

..... **Daily Devotions**

Devotions – January 17-23 2021

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Sunday, January 17, 2021

Text: 1 Samuel 3:10

“The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Then Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'”

Our congregation, Immanuel Lutheran Church in Rhinelander, had our stewardship emphasis in November. In this time of such hardship in our nation, due to the Coronavirus, we wanted to stress how important it is for each of us to listen to God's call for us. Our Pastor prepared a message each week based on the story of Samuel and our theme was “Here I am Lord.” We also had members tell their stories about how they became involved in the church and community. Everyone started from little or no involvement in the life of the church and its ministries. Each one became aware of their spiritual gifts and how they could be used. The stories were very personal and moving.

What is your story? Have you discovered your special spiritual gifts? The Lord is calling you.

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, so much is happening in this world each and every day. Too much drowns out your call. Help me to listen. Help me to act. Lead me as your servant. Amen.*



Monday, January 18, 2021

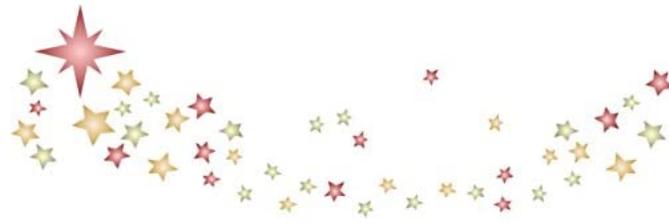
Text: Psalm 139:1

“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me.”

I was taught in Catechism Class at the age of about 11 or 12, that God sees all, knows all, is always present and is all powerful. Kind of scary. But then, it only makes sense. God knows me because I am his creation. He knows my every thought (good or bad), every action and even every breath. The Holy Spirit resides in me. Without God I am empty.

God not only knows us, but He knows everything that we have. That makes sense, too, because He has given everything to us. He knows our spiritual gifts and gently moves us to use them. We are called and we are led.

Let us pray: *O Lord, you know me. I can never be lost from you. Give me the strength and courage to go forth as your partner in ways that you have planned. Amen.*



Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Text: 1 Corinthians 6:19

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;”

I believe that most people on hearing the word stewardship immediately start thinking about money. Oh to be sure, stewardship includes money, but is not your body and indeed your very life more important than money? Sadly, because of the pandemic, our health, how we protect ourselves and others, has come to the forefront of our thoughts. God has given us incredible bodies. The work of our immune system is amazing. However, we are still responsible for the care of our temples of the Holy Spirit.

God has provided us with much information on caring for our health. Masks, social distancing and hand washing are simple ways to protect our health and the health of others. We are not our own. As stewards we are called to care for our bodies to the best of our ability.

Let us pray: *Dear God, help me to remember that I belong to you. Remind me that my actions are important to protect my body and my life. Amen.*



Wednesday, January 20, 2021

Text: John 1:43

“The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.'”

This reading is from the story of how Jesus called his disciples to follow him. Jesus' call started then and continues to this day. God has blessed us each with special gifts. And God also blesses us with the opportunities to use these gifts to further His kingdom. God calls us to follow Him.

Sometimes it is hard to go where God wants us. Sometimes it gets in the way of our plans. Sometimes we don't feel our skills and talents are good enough. Sometimes we don't even take the time to think about it at all. But God will never give up on us. God knows our hearts and what He gives us the capability to do. Are you hearing God's call to follow? Will you come and see?

Let us pray: *Dear Father, I hear your call. I ask that you give me the strength and courage to follow you. In your Son's name. Amen.*



Thursday, January 21, 2021

Text: Jonah 1:1-3

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.' But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.”

In this story, God “asks” Jonah to bring a message to the people of Ninevah. While it turns out that God had to do more than “ask” for Jonah to actually deliver the message, he does bring God's word to the people and they make some drastic changes to their lives. Jonah tries to run, but I guess he couldn't hide.

When my husband, Devon, was called to be the Pastor for Bethany Lutheran Church in Perkins, Michigan and Faith Lutheran Church in Rock, Michigan, I did not want to go. However, my story is different from Jonah's. The people of Bethany and Faith were not wicked. In fact, we were there for almost five years and grew to love them. But, as with Jonah, we were entrusted with stewardship of God's word. As God's children we have faith. This is a great gift. A gift that is to be shared.

Have you been a good steward of God's word?

Let us pray: *Heavenly Father, we are your stewards of many spiritual gifts. Encourage us to share all of these gifts, especially the gift of your word. Amen.*



Friday, January 22, 2021

Text: 1 Corinthians 16:2

“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”

In this story, Paul is collecting money for the Christians in Jerusalem. They were suffering from poverty and famine. He suggests that it would be easier to save up a small amount each week so that when he arrives a large donation will already be set aside. Devotions about stewardship would be lacking if money was not mentioned.

Perhaps money is so hard to discuss, because money can mean so much to us. Money can mean security, safety and freedom. Money is pretty much necessary for food, shelter and clothing. Money is needed for our health care. But when the accumulation of riches becomes our main goal, money replaces God. God provides this world with abundance and when some gather more than they need this generally means that some will also go without.

Giving our benevolence offerings to the Synod gives us a way to help those that are suffering from poverty and famine today. Giving to our local food pantries, feeds our neighbors. During this pandemic there is more need than ever.

Let us pray: *Dear Lord, we are grateful for all that you provide for us. Help us to release our grip on our money so that our hands are open for our neighbors. Amen.*



Saturday, January 23, 2021

Text: Matthew 6:21

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

I have been on many stewardship committees in the years that I have been a church member. I have seen many a stewardship emphasis use this passage as the theme. In most cases, treasure can be interpreted as money or wealth, but treasure can mean so much more. Some of my treasures are my family, my health, my education, my home, my musical abilities, my church and the word of God. All of these treasures bring me great joy and hold my heart. I know that there are times when I feel that I attained all of these treasures on my own, but I would have none of these without God. All of them came from God and all of them are to be used to His glory.

Take some time to think about your treasures. I'm sure that you can name many.

Let us pray: *Lord, I am so grateful for the many blessings that you have given me. Remind me of*

all the true joys that hold my heart and help me to share your gifts. Amen.

