the peace that passes all understanding is God’s consolation for our souls.

Let us pray: *Lord, thank you for loving us, knowing our needs and being there for us always. Help us to hear your call to share your consolation with others. Amen*



Thursday, May 5, 2016

COMMUNITY

Text: Galatians 5:25-26

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.”

Last week a friend of mine who hasn't been part of the organized church for very long shared some concerns with me. She had been a part of a discussion group with some more seasoned church folks and had her ideas shot down in a not so friendly way. Now how she explained herself was as a “Baby Christian”. Sometimes we forget there are new members among us who may be more sensitive to the way we have (always done it.) A little openness, compassion and understanding will go a long way in welcoming the new members among us.

Let us pray: *Lord thank you for bringing us together as a community of believers. Be with us as we worship, celebrate and do the business of a loving caring church in Christ. Amen*



Friday, May 6, 2016

CELEBRATE

Text: Romans 12:13

“Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.”

Each day is a gift; in the middle of summer we celebrate the beauty of the earth. Our gardens are growing, we have a lot to celebrate and be thankful for. During the Church year each Sunday is a celebration. When I arrive at worship and am met by the Greeters the celebration begins. The way we welcome strangers and friends sets the pace for the service. During the church calendar year one of my favorite services is the Vigil of Easter service. The prayer for today is from the ELW Book of Worship, Vigil of Easter service.

Let us pray: *“Eternal giver of life and light, this holy night shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your church with the Spirit given us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth and may shine as a light in the world, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”*



Saturday, May 7, 2016

WELCOME

Text: Romans 15:13

“May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Marty Haugen gave great insight to being welcomed in his hymn, “*All Are Welcome*” # 641 in the ELW Book of Worship:

“Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.”

Let us pray: *Lord, fill our hearts with hopefulness that we would carry the church with us in our daily walk letting all we encounter know that “all are welcome in this place.” Amen*



