

..... Daily Devotions

**February 4-10, 2018**  
By Pastor Linda Forray  
Peace United Church of Christ  
Marinette, Wisconsin

**Sunday, February 4, 2018**

Text: 1 Peter 3: 12

**“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer.”**

I don't ever remember a time when I doubted the power of prayer; still it never amazes me when appeals in prayer are granted by our wondrous God. And all we can say is “Praise the Lord.”

I pray for a lot of different things. I pray for the sick and the lonely, and for my family. I pray for the church and our congregation. But lately I find myself praying a lot about the newest “adventure” God has in store for me, and that it will be something I can handle, with His help of course. Each change in my life comes with anticipation, excitement and fear. And God keeps pulling me through these obstacles, no matter how tough they seem to be. I know that this is because of the power of prayer and an undying faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And I know that God does this for everyone.

Paul says in 1 Thessalonians “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Prayer needs to be a priority in our lives. Without prayer we have no communication to the one and only source of answer to our daily problems and needs. Without prayer we are disconnected from God. Be connected, pray.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to talk to you. We thank you for the faith we have to know that you hear our prayers and that you answer them in our time and your way. Help us Lord to be diligent prayers, to pray without ceasing. We ask this in Jesus name. AMEN.*



**Monday, February 5, 2018**

Text: John 15:12-15

**“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do**

**what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”**

I recently had the pleasure and honor to make a new friend. I was called to visit an elderly man who had medical problems and had come upon some rough times (who hasn't these days). The call came from an old friend of his that was concerned about this man and lives quite a distance from him now. I knew I was to meet someone special while talking to his friend. He talked about what a kind, giving person this man was and told me I would become fast friends with him. I did visit this man and his friend was right. We had a long conversation about family, life, death, and war. He is a remarkable man with a big heart.

Jesus asks us to love one another as I have loved you. We sometimes get so wrapped up in our lives that we don't see the opportunities to make a friend or to extend a helping hand to someone in need. Need is all around us. Take the time in this New Year to get to know what the need is in your community, neighborhood, or church. Remember, God first loved us so that we may love others.

*Let us pray: Father, you gave us your only Son to love us and to fill our every need. Help us to look for the need in our world and find ways to fill that need. Help us to love our neighbor as you love us, endlessly and unconditionally. Amen.*



**Tuesday, February 6, 2018**

Text: Matthew 6:25-34.

**“Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed, your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. “So, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”**

As a newly hired church secretary for a newly ordained Pastor right out of seminary, I was feeling a lot of stress at my job. My Pastor saw that I was struggling and worrying excessively over very small things. He suggested reading Matthew 6:25-34 to see what God's Word had to say about worry.

I go back to this passage often, knowing that God knows what I need and that He will provide me with those needs. This goes beyond what I will wear or eat. It goes to the comfort of knowing that He will provide the skills, people, and time for me to get through stressful areas of my life.

If God clothes the grass of the field with the beauty of lilies and feeds the birds of the air who don't sow or reap, will He not much more clothe me, whom He sent His only Son to die for my sins. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, your many blessings are all around us. Help us to put all our faith in you in our everyday lives and to know that you will provide for us all of our needs. We pray this in your Holy Name. Amen.*



**Wednesday, February 7, 2018**

Text: John 11:32-35

**When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep.**

Jesus WEPT! I can weep at the drop of a hat. Any little thing can set me off. You know how cleansing a good cry can be. I think it does us good to cry once and awhile. I'm sure that Jesus wept other times; I hope He did, but this is the only instance in the Bible where Jesus wept. This time, when Lazarus died, this time it was written down. He must have had great love for this man. It's a very human thing to do which shows that Jesus is truly human and truly divine. The human Jesus, the Jesus that was truly like us, as we in turn, try to be like Him.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, we thank you for coming down to us in Jesus. We thank you for His humanness as well as His divineness. Please keep us mindful of Jesus' life that we may, in our humanness imitate His divineness. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.*



**Thursday, February 8, 2018**

Text: Romans 5:6-11

**For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

I attended a funeral of a long standing very active member, and wonderful friend of our congregation today. The Pastor read this text during that funeral. I loved the way he tied in our reconciliation with God. We are all sinners, but Jesus died for us...sinners. He didn't only die for the righteous but all of us the righteous and the unrighteous. And in this knowledge and faith we are comforted that we will be reconciled with God in the everlasting life we have inherited from Him.

No matter what you have done, no matter what you will do in your life, faith in our Lord Jesus and repentance of our sins assures us God's loving grace and a place for us, with God, in life everlasting. And because of this undeserved, unmerited grace, we are compelled to do God's work in this life.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, we are all sinners, but in Your mercy and grace we are all made clean and are reconciled with you through your Son Jesus. We look forward to our eternal lives with you with comfort and reassurance. Amen.*



**Friday, February 9, 2018**

Text: Hebrews 9:15

**For this reason, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.**

When I read this text, I am mindful of change. I picture God in the realms of heaven, looking at His creation and saying, "It's time for a change". And what a change it was. Jesus, in His dying on the cross, renewed our relationship with our God. Our sins were forgiven, past, present and future. It also makes me sad to think that our congregations have such a hard time changing even the simplest things. If God can make such radical changes, why can't we move the organ five inches to the right!

Change is a new start, a new chance, a new adventure. Change can be scary, but without change we become stagnant and die. Look around in your life and your church. Don't be afraid to change things that just aren't working any more. Make that change and start anew.

Let us pray: *Our most merciful Father, thank you for change. Thank you for showing us that it is alright to change and guide us as we make decisions that affect others. Please stay with us as we go through difficult times. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



**Saturday, February 10, 2018**

Text: Mark 11:22-24

**Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**

Prayer is a powerful thing! Jesus taught us to pray, Jesus prayed for us and continues to pray on our behalf. It is through prayer that we maintain and grow our relationship with God. This is our intimate one on one with our Father and Creator. Pray with all your heart. It is the foundation of our faith. Our prayers aren't always answered the way we want them to be, but be assured they are heard by our God. Look closely, and remember, it's God's will not ours. And listen closely; God is always nudging us in the direction He wants us to go.

Let us pray: *God our Father, Jesus taught us to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

