

FROM PASTOR JIM

During this Lenten season at Mt. Olive we are using the theme for our Wednesday night worship, *“Thy Will Be Done.”* We are all familiar with the circumstances surrounding this utterance from the lips of Jesus. The setting is the Garden of Gethsemane on the last night of Jesus’ earthly life (that is his physical, temporal body life). He has been struggling mightily in prayer with the Father about his impending suffering and death at the hands of the very people he came to save. After petitioning his Father to allow the cup of wrath to pass from him, he utters the most beautiful statement of trust found in the whole of Scripture, *“Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done (accomplished).”*

It is in this incredible circumstance of deep prayer that Jesus most identifies with us in our humanness. Jesus has spent over 30 years living in his Father’s fallen world, watching and experiencing the brokenness of a world separated from its’ loving Creator. He has known the death of loved ones, he has seen the cruelty we inflict upon one another physically, emotionally and spiritually, he has been hated and berated for speaking out against abuses by those in power, he has been crushed by the devastations of disease that wrecks havoc on the old and young alike, he will be betrayed by two of his closest confidants, abandoned by all of those who followed him throughout his earthly ministry, turned over to his enemies who will taunt him, beat him, mock him, scourge him and ultimately crucify him by nailing him to a tree (the most horrible judgment of defeat known). Asking the Father for this cup to pass from him is the most human request he can utter, and one that every one of us can identify with in our life.

How often have we cried out in the difficult circumstances of our life, *“Please God, take this away!”* It is the most human prayer we make. For who among us enjoys the pain and suffering this life offers us? The problem we have with asking for this to pass is that it is

totally and completely a selfish prayer. We just want the pain, the distress, the hurt we are experiencing to end. How many times in the difficult circumstance are we also guilty of saying, *“Why me?”*, as if we should be exempt from these unpleasant happenings in our lives?

While Jesus’ prayer is the same as ours from the human perspective, he immediately follows it with the statement of trust he has in the Father’s will being done – knowing the Father’s will is to suffer and die! The writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote that *“we should fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (12:2)* Like Jesus, we have seen the brokenness of this world, we have experienced the pain and suffering of life (some of it our fault), and we are privileged and able to ask God to please take it away from us. We also know that our gracious God does sometime take it away – but we have also learned to add the phrase of trust Jesus taught us, because we know what God’s good and gracious will has accomplished for us through our Lord Jesus.

As we take this Lenten journey together through the Garden and through Calvary, let us be thankful that Jesus has fulfilled the Father’s will and brought us the incredible and lasting truth of Easter and the joyous proclamation, *“He is risen! Alleluia!”*

Rev. Jim Bothwell, Transition Pastor

THY WILL BE DONE

Experience the SEASON OF LENT

“Not as I will, but as you will,” Jesus prayed to his Father the night before he went to the cross for our salvation. And that is our prayer as well this Lenten season as we seek to do God’s will in our lives, and as we draw near to the observance of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection during Holy Week. Each service in the series focuses on a

different aspect of God's will at work among us. Biblical characters are used as insightful reference points each week to guide us in following our Lord more nearly day by day.

Wednesday, March 7, 2018. Join us for the Thy Will Be Done special service for Week 4 of Lent. In this service we remember that, in humility, **Mary dutifully accepted the role God had given her** to become the mother of our Savior. That Son would later accept his role, faithfully following the path his Father had in mind for him to save us all.

SUPPER – ITALIAN)

Wednesday, March 14, 2018. Join us for the Thy Will Be Done special service for Week 5 of Lent. In this service we remember that, on the road to Damascus, **Paul had his worldview turned upside down when God called him** to preach the name of the Christ he had been persecuting. We follow God's will by putting the crucified Christ at the center of our worldview.

(SUPPER – IRISH)

Wednesday, March 21, 2018. Join us for the Thy Will Be Done special service for Week 6 of Lent. In this service we remember **that Lydia followed the will of God by responding in faith and hospitality** when the Gospel message of Christ's sacrifice was preached to her. We follow the will of God by responding in love and service to one another in return for what Christ has done for us.

(SUPPER – MEXICAN)

News from our Church Council

No official actions taken.

LLL – Met on 2/14 with lunch provided by the Renner Family. The men read and discussed Lenten reading, Joel 2:12-18 which talks about God's compassion and mercy. The men also discussed the need

for "new recruits" and included that petition in their closing prayer.

LWML – Met on 2/21 and read Lenten devotions. A check for \$100 was sent to Seminary Student Sylvan Finger and his thank you was received. We also received a \$1,000 check to LWML from Dale Carroll in memory of Faye Hansen. There will be a Zone 14 Social on Sunday, March 11, 1 – 3PM at Mary's Pizza Shack in Windsor. Rev. Fred Karlen will lead a devotion on "How is Jesus Messing with You?"

FELLOWSHIP – The Lenten International Country themed pot-luck suppers are going well. The following Wednesday evenings will feature China, Italy, Ireland and Mexico. There will be sign-up sheets in the narthex to provide Easter Flowers.

NURTURE – The northwest corner of Harvell Hall is being prepared for children's Sunday School – books, crafts, posters, etc.

PROPERTY – Tim & Shelly continue to maintain the inside and outside of our Church. There will be some more painting done.

SERVICE – The Prayer Chain continues to work well. Judy is looking for volunteers to provide her transportation when she visits and/or delivers flowers to ill members of Mt. Olive.

WITNESS – Reaching Out for Christ in Our Community

Let's Share Easter With Our Murphy Ave. Neighbors

Large, colorful Easter eggs, containing an invitation to join us on Easter morning will be delivered to each home on Murphy Ave. The invitation, to be delivered the week before Easter and will include a welcome to

the Easter breakfast at 8:30 am, the Easter egg hunt at 9:30 am, and Easter worship service at 10 am.

