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THE EPISTLE

SEPTEMBER 2019

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St. Paul Lutheran Church ♦ 5103 N. Central Ave. ♦ Tampa, FL 33603 ♦ (813)239-3113
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Pastor's article

In meditation this week we focused on Psalm 119:65-72. Medieval monks like Luther spent a lot of time pouring over the words of Psalm 119. It is the quintessential Psalm of meditation. It is the longest in the Psalter, and it is crafted in short sections for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, summarizing the content of scripture from A to Z. It focuses especially on the great treasure of God's Word, which comes to us in several ways, and particularly in the form of commandments and promises. God's commands give us guidance for life, and the promises call us to trust God to do us good and to help in every trouble.

This section of Psalm 119 connects with the Sunday readings. We recently heard Jesus teach that "those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:11). Likewise, Psalm 119:71 reads, "It is good for me that I was humbled, so that I might learn your statutes." Another way of translating "humbled" (עָנִיתִי) would be "afflicted," that is, to experience stress or suffering of some kind. We often think of humility as being very self-effacing or soft spoken, but another way to think about humility in the Bible is the experience of stress, suffering, or oppression. The shocking message of Psalm 119 is that the experience of suffering can sometimes benefit us; it can open the meaning of God's Word to us in new ways. It may be painful and difficult, but there is a promise of abundant life through the narrow gate of the cross. The first part of this wise saying may sting, but the second part promises new life: "those who are brought low will be lifted up."

The congregation of Faith has experienced this kind of "humbleness" through the pain of the sanctuary fire. We have been brought low, and now we look to God's saving help to lift us into something new. "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). God is faithful, and God will act according to these words of promise. I invite the parish to pray for Faith and for clarity about our future direction. Ask the Lord to act in our midst, to do us good according to these words of promise (Ps 119:65 & 68).

I also invite the members of Faith to stay after church for a congregational meeting on September 22nd. Our purpose for this meeting is to prayerfully discern God's will for our future, to openly share ideas together, offer feedback on certain proposals, and to debrief where things currently stand. The purpose of this meeting is not for any of us to impose our own ideas or vision, including the pastors, but for each of us to offer our voice to help the body as a whole to discern God's will for our future. This will be an important conversation; don't miss out!

A quick reminder: we have Kinship Markets at Faith the first Saturday of every month, and at the Good Samaritan on the third Saturday. Bible Study is at St Paul for the month of September, on Thursdays at 6:30pm. We will be discussing the theology of James Cone as we weave our way through the Gospel of Luke. We have so far explored chapters 1-9, and we continue to weave different passages together in our discussions each week; it is never too late to join!

Please also pray for members of our congregations who have recently undergone surgery and may need healing, for those who have lost loved ones, and for unity in our parish as the one body of Christ.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,

Pr. Gabriel

LUTHERAN URBAN PARISH OF TAMPA

The Lutheran Urban Parish of Tampa, is a **united ministry of Faith and St. Paul Lutheran Churches**. Our two congregations pray, work and fellowship together, pool resources, and share the same pastors. We are one body of Christ in two locations, in service to the single mission of God in our midst.

JOIN OUR BIBLE STUDY



Join us for our **NEW PARISH BIBLE STUDY** which will meet **every Thursday night at 6:30 pm**. We will alternate locations every month between St. Paul and Faith. **For the month of September we will meet at St. Paul.**

Our first study will be on the Gospel of Luke, which will take us through the rest of the year and compliment the Sunday morning Gospel readings.

This will differ from a traditional Bible study in some ways.

For one thing, although we will go through the overall narrative of Luke's Gospel to get a sense of how it all fits together, we will not be responding to or filling out worksheets with pre-determined questions. The process will be more conversational. Secondly, our study will be interspersed with short topical studies that help us to draw connections between the text and the present time. Sometimes we will look at writers from the ancient church or the Reformation. Other times, we will look at modern authors. For example, after a few weeks of looking at the early chapters of Luke's Gospel, I would like to take a detour through the writings of James Cone, who was one of my professors in seminary at Union. His writings focus on the Gospel as a message of liberation for oppressed people, specifically for black people throughout the history of white supremacy in the United States. In this way, I hope to combine both historical and spiritual methods of reading the Bible, recognizing the historical contexts and limitations of the Bible, while also recognizing that it was written to be God's living Voice for us through the ages.

