

Daily Devotions



Monday, 11/19/2018 Daniel 12:1-3

I was working as a chaplain in a hospital and had responded to a request to visit a patient in the emergency room. I read a few verses of scripture and prayed with the patient, who then asked me about judgment day and who would and would not be saved. I responded that this decision wasn't up to me. When I got a surprised look, I continued by noting that in the Apostles' Creed I am told that Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead. I don't have to judge. Rather, it is up to me to live each and every day in the way Jesus taught me to live, by loving God with all my heart and soul and by loving my neighbor. Jesus showed me a way of life, not a way to fear the end of life. I live in the love of Christ, and by faith I trust in the love of Christ. *Lord, help us see each other through your eyes of mercy and grace. Remove our desire to judge ourselves and others so we may treat each other with love and respect. Amen.*

Nicole M. Garcia, '18, Director of Congregational Care, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Boulder, Colo.

Tuesday, 11/20/2018 Hebrews 9:24-28

Did you know that people are imperfect? Personally, my life seems to be living proof of this. Imperfections can feel frustrating and limiting. There are so many moments, even entire days or lengths of time, when we feel like we are not enough. Then we take a step back and remember that God lives within each of us. Remember back in Sunday school when you were told that Jesus is in your heart? While the Sunday school crafts might be gone, the message is the same: Christ lives in you. Passages like this one in Hebrews remind us that, far beyond what humans are capable of, God is enough. When faced with challenges or human limitations, how much stronger would you feel if you looked at yourself in the mirror and reminded yourself: God is in me, so I am enough. *Loving God, we lay our imperfections before you, and pray that you take away our sin, pain and brokenness. Live in us, work in us, so that with your help, we might be enough. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.

Wednesday, 11/21/2018 Mark 12:38-44

Beware! Beware of the scribes! Not because they're scary or violent. But beware, and be cautious not to put them on too high a pedestal. Be cautious, that you not try to imitate them as a means of living rightly. Sure, they may walk around like they have it all together, like they are very prestigious, like everyone should respect them, but at what cost? At the cost of those the Lord has deemed the most vulnerable. What Jesus is saying here is that fame for fame's sake is not a good enough goal, if along the way you are not caring for the widow and the orphan. Ask yourself, "Who do I look up to, and why?" Is it because of what they've done? Is it because of what they've said? Now consider what it took for them to get to where they are. Are they still honorable? *Holy One, open our eyes so we might see clearly what is false righteousness and what is your truth. Guide us toward role models whose paths are paved in service toward you and your kingdom. Keep us mindful of who we're called to be. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.

Thursday, 11/22/2018 Mark 12:38-44

After Jesus condemns the scribes for trampling on the widows while scrambling to gain respect and make an impressive appearance, as if planned by God, a widow makes her way up to the treasury and puts in all of her money. We can miss this connection in our reading if we separate Mark 12:38-40 from 12:41-44. But making the link is important, because it changes how we understand Jesus' reaction to the widow. Without the aforementioned verses about the scribes, it can sound like Jesus is proud that the widow is giving everything she has. However, making the link lifts up consideration of what the scribes have done to her; it reminds us that they have not been taking care of her as the scriptures demand. Then we may also note a Jesus whose anger may stem from the fact that she has been left with only two coins to live on. Making this interpretative connection also invites each of us readers today to consider for whom we are called to care, and how. *God, help us to see the invisible. Guide our eyes and hearts to see all of your children with the same eyes with which you see them, and with the same love with which you love them. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.

Friday, 11/23/2018

"Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling," ELW 582, verse 2

*Holy Spirit, ever living
as the church's very life;
Holy Spirit, ever striving
through us in a ceaseless strife;
Holy Spirit, ever forming
in the church the mind of Christ:
you we praise with endless worship
for your gifts and fruits unpriced.*

What is the church? Some would say, a nonprofit organization; others might say it's a social club of sorts. But fundamentally, the church is the body of Christ. The church is the people, living in Christian community, striving to be Christ-like in their communities and around the world. As the second verse of this hymn says, the Holy Spirit forms within the church the mind of Christ. In the church, what Christ wants, who Christ loves--this is all collected and curated, and becomes who the church is. So, rather than "What is the church?" a more appropriate question would be "Who is the church?" Just think for a moment: Just as any individual person does, the church prays, the church gives, the church acts, the church protects, and the church embodies Christ in the world--which is exactly what we as individuals are all called to do. *Lord, we are your church: imperfectly human, and unapologetically in love with who you are. We strive to be who you have created us to be, and we ask that you forgive us when we fall short. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.

Saturday, 11/24/2018 & Sunday 11/25/2018 "Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling," ELW 582, verse 3

*Holy Spirit, ever working
through the church's ministry;
quick'ning, strength'ning, and absolving,
setting captive sinners free;
Holy Spirit, ever binding
age to age and soul to soul
in communion never ending,
you we worship and extol.*

The church's notion of "ministry" stems from the Greek word *diakoneo*, which simply means "to serve." So when we talk about the church's ministry--as does the third verse of today's hymn--we're talking about how the church serves: serves God, serves our neighbors and serves the world. The Holy Spirit, through the church's ministry, quickens us, strengthens us, absolves us, and sets us free! Are we then free to do whatever we want? Well, not exactly. We are set free from our sin, from our brokenness, in order that we might serve those who need serving, be it the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, the outcast, the sick, the dying--and the list goes on. We serve out of an attitude of abundance because God has been abundant with us. In hope, forgiveness and love we are set free to do whatever God calls us to. What a world it would be if each of us woke up in the morning and clothed ourselves in such an attitude of abundance. *Almighty God, you call us to serve in your name. Put on our hearts a call to service, that we may serve those in need with compassionate and loving hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Emily Martin, '17, Associate Pastor, Cambridge Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minn.