Easter is the perfect time for us to reach out to our neighbors to share the joy of Jesus and his victory over death for everyone who believes in Him. Let's pray, as a family of believers, that some neighbors will join us in all, or part, of our Easter morning celebration.

We will have extra fresh eggs and sausages on hand! See a new face or family on Easter morning? Let's give them the Mount Olive welcome!

Manna, Missions, Mites, and Sunshine

On the first Sunday of each month, remember to bring non-perishable food and place it in the box in the narthex. The food is then delivered to the Sebastopol Food Pantry by Don Hanni.

You can use the special Mission Offering envelope found in your church offering box.

LWML ladies, bring your Mites box.

If you have any questions, please contact our Church Treasurer, Tim Meiburg

March Birthdays:

3/12 – Christine Dechert
3/20 – Valerie Garden
3/20 – Kris Hutchins
3/21 – Judy Hartwig
3/27 – Don Hanni

March Wedding Anniversaries:

3/7 – Jose & Annette Avila, 49 years
3/24 – Peter & Heather Renner, 45 years

Please pray for:



† Our home-bound members: Karen Coster, and for Michael Fauss who is at Mirabel home in Forestville.

From Peter Renner

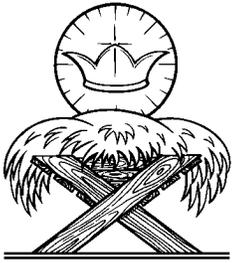
“Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10

You know how sometimes you hear a bit of a perfectly forgettable old song, or an advertising jingle, and you can't get it out of your head for a week? I hate when that happens.

But “Be Still and Know That I Am God” works the opposite for me. Every time I hear it, I can't help but think of singing it with our choir in a former church and how much it meant to me at the time, how much it means to me now. When I get off the phone with our oldest son Ted, I think what an immensely likeable and loving offspring he turned out to be. There was a time when we were justly concerned he'd never make it through single digits.

Ted had an assortment of medical issues when he was little; nothing extraordinary, really, just things that needed some attention and treatment – hernias, for example, that needed to be operated on, and a turned-in foot that required some funny-looking shoes for a time. (He now wears standard size 13's – on both feet.)

Before he started Kindergarten, a physical exam was required. Our family doctor, a wonderful man named E. Paul Gander, did the honors. He seemed to be taking a little longer than normal with the stethoscope. He had Ted sit up, lie down, sit up, lie down, and then he announced, "I've found a murmur. We need to have Ted checked by a pediatric cardiologist."



For unto us a child is born,
to us a son is given ...
Isaiah 9:6

We made an appointment with the doctor, by reputation the finest in the area, at Children's Hospital in Milwaukee. He confirmed the murmur and then scheduled Ted for an echocardiogram. It was scary, but also fascinating, to see Ted's inner workings displayed on the monitor overhead. It didn't mean much to us, of course, but when the doctor said, "We need to operate, the sooner the better", that was as clear a message as we could get.

Without getting too medical, a hole between passages in his heart, which all children have before birth, had failed to close after Ted was born. According to the doctor, this problem could never heal, it could only get worse. If we didn't get the operation done, and done quickly, Ted's heart would be overworked, probably overdevelop, and Ted would have stunted growth and a shortened life. We were shocked.

After some more consultation and impassioned prayer, Heather and I both felt we needed some time to absorb the implications before a decision could be made. The doctor urged us not to delay. Our family doctor was respectful of our feelings, but also supported prompt action. We struggled mightily with the decision. Our prayers reflected our hurt and our anger.

After most of a year had passed, both of us worriedly watching all of Ted's activities for the slightest sign of undue strain, we felt we couldn't responsibly wait any longer. We took Ted back to our family doctor. We expected that open-heart surgery would soon follow, perhaps within

the month. We had conditioned ourselves to deal with it. But because we found the specialist's office staff a little too "pushy" for our taste, we asked our doctor to refer us to another pediatric cardiologist. He might have been a little put off with our request, as he had pulled some strings to get us in to see the first specialist, but he did what we asked.

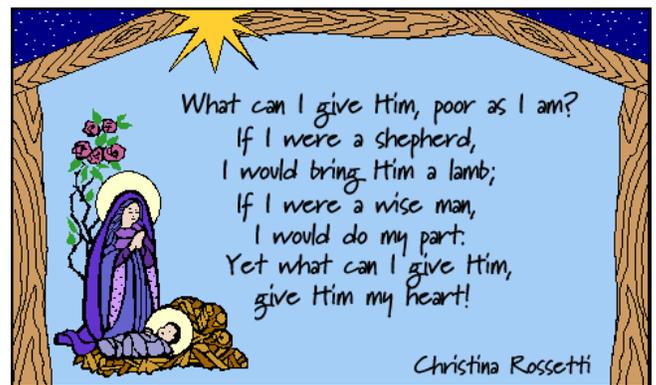
I'll never forget the visit following Ted's second echocardiogram. The doctor spent at least half an hour listening to Ted's heart and having him perform a variety of exercises and assuming various postures. We watched closely, eager to develop some confidence in the man who would soon be operating on our son.

"Nothing. There's nothing here". We couldn't believe our ears. Did he make a mistake? How could he miss such an obvious problem? Had the hole healed itself?"

"No", he explained, "these things do not heal themselves", not in his experience, which was considerable, not in an infant, not in a 6 year-old. He poured over Ted's file, looking for some anomaly to explain what had happened. No, there was no doubt that Ted had the condition a year earlier, and no, there was no doubt it was now gone.

Heather and I looked at each other. And we knew.

"Be still, be still my heart and know ..."



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