Peace and joy of Christ be with you all,
Pr. Gabriel



MEDITATION

All are welcome to join us for meditation that **meets every Wednesday, at noon in the Sanctuary, for approximately 20-**

25 minutes. Meditation will include silence, prayer, and the recitation of scripture, led by Pastor Gabriel Morgan and others. For those who feel the need, an optional time for debrief and discussion will follow.



Please join us the **third Saturday of every month at The Well!**

We will be assisting in setting up the free market at the Good Samaritan Inn on Florida Ave., helping clients shop for groceries, entering data and restocking groceries. This month we will meet on **September 21 at 8:30 am**. See you there!



Jesus teaches us to ask God for our daily bread, yet this world often makes it difficult to get our needs met. Our parish has responded to the call of our Lord with two mobile food markets that are

open to all. Our next Kinship Free Market will be Saturday, Sept. 7, at 9:30am at Faith Lutheran Church, 12703 N. Florida Ave. Tampa, 33612. If you are looking for ways to serve, or you would benefit from some groceries for yourself or your family, please join us!



PUB THEOLOGY MEETS ONCE A MONTH

Are ready to relax, have a pint, and speak easy about the big topics, then come join us for **Pub Theology**. **We will meet Friday, Sept. 27 at 6:30 pm** at Southern Brewing and Winemaking, 4500 N. Nebraska Ave., Tampa, 33603. Pastor Morgan's # (813) 245-6812. Invite a friend; all are welcome!

Healthy Congregations:

Lutheran Urban Parish of Tampa Post-Call Congregational Retreat

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

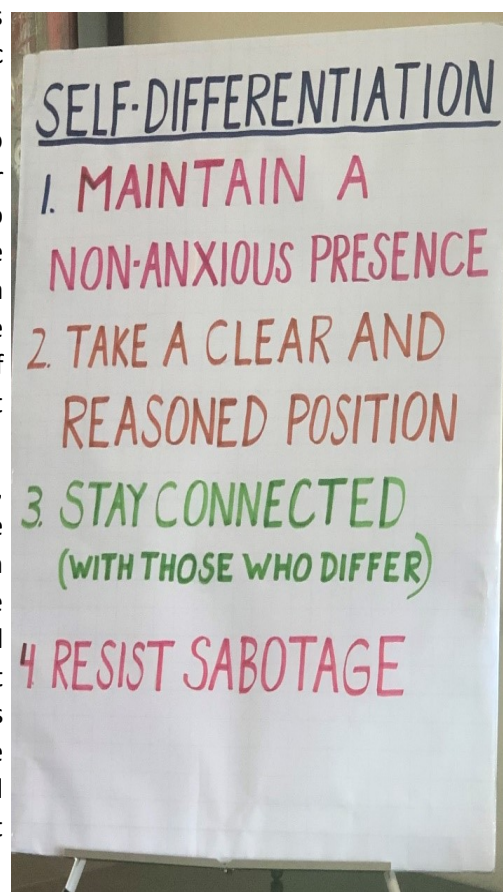
1 Corinthians 12:14

On August 23 and 24th several of us gathered together for our Post-Call Congregational Retreat led by the Reverend Don Reiter. Rev Reiter started the retreat letting us know that the purpose of the retreat was to "...promote healthier, stronger mission-focused congregations" and intended outcomes was that we would, "....have the tools we need to improve communication and manage conflict."

There was a discussion on the Bowen Family System Theory. My understanding is that the Family System Theory is the notion that the "family" (i.e. our church family) is an emotional system. We as individuals are actually interdependent where the actions of any impact the action of all of us such that "All human relationships exist in a tension between two basic forces—separateness and closeness."

There is a lot I think we all learned from this experience and there is so much I could say about what was shared but I think the big "Ah Ha" for me was the discussion on self-differentiation. Rev Reiter shared a video about an "Anxious Congregation" and then another with the same characters called, "The Responsible Congregation." Both were about a change that had happened to the worship service that not everyone agreed with but the difference between the two videos was how some of the members reacted the change. In the first there was conflict that escalated; in the second there was communication and a resolution.

