

Devotions – September 10-16, 2017

By Pastor Micheal Laakko
United Lutheran Church, Crystal Falls, MI
Bethany Lutheran Church, Amasa, MI

THE SEASONS OF LIFE

Sunday, September 10, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:”

Our relationships to God and each other can be compared to the yearly cycles of: SPRING, SUMMER, FALL and WINTER. In the Spring time of life, I feel hopeful and optimistic as nature bursts forth with newness. The crocus bloom, the fragrant apple blossoms, the seeds planted in the garden start to come up green, all signs for me of resurrection promise.

The Summer time of life represents watching God’s nature mature. I marvel at the various hues of green in the trees, the beauty of a rainbow after a thunder shower. Signs that God’s covenant promises to watch over us and to Love us, are real.

The Fall time of life is perhaps my favorite season as now the various shades of green turn to many different colors. It reminds me that my relationship with the Lord needs to continue to grow and mature.

The Winter time of life allows me to reflect on how my relationships are going with God, Denise, my children, my community of faith. Even in the cold of winter God’ promise to love us unconditionally holds true.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for each of the seasons of life that assures me each day that you are watching over our lives. Amen



Monday, September 11, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:2

“A time to be born, and a time to die, A time to plant, and A time to pluck what is planted”

As I was coming into the world on a cold November morning in 1948, my mother was informed by the doctor that a car accident was taking place across the way on the portage canal road that he observed from the window of the birthing room. Mom never did say if the accident

resulted in death, but she and the doctor were focused on bringing the gift of life into the world. I give thanks for my mother who nurtured me and encouraged me to be a Pastor. The seed of faith is given to us in the gift of Baptism. By the Grace of God, we grow spiritually so that we can pluck what is planted for all to see God's Glory in our ministries of daily life.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord thank you for the gift of each new day, to die to our disobedience of sin and rise to the newness of life. Amen



Tuesday, September 12, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:3

“A time to kill, and a time to heal; A time to break down, and A time to build up;”

Death and destruction are always a part of life, from the devastations of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma to the havoc we humans wreak upon each other by our brokenness of sin. Natural disasters always lead to new life out of death. Nuclear war will lead to the final annihilation of human kind. We need to break down the barriers that divide us through the power of the love of Jesus and keep PUSHing for peaceful solutions. So, keep Praying Until Something Happens. We need to build each other up in the Love of Christ every day in order to break the cycle of hate.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, break down the barriers that separate us and build us up out of death into life everlasting. Amen



Wednesday, September 13, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:4

“A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and A time to dance;”

My intern Pastor Donald Johnson gave me some very sage advice that I have tried to carry out in my ministry. “God has a sense of humor, so should you. If you are going to succeed as a Pastor you need to be able to laugh at yourself.”

There is a lot going on in our lives and in the world to cry about. Crying is a good outlet for grief and many other maladies that plague us and society. Then we also need to mourn for

those who are suffering and see them through to a time of laughter. Life is like a dance, but you can't sit on the sidelines. Getting involved in relationships with others is not an easy task, but it is our obligation as Christians to be there for each other. And don't forget to laugh at yourself along the way.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, give me the courage each day to follow the golden rule and bless our weeping, our laughing, our mourning and our dancing. Amen



Thursday, September 14, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:5-6

“A time to cast away stones, and A time to gather stones; A time to embrace, and A time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and A time to lose; A time to keep, and a time to throw away;”

In times of peace, stones were cleared from the fields, allowing for cultivation. In wartime, the rocks were thrown on the fields to make them unusable (2Kings 3:19, 25). What are the stones that are blocking you from living in a right relationship with God? Are they perhaps the stones of hatred, jealousy, deceit, envy, pride, controlling other people? We all need to throw away each day that which blocks us from loving our neighbor as our self, and seek instead to find ways to live each day in the baptismal gift of new life, promise and hope.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, help me to cast out everything that keep me from growing in my faith relationship with you. Amen



Friday, September 15, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:7

“A time to tear, and a time to sew; A time to keep silence, and A time to speak;”

In the Old Testament, when bad news came, it was customary to rip one's garments to show remorse (2 Samuel 13:31). When the problem passed, it was just as well to sew the garment back together. Every day we have a choice as to which season we choose to live in. We can live in the benefits of each season, live in a part of each or embrace the gifts that all of them offer. Our relationships with our spouse or family also go through these changing seasons of time. My bride Denise at times points out to me that if I am not more thoughtful in what I say and how I

say it, I am in danger of casting our marital relationship into winter time. Thank the Lord that from time to time I pay attention and we are living in the beautiful autumn (fall) of our lives.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, help me each day to live in the season of love that helps me to lift you up in everything I do and say. Amen



Saturday, September 16, 2017

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:8

“A time to love, and A time to hate; A time of war and A time of peace.”

Wouldn't it be wonderful if our world could abide by the new commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ? “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34).

Thank God for each new day for the gift of time we are given. Each of us are given the gifts of the spirit to use, not to hate, not to make war. Instead, each day we are to make time to love and to be at peace with each other.

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, thank you for each season of life and the gift of time we are given to grow in our relationship with you. Help us to grow every day in our love for you and each other. Amen

