

HAVEN LUTHERAN CHURCH
Hagerstown, Maryland



February 23, 2021



Dr. Bill and Becky Plavcan have COVID. They have been so very careful, yet... Becky is quarantining at home. Bill is at the Shippensburg Health Care Center (121 Walnut Bottom Rd, Shippensburg, PA 17257) Please keep them both in prayer.



GRATITUDE AND GODSIGHTINGS

I WANT TO THANK YOU for the gift and ovation for my 14th year installation anniversary. You still surprise me! As the livestream showed, I was speechless. I continually ask the Lord why it is that I was so blessed to partner with a church that does such a good job of loving one another and caring for a pastor. And when there is no answer to that “why,” I simply say “Thank you, Lord.”

In case you are curious about the gift the Council gave me, let me share. It is Always a Guest: Speaking of Faith Far from Home, a book by favorite preacher, Barbara Brown Taylor. Thank you, Council. I’m looking forward to a good read!

SOAP ON YOUR MIRROR? I invited all of us to use the soap of repentance and cleansing to make a cross on the mirror where you wash your face for brush your teeth each morning. "I am a baptized child of God, forever loved and forgiven." I am wondering how many have made this part of their Lenten walk. Well, I heard from one member:

"Just a beloved wannabe follower remembering his baptism in a way suggested last Wednesday."

Pastor Dave Kaplan



ANGLERS FOR JESUS (aka "God Squad Explorers t Cannon's house) had an exciting lesson last weekend.

"Are you surrounding yourself with friends who would carry you to Jesus?"

This week the God Explorers journeyed with the disciples and learned about a place where some friends had to carry their friend on a mat to Jesus for healing. Roark, Quill and James Paul had to determine, "How would we get Quill to Jesus"? They could select from a blanket, yoga mat or sheet. They are coloring their accordion of disciples and when they have memorized the names of 4 disciples, have perfect attendance for 3 classes and memorize 3 scriptures, they earn a pizza and game night. This week, they recited "Come, follow me, Jesus said and I will send you out to fish for people." Matthew 4:19. It was a night overflowing in blessings as Quill said "what does it mean to fish for people...what bait to you use"? And his brother very easily replied "the bait is love from Jesus." James Paul, an avid fisherman told them about using different bait to catch different fish. (wow...now that is the start of great lesson.)

Jamie Cannon



A Prayer to Refocus

God, I want more of You.

Too often, I choose to pursue momentary things and push You aside. Please forgive me, and change me. I don't want to live a life that isn't focused on You.

As I prepare for Resurrection Sunday, help me to silence the noise in my life. Show me what steps I need to take to refocus my heart, mind, and will on You alone.

Search my heart, and know me. Clean out my life, point out anything that offends You, and make me more like You. Show me the paths that lead to life, and fill me with joy in Your presence.

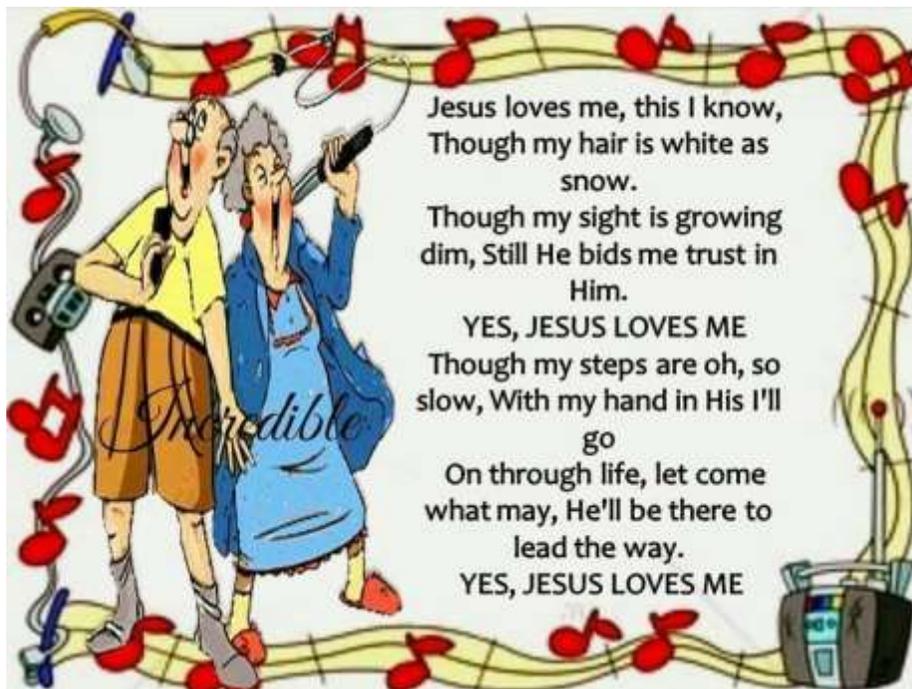
I love You, and I want to fix my eyes on You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

YouVersion

CAROL SHULL SENT A PRAYER for our Lenten walk.