There were definitely some characters, both likeable and not so likeable, that I think we all have behaved like from time to time, but I think the point was that anxiety and conflict are going to happen and we must learn to deal with it in a healthy way. I think at one point Rev Reiter made the comment that we need to take responsibility for our own individual behaviors yet step outside of the situation and try to assess how it impacts our family system. How am I contributing to this conflict and is this about what I want or the mission of my church? The picture above was a sign that Rev Reiter displayed during the retreat where he remarked (paraphrasing) that if we don't remember anything else from the retreat we should try to remember these points.



I wish more of you could have been there to experience it. Even if you were not there, I hope you will take the time to think about the statements in the photo above. I know I am going to make an effort to take responsibility for my behavior and strive to be more empathetic with those individuals that I may disagree with by speaking to them directly and address any concern while it is still a "pinch" (i.e. minor misunderstanding) and before it escalates into something greater.

I actually think that our Lutheran Urban Parish is made up of two responsive and healthy congregations. We have our moments of anxiety and disagreements but I truly believe that we are a parish whose members are there for each other and committed to doing *God's Work With Our Hands*. I feel grateful and blessed to be a member of our Lutheran Urban Parish family system. I am grateful to be a part of this body of Christ.

Jeanine Romano, PhD

Parish Deacon, Lutheran Urban Parish

Music Director



O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer, which I call, answer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: come and listen to me. (ELW #751)

Hopefully, when you read the above text, the melody of this short, simple hymn from the Taize community will pop into your head. It should – we’ve been singing it just before the prayers every Sunday for over a month. Eventually (if not already), my hope is that you will not need to see the music or text to sing this or any of the other short refrains that we will be using. Most of them are already familiar (Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying, Taste and See, Jesus Remember Me, Eat This Bread, Wait for the Lord, etc.), and we’ll learn a few new ones as well. They are best sung in harmony. As we learn a number of these lovely hymns, it is my hope that they will touch your heart and draw you closer to God in prayer. I also hope that if you hear one of these hymns played, even if the music is not printed in the bulletin, you will know it well enough to sing the words. Please do this with any hymn that you know, such as Amazing Grace. Just start singing, and if you don’t know the words, hum along. The sound can be amazing if enough people do it.

Choir rehearsals have resumed! We rehearse at 7pm on Wednesdays, and we would love to have *you* join us. No auditions or anything like that. You just have to enjoy singing. If you’re not sure it’s for you, just come to a rehearsal and see what a fun group we are!

Many thanks to our musicians for sharing their time and talents with us on a regular basis: Ann Delach, Pastor Gabriel Morgan, Hilde Reno, Mariana Gordon, Dave Stroupe, Jeanine Romano, James F.W. Clark, and Tom O’Reilly (cantors); Jeanine Romano, Justin Fair (soloists); Mariana Gordon (flute); and Rico Gordon (percussion); and many thanks to those who give of their time and talent singing in our choir: Hilde Reno, Julie Williams (soprano); Ann Delach, Linda Roche (alto); James F.W. Clark, Dave Stroupe, Pastor Gabriel Morgan (tenor); Bill Roche, Tom O’Reilly (bass).

Soli Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory),
Dennis

Worship/Altar Guild

On the second Sunday of the month beginning September 7th we will have Bread instead of wafers during Communion. We will form the single line as usual with Pastor administering the Bread and the Assisting Minister holding the wine chalice. We will purchase a regular and gluten free alternative.

September 29 – Michael and All Angels will be a white Sunday.

Patty Tolzman, Chirperson
Worship/Altar Guild

Pray for Healing

Michael Brannan	member
Winnie Clark	member
Eleanor Dunn	member
Jimmy Dunn	member
Carmen Hayes	member
Teresa Jones	member
Jeanne Pursell	member
Hilde Reno	member
Carol Swanson	member
Ron Tillis	member
Fabio Toledo	member
Joyce Toledo	member
Natalie Abreuhome	friend of Patty Tolzman
Lillian Brown	mother of Pastor Meyer
Frieda E. Bachowski	Friend of St. Paul
Thelma Brumett	mother of Justin Fair
Alicia Cejas	friend of Carmen Hayes
Sue Hiza	sister inlaw of Rom&MargaretTillis
Diane Tolzman	mother of Wayne Tolzman
Linda & Ray Garret	mother & father of Curt Fritz
Debbie McCormack	friend of St. Paul
Hailey Miller	great niece of Tina Fritz
Gloria Tillis	mother of Ron Tillis
Alina Toledo	daughter in-law of Fabio & Joyce
Gary Toledo	son of Fabio & Joyce Toledo
Yolanda Villalobos	Friend of Patty Tolzman
Dot Ward	aunt of Eddie Malmquist



