

Devotions – May 19-25, 2019

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I will be taking a cue for these devotions from the May Synod Prayer Calendar. I find that daily prayer reminder to be very helpful.

Sunday, May 19, 2019

Text: Psalm 148:1-3, 9-10, 12-13

“Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Young men and women alike, old and young together! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.”

At this time of year, it is easy to marvel at the glories of God’s creation. With almost all snow melted away and trees budding and songbirds singing, I feel a renewal of hope and a true sense of gratitude for this place we call “Up North”. No wonder that the Easter season coincides with the season of Spring. Praise the Lord!

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, we pray for all the congregations of the Northern Great Lakes Synod as we prepare to welcome summer visitors and vacationers in our beautiful area. We pray for shop keepers, restaurant, lodging and resort owners as businesses open for the season and for all who will be employed by them. Help us to reach out with hospitality that parallels the glories of this beautiful place. Amen*



Monday, May 20, 2019

Text: Psalm 46:1-3, 10-11

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. “Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

As Lutherans, we never tire of this Psalm of encouragement on which Martin Luther based his well-known and beloved hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” In our prayers today we

remember all who work in our school systems. My mother was a life-long teacher and I myself have spent some time teaching in public school; I am well aware of the challenges faced by these public servants. A special blessing is deserved by all who seek to guide and educate our children.

Let us pray for teachers, bus drivers, school staff and administrators— as they head into the final days and weeks of the school year and begin plans for Summer School and the next school year. We thank you for their dedication to our children and pray for renewal and restoration of courage to them. Amen.



Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Text: Psalm 121:1-4

“I lift up my eyes to the hills— from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”

What are you planning to do to restore your soul this summer? Opportunities in nature abound around us to find the help of the Lord. I have fond memories of my time at Bible Camp as a youth and can attest to the impact that time had on my faith. Even over 90 years ago, when life was much more simple and closer to nature, there was a perceived need to build camps and retreat centers for people to get away to and find rest and renewal. I know that I need that touch back to nature to help restore my soul; I hope you will do so too.

Let us pray: *Gracious God, creator of this precious earth, we pray for camps and camping ministries, especially Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp, as they gear up for the summer and as their summer staff members are trained. May the Holy Spirit empower and guide them as they watch over all who will be in their care this summer. Help us to find restoration and renewal, even if it is only by looking out the window to the beauty unfolding around us. Amen.*



Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Text: Psalm 117

“Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol him, all you peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!”

One of the best things about summertime is, travel! Going places, seeing new sights, meeting new people. I find what I enjoy the most is discovering places and peoples that are totally different from what I am accustomed to, while at the same time finding that there is so much we hold in common, with people especially, that unites as a people of God. Whether you go down state, across the country, or across an ocean, you will find kinship with God's people of faith. We pray for sister congregations in Maryland today. May you rejoice in the brothers and sisters in Christ you meet during your Summer travels.

We pray for the members of St. John Lutheran Church, Cumberland, MD; St. John Lutheran Church (Edgemere), Baltimore, MD; St. John Lutheran Church (Franklin Ave.), Baltimore, MD; and St. John Lutheran Church, Hagerstown, MD, and for the multitude of places of worship we will encounter over these next few months. Strengthen our bonds in Faith, Hope and Love. Amen.



Thursday, May 23, 2019

Text: Psalm 23:1-3

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.”

Our pastors and other rostered leaders, “Shepherds” and their personal flocks, need time to be restored. Jesus gave orders to Peter to feed and care for His sheep, but who cares for and feeds the shepherd and his or her family? It's hard to give and to lead when you're running on empty. It is remarkable how even small gestures of kindness and thoughtfulness go a long way in refilling the “spiritual tank” of a pastor. Of course, the writer of Psalm 23 is absolutely correct when he writes with Jesus as our Good Shepherd, we will have everything we need.

O Good Shepherd, Jesus, we lift up all Rostered Leaders and their families – that they may have productive times of study and prayer, relaxing days of renewal, and supportive relationships inside and beyond the congregations they serve. Amen



Friday, May 24, 2019

Text: Psalm 130:1-2, 5-6

“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.”

When life isn't going the way we hoped, when trials and tribulations come our way, we can take heart in the Psalms. Many of them lament of hardships or feelings of abandonment, yet in almost every case, they end on a note of assurance and hope. We have a Savior who promised his disciples that he would not abandon them nor leave them orphaned, and that promise extends to us also. You are not alone.

Let us pray: O Lord we pray for hope in discouraging times, for assurance in times of doubt and despair. For all who are in any kind of trouble, we pray that they be given new life. We pray especially for the unemployed and underemployed. We ask you, Heavenly Father, to send them opportunities to work, to keep their families well-fed, and to teach those of us more fortunate how we may help them. Amen.



Saturday, May 25, 2019

Text: Psalm 139:1-3

“O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.”

It is interesting to me to look back on my life and discern instances of God's grace and the Word that touched me and perhaps steered me along the path of becoming a pastor, even before it was possible for women to be ordained in the Lutheran church. I've not taken time to write them all down, but I'm sure I could fill a notebook. For instance, I recall when the TV broadcast day began (before the children's program began), a pastor would come on with a short devotion and he would quote from the Psalms, "This is the day that the Lord hath made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it." It was a touch of God's grace that has stayed with me. Watch and keep alert to the touches of God's grace and Word in your life.

O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, we pray for our clergy celebrating anniversaries of their ordinations this month: Dean Peterson (5/26), Doug Schoen (5/27), Dale Skogman (5/30), and Mary Weinkauff (5/30). Raise up new and faithful leaders to tend your sheep, and strengthen the wills and bodies of those who continue to serve in Jesus name. Amen