A GIFT OF A SONG AND A SMILE from Pam O'Connor:



LYO Lenten Devotional Series: "Grounded"

“Grounded” is a Lenten video devotional series for children based on the life cycle of a plant. Each Sunday during Lent, we will share a video on our synod's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/DelawareMarylandSynod>) and YouTube channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/channel>) where a member of the Elementary Team (E-Team) of the LYO will read a brief Bible passage connected with the various stages of growth, discuss it, demonstrate a craft that goes along with it, and provide a link to a song that fits with the message. Be on the lookout for these videos each Sunday in Lent, and please share with our youngest disciples! (So this is a Lenten series prepared for elementary children by teens from the DE-MD Synod. Rather cool!)



BECAUSE WE NEED TO LAUGH



I don't have grey hair. I have wisdom highlights.

I don't trip, I do random gravity checks.



A PAUSE IN GOD'S WORD

Today I offer the reflections of DE-MD Synod Bishop Bill Gohl from his weekly posting.

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. – Ezekiel 36:26

Even in a time of pandemic, the season of Lent is the springtime remedy for the places in our life that strike a dissonant chord with our faith; a time to turn our hearts away from sin and back towards the heart of God. Lutheran Christians have sometimes observed Lent with striking sobriety and somber spirits, but Lent in and of itself leads us to the ever new, joyful and hope-filled promise of resurrection. Lent invites us to be attentive, especially in times of isolation from in-person community, to that which could dampen or even corrode our heart of faith.

Pope Francis in 2017 said, “the whole of the Lenten season is imbued with this conviction, which we could say is echoed by three words offered to us in order to rekindle the heart of the believer: *pause, see and return.*”

Pause a little, leave behind the unrest and commotion that fill the soul with bitter feelings which never get us anywhere.

Pause from a distracted life that robs us of time with family, with friends, that hallows time with God.

Pause and refrain from the urge to want to control everything, know everything, consume everything; to take stock, with gratitude for the gift of life, and all the good we receive.

Pause and turn away from the emptiness of everything that is instantaneous, momentary and fleeting, from the babel of blustering aloud and online, back to the fruitful and creative power of silence and contemplating the enduring faithfulness of God.

See the face of God in the marginalized neighbor, in those who blend into the backgrounds of our lives, to see in others God's tenderness and goodness working in our midst.

See the face of our families, of biology and choice, who continue striving, day by day, with great effort in the midst of perilous times, who, despite many concerns and hardships, are committed to making our lives together a school of love.

See the faces of our unhoused, sick, addicted, incarcerated and isolated siblings, and the many who take care of them; recognizing in their vulnerability and service that the value of personhood can never be reduced to a question of calculation or utility.

See the faces of so many who try to repair their errors and mistakes, and who from their misfortune and suffering fight to transform their situations and move forward.

Return to God, to Crucified Love, who from the cross continues to bring us hope, his hand outstretched to those who feel crucified, who experience in their lives the burden of failure, disappointment, and heartbreak.

Return to Christ, to an invitation filled with hope for this Lenten, pandemic time, in order to defeat the demons of distrust, apathy and resignation; indeed, to the one who invites us to believe and act, in word and deed, proclaiming “the kin-dom of God is possible, the Kingdom of God is near!”

Pause, see and return.

Prayer: In some ways, Lord, it feels like we have been on “pause” for a year. Yet I know it hasn’t usually been a stillness that brought rest, peace or a nearer walk with you. Help me to choose to *pause* each day to *see* you, my neighbor, your love and healing in small acts of kindness or the beauty of sunshine after days of gray. Help me to then *return* to you with thanks and entrust you with my worries so that I am ever freed to serve you and neighbor in love. Amen.

Music:

“Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song” ELW #808
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgwGPPM2ytc>

“Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth” ELW #735 (based on Julian of Norwich writings)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oyR2SQKOYo>

“Now the Silence” ELW #460 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJxNqY4sf70>

LISTEN and begin to learn for our Annual Meeting on Sunday

“Build Us Up, Lord” ELW #670 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoZz4X7ep3Q>

Some rockin’ Contemporary Christian music:

“Your Grace Is Enough) (Matt Maher) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LISbMRpoY64>

“Strong Enough” (Matthew West) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_gCfAoDmgg