*Watch dear Lord, with those who wake, watch over, or weep.
Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In you love give us
all this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Stewardship



Stewardship of our civic freedoms

Although Independence Day was a couple months ago,

this is still relevant today.

As Americans celebrated the birthday of our nation, we gave thanks for our civic freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, due process, a speedy trial, voting and many more. Our freedom has made us the envy of much of the world.

But as with any valuable gift, our civic freedoms can be abused, neglected or underappreciated to the point where, if we aren't careful, they hardly matter anymore.

Lutherans are guided by Martin Luther's insight that we are simultaneously called to be responsible citizens of "two kingdoms" – first, of God's spiritual realm, and second, of earthly governments of people and laws. The synergy of our "dual citizenship" directs us to be good stewards of our civic freedoms.

Freedom of speech: Yes, even hateful speech and lies are protected under our Constitution, but Christians avoid them in obedience to Jesus' command to love our neighbor as ourselves and by the Eighth Commandment, which Luther explains in *The Small Catechism*: "We should fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations." We steward this freedom by speaking honestly and insisting others do, too.

Freedom of religion: Millions of people across the globe, including Christians, face persecution and discrimination because of their faith. We dare not take our freedom for granted, but exercise it with joy and defend the rights of others to follow their own consciences.

Freedom from illegal prosecution: Our guarantees of due process in legal, criminal and civil proceedings uphold justice and guard against government misconduct. It works imperfectly, as do all human systems, but as good stewards we fight for justice and the rights for all.

Freedom of self-governance: With its interconnected checks and balances, our three-branch system of government provides stability, accountability and flexibility for change. It's a great system, but it requires us to be informed and involved. We steward this freedom by participating in political processes, voting and insisting on honest government that works for our interests.

As citizens of both God's spiritual realm and the United States of America, we renew our commitment to be good stewards of the freedoms we are privileged to have.

--Rob Blezard Copyright © 2019, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission.

Finances



YEAR TO DATE (July 31 2019):

Total Offerings	
(pledged, non-pledged, loose plate):	51,504.00
Total Special Offerings -	162.00

Total Other Income	
(Building use donations, etc.):	16,924.00

Total Year-To-Date Income as of July 31: \$68,428.00

Total Year-To-Date Operating Expenses: \$70,248.00

Year-To-Date Net Deficit as of July 31: (\$1,820.00)

Total Specified Donations - \$3,553.00
(this amount is collected for other causes and not included in the church's income).

Fund Balances as of July 31 (Those over \$1,000.00):

Northstar Investment Equity:	49,607.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund:	1,531.00
Capital Improvement Fund:	6,951.00
Thrivent Choice Fund:	2,544.00
Memorials:	1,189.00
Throwback Sunday Fund:	1,000.00

INTERESTED IN ONLINE GIVING? FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW.



Give On Secure Link

<https://onrealm.org/StPaulTampa/Give/>

Or Text **STPAULTAMPA \$50** (or your preferred gift amount) to **73256** to give to Operating using your text messaging. Standard text message rates do apply.

Or use this QR code.



Worship Schedule

SEPTEMBER

September 1

AM: Erin Szwejkowski Morgan

AC:

USH: Brad Haarer, Curt Fritz

Refreshments: OPEN

September 8

AM: Federico Gordon

AC:

