

Rebirth and Rebuilding

*Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you." Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." – **Jeremiah 1:4-8***



Jeremiah was a prophet living in Judah just before its fall to Babylonian troops and the destruction of the first Jerusalem Temple in 587 BCE. Jeremiah has been called the weeping prophet, because so much of his book is painful to read. Jeremiah is called to speak to his own people, and predict what is going to happen to them soon. To speak the truth. Their country is about to be destroyed.

This passage is about the call of Jeremiah. It was a dark time for the people of God and their nation. Sound familiar? As I write this, portions of our government have just reopened after being shut down for five weeks. Workers missed paychecks. Middle-class families had to get help from food shelves. Government officials continue fighting political wars with each other, with the threat of another shutdown after February 15.

While Jeremiah was talking about a specific historical event that took place over two millennia ago, his words still speak to our times and our lives today. We've all seen how national politics can affect individual lives and families.

Personal tragedies and losses can also be overwhelming—such as the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the diagnosis of a serious medical problem, or the end of a friendship. The grief process in response to those kinds of losses may include denial, bargaining, depression, anger, and acceptance.

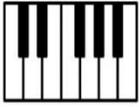
God uses six verbs to describe the changes that the prophet Jeremiah might witness: plucking up, pulling down, destroying, overthrowing, building and planting. Notice how the first four are verbs describing loss or destruction, and the final two are about repair and rebirth. They sound a lot like the grief process.

Much of life is dealing with death and loss, rebirth and rebuilding. This passage from Jeremiah offers the promise that, whatever we may face in our lives today, God is always present beside us. From the day of our birth until the day of our death, God tells us, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you." God doesn't promise to protect us from suffering or tragedy. But God does promise to walk with us.

God also promises that we will find comfort in a community of faithful people—like St. Mark's. Jeremiah received his calling as a boy. And even though this passage doesn't say anything about it, I'm sure that Jeremiah's parents and family and faith community encouraged him to listen to God's calling. I first became aware of God's call for me when a fifth-grade Sunday school teacher told me that I should think about becoming a pastor. She planted a seed in my heart that kept growing throughout my life. Even during the many years after I had decided not to seek ordination because I was gay. For me, that early dream was destroyed, and then reborn 30 years later.

God does that sometimes. God takes our broken hearts and long-dead dreams and brings a resurrection that no one—including yourself—would expect. God sends friends and loved ones who listen to our disappointments and hopes. And even when our dreams do not "come true," those people walk beside us, along with God, step-by-step through life's journey. To help us not to be afraid. Amen.

Pastor Joe



MUSIC NOTES*

A familiar folk song, O WALY, O WALY, will be a setting used for the communion hymn this coming Sunday, February 3rd. This tune is used for *The Gift of Love, The Water Is Wide* and others. Our hymnal, ELW, uses it for the text, *Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue*, written by Andrew Donaldson. He, a church musician from Ontario, Canada, served on a revision of the *Book of Praise* for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He states that he was looking for a paraphrase of 1 Cor. 13 that could be sung to this folk song, O WALY, O WALY. In addition to 13:1-13, he included text from 12:12-13 in the last verse to include the context of the whole baptized body:

The gifts are many, the Body one, and into one are all baptized.

Beloved, share one heart, one mind, one hope, one faith, one love in Christ.

The folk tune was collected by Cecil Sharp, a collector and editor of folk music. Born and educated in England, he continued his music as an organist in Australia, and ran a music school. He returned to England and developed a passion for folk song and dance, publishing *Folk Songs from Somerset* in five parts between 1904-1909.

He then visited the United States and collected folk songs from the Appalachians which became a part of his book, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*. It was his work that influenced the works of Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Alpha Roeszler
Music Director

*Excerpts from ELW Hymnal Companion



St. Mark's Education Hour

Since the fall, a group has been reading the book *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road?* by Brian McLean. We have been considering how, for many Christians, there is a "crisis of identity" that arises out of the discord between the Christian call to love of neighbor and the highly visible attitude of hostility toward the "other."

In the second part of the book, the author invites us to reexamine central Christian doctrines to see how they might heal this discord. Join us on Sunday mornings in February at 9:00-9:45 am as we continue our conversations. All are welcome even if you have not read the book. If you have questions, contact Helen Beth or Tammy.

For the season of Lent, the education hour will be devoted to "Crosswalks: Journey to ComPassion."