USH: Bob Delach & Peggy Reineking

Refreshments: OPEN

September 15

AM: Jim Clark

Acolyte: Rico Gordon

USH: Bob Delach & Peggy Reineking

Refreshments: OPEN

September 22

AM: Jeanine Romano

Acolyte: Mariana Gordon

USH: Wayne & Patty Tolzman

Refreshments: OPEN

September 29

AM: Jeanine Romano

Acolyte: Mariana Gordon

USH: Wayne & Patty Tolzman

Refreshments: OPEN

Altar Guild: Patty Tolzman & Ann Delach

Counters: Wayne Tolzman



Sunday School at St. Paul recommences on Sunday, Sept 8 at 10 AM in the lounge. We will continue with Jesus and His Jewish Influences, a Great Books video course featuring Jodi Magness, an archeologist and a professor of religious studies at UNC Chapel Hill. The class is facilitated by Peggy Reineking and Jim Clark and

Pastor Gabriel arrives after the service at Faith to contribute to the discussion. On Sept 8 we will have a session that reviews the time periods we covered last year, bringing us to about 150 BC. Brief notes from last year's video lessons can be found at https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c2grx2kbqe9nfsW/AADeG_aPgG-kNxG1nXmsO5Tta?dl=0



Before scriptures are read on Sunday, the children will be gathered and escorted to their own classroom (at the entrance of the Sanctuary). They will have activities built on the scripture of the day, then they will be brought back to worship during the passing of the peace. We hope to see you and your little ones on Sunday!

OCTOBER

October 6

AM: Linda Rosche

AC: Isaac Fritz

USH: Brad Haarer & Curt Fritz

Refreshments: OPEN

October 13

AM: Tina Fritz

AC:

USH: Brad Haarer & Curt Fritz

Refreshments: OPEN

October 20

AM: Jim Clark

Acolyte: Rico Gordon

USH: Bob Delach & Peggy Reineking

Refreshments: OPEN

October 27

AM: Hilde Reno

Acolyte: Mariana Gordon

USH: Bob Delach & Peggy Reineking

Refreshments: OPEN

Altar Guild: Patty Tolzman & Ann Delach

Counters: Jim Clark

****PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT FOR YOUR DAY IF UNABLE TO ATTEND****
THANK YOU!



LUNCH BUNCH IS BACK! We've taken the summer off, but we'll be back the last Sunday of each month to get together and dine out after Sunday's services. We meet at a different location each month and for September 29 we're going to The Yummy House China Bistro, 2620 E. Hillsborough Ave., Tampa, 33610. Everyone is invited to join us for some good food and lively conversation! Hope you'll be there!

SEPT. BIRTHDAYS

9/10 - Dina Forsythe

9/13 - Brian Tolzman

9/19 - Pastor Russell Meyer

9/21 - Jim Clark

9/28 - Rachel Bhaskar

SEPT. ANNIVERSARIES

9/7 - Federico & Jessica Goprdon

9/18 - Fabio & Joyce Toledo

9/20 - Ron & Margaret Tillis



SEPTEMBER 2019

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1st SUNDAY 2 PM Suncoast Area Convention	WEEKLY: 11-1 New Bite of Serenity 6:30 pm Together We Can 9 pm Never Too Young	WEEKLY: 11-1 New Bite of Serenity 6 pm Men's Literature Study	WEEKLY: 11-1 New Bite of Serenity 5:30 pm Sunset Solutions 8 pm New Life	WEEKLY: 11-1 New Bite of Serenity 8 pm A New Way	WEEKLY: 11-1 New Bite of Serenity 7-8 pm Step Verse	WEEKLY: 10 am Aging in Recovery 7 pm Triple M Men's 8:15 pm Keep the Faith
1 11:00 am Worship	2	3	4 12 Noon Meditation/ Sanctuary 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	5 6:30 pm Bible Study @ St. Paul	6	7 9:30 am The KINSHIP free market @ Faith
8 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship	9	10 7:00 pm Council Mtg	11 911 Memorial Service @ Good Shepherd 12 Noon Meditation/ Sanctuary 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	12 6:30 pm Bible Study @ St. Paul	13	14
15 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship	16	17	18 12 Noon Meditation/ Sanctuary 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	19 6:30 pm Bible Study @ St. Paul	20	21 8:30-11am The Well@ Good Samaritan Inn/ Florida Ave.
22 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship	23	24	25 12 noon Meditation/ Sanctuary 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	26 6:30 pm Bible Study @ St. Paul	27 6:30 pm Pub Theology	28
29 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Worship 12 noon Lunch Bunch @ Yummy House	30					