In this intergenerational series, participants of *all ages* will be invited to (re)read the lessons from the service and consider together how they relate to their experiences and questions as they live out their faith Monday through Saturday. Particular attention will be given to the questions of privilege and how we, as people in relationship with God, our neighbor and the natural world, should embody a ComPassionate response.

Join us on Sunday mornings beginning on March 3rd in the chapel following the worship service (11:15-12:00). If you have any questions, contact Helen Beth, Emily, Tara, Tammy, Elna or Pastor Joe.

Tammy Lanaghan



Gospel Readings for February

Feb 3 – Epiphany 4

Luke 4:21-30

Jesus says a prophet is not accepted in his hometown

Feb 10 – Epiphany 5

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus calls the disciples to fish for people

Feb 17 – Epiphany 6

Luke 6:17-26

Jesus speaks blessings on the poor and hungry; woes on the rich and full

Feb 24 – Epiphany 7

Luke 6:27-38

Love your enemies

"Boy Erased"

The next book selection for the **Query Book Discussion** is *Boy Erased: A Memoir of Identity, Faith and Family* by Garrard Conley. Now a motion picture, this is "An urgent reminder that America remains a place where queer people have to fight for their lives."

Come to the Front Street Taproom Mezzanine on Tuesday, February 26th, 5:30-7:00 p.m., for the discussion led by Pastor Joe and Tammy Lanaghan.

The Front Street Taproom is located at 614 Main Ave, Fargo.

CHOIR NOTE: We will have rehearsal on Sunday, February 17, at 9:15 a.m. All singers are welcome to join us! We will sing for the worship service that Sunday. Copies of the music are available from Alpha.

February Schedule

USHERS

3: Amelia Gaddie and Stan Franek
10: Bill Roeszler
17: Brian Buteyn
24: Charlie Jordan

LECTORS

3: Linda Graf
10: Jane Radig
17: Mary Jane Haugen
24: Becky Barry

CANTORS

3: Jon and Phoenix Leiseth
10: Tammy Lanaghan
17: Brian Buteyn and Charlie Jordan
24: Becky Barry

ALTAR GUILD

3: Naomi Franek
10: Maxine Fagerland
17: Mary Jane Haugen
24: Elna Solvang

BREAD

3: Linda Graf
10: Maxine Fagerland
17: Tammy Lanaghan
24: The Kuhens

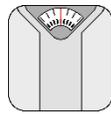


DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb 1: Serve at Churches United, 3:30 pm
Feb 3: Food Pantry Sunday
Feb 3: Book Study, 9 am
Feb 5: Mosaic, 2-5 pm
Feb 7: Church Council Meeting, 6:00 pm
Feb 10: Book Study, 9 am
Feb 12: Mosaic
Feb 17: Book Study, 9 am
Feb 19: Mosaic, 2-5 pm
Feb 21: Education Comm, 7 pm
Feb 24: Book Study, 9 am
Feb 26: Mosaic, 2-5 pm

FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY

Sunday, February 3, we'll be collecting items for the Emergency Food Pantry. Last month I challenged us to collect more items than we did in December. In December we had collected 16 lbs. and we managed to up that to 28 lbs. in January,



During a council meeting Carly suggested we aim to collect the amount equivalent to a small child, such as Oscar. I googled the average weight of a 5-year-old boy (Am I the only who can't believe Oscar will be 5 this month?) and it was 49 lbs. We were just over 1/2 way there in January. Can we get closer to that weight in February? Just for fun I calculated the weight of 6 (5-yr-old) boys. It comes to 294 lbs. Dividing that by 12 (the number of months in the year) equals 24.5 lbs.

By collecting a little over 24 lbs. a month, we will have collected the weight of 6 average 5-year-olds in one year. Do you think we can do it?

Current needs include the following: Canned Tuna, Peanut Butter, Canned Fruit, Rice (one-pound bag white or brown), Pasta/noodles, Toilet Paper, and Bar soap.

They also accept other non-perishable items, basic hygiene items, and egg cartons (must be 1 dozen carton and prefer large size).

If you wish to make a monetary donation, please make the check out to St. Mark's Lutheran Church and notate Emergency Food Pantry on the memo line.

Thanks!

Jane Radig

Churches United for the Homeless Information

At the annual meeting for the member board of Churches United for the Homeless it was announced that the **merger** of Churches United for the Homeless and Fargo Moorhead Dorothy Day House of Hospitality (FMDDHH) had been approved. Due to the completion of Bright Sky Apartments and the merger with FMDDHH - which has a shelter for men only in Moorhead, a food pantry in Moorhead, and a food pantry in West Fargo - CUFH went from having one building and a staff of 21 at the beginning of 2018 to having 5 buildings and a staff of 51 in 2019.

2018 Highlights for the Main Shelter

557 men and women and **99** children sheltered. Bright Sky Apartments has housed **50** adults and **60** children. All units were leased by the end of November.

Over **9,500** volunteer hours

64 adults and **53** children moved into housing, totaling **56** households from the main shelter.

80,785 meals served \$0.65/meal = \$52,510.25

Churches United NEEDS List

Diapers (sizes 4, 5, and 6), Baby wipes and formula, Space Heaters, Pillows, New Underwear, Adult Gloves, Adult Winter Boots, Alcohol Free Cold and Flu Medicine, Ibuprofen, Antacids, Shower shoes, Silverware

Dorothy Day NEEDS List

Ibuprofen, Antacids, Adult Men's Gloves, Ground Coffee, Bus Passes

Bright Sky Apartment NEEDS List

Food (Perishable and non-perishable) Meat, Milk, Dish Soap, Dishwasher Soap, Hand Soap, Laundry Detergent, Cleaning Sprays, Disinfectant Wipes

Community Activities Coming Soon...

FMCT presents "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time"

Dates: Feb 1-3, and 7-9

Place: The Stage at Island Park

Contact: www.fmct.org

Rosemary Jones performing

International Potluck

Date: February 7, 2019, 6 pm

Speaker: Dr. Gatluak Thach

Place: Dakota Medical Foundation

Contact: Nyamal Dei at southsudanreads@gmail.com

Red River Rainbow Seniors

"Dancing with the Oldies"

Date: Saturday, February 9, 6:30-11pm

Place: The Bowler on So. University Avenue

Contact: RRRainbowSeniors@gmail.com

Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Women March and Rally

Date: February 14, 2019, 1-3pm

Place: Fargo Civic Center

Facebook Updates: FM Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Human Trafficking Taskforce

Query Book Discussion

Book: "Boy Erased: A Memoir of Identity, Faith, and Family" by Garrard Conley

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 26, 5:30-7pm

Place: Front Street Taproom

Contact: Pastor Joe or Tammy L.

Horizon Middle School Theatre's

Production of "Li'l Abner"

Dates: Feb. 28 @ 7 pm

March 1 & 2 @ 7 pm

March 3 at 2 pm

Place: 3601 12th Avenue So., Moorhead

Phoenix Leiseth performing

Note: Please let us know of local groups/activities that may be of interest to our congregation.

GUATEMALAN GETAWAY

In June, members of **Sister Parish***, a ministry of Faith/Journey Lutheran in West Fargo, will be sending a small delegation to a congregation in Guatemala for a week of visiting, cultural exchange, support and community building. It is an educational relationship as well, since the 1990's. It is not a typical church mission trip where folks build homes or infrastructure; rather, a nurturing of our common bonds in faith and service. Members from Fargo will stay with local families to facilitate this cultural exchange. I have signed up to go with them!

On February 16, 2019, Faith/Journey will hold a fundraising dinner/Fiesta-like carnival, complete with a silent auction and games/activities for all ages. (Please see the next page for more information.) Tickets are available from Charlie Jordan or Pastor Joe.

Donations are also most welcome to offset the travel costs. Thanks for your support! --**Charlie Jordan**

*Read more about **Sister Parish**, below:

MISSION: Sister Parish (Iglesias Hermanas) exists to foster mutual understanding and commitment to peace and justice among people in the U.S. and Central America. This objective is pursued through intentional linking between churches and Christian communities in the United States and Central America. Delegations travel to the North and South with home stays as an essential aspect in enhancing awareness and understanding, and in nurturing closer relationships.

VISION:

Consciousness-Raising: To better understand and overcome sources of justice and oppression

Solidarity: To promote mutual respect and dignity for all people, advocate for human rights, and work for social and economic justice for all

Reconciliation: To live in peace with one another by finding the courage to recognize our own failings and to forgive each other despite the history of violence

Ecumenism: To accept each other and respect each other's beliefs and practices, as we unite to work together so that all may share equally in the fullness of God's creation.