Pastor’s Pieces for August, 2023

*“It is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” - 1 Corinthians 4:2*

In my short time here as your Pastor, I want to praise the faithful and admonish any who may have become complacent or lazy in their walk of faith. What did you expect when you came to Christ? Did you expect praise or honor or to have a life of ease? I hope you know, today, that being a Christian is not easy. The world stands firmly against us, the devil himself ready to assail us with falsehoods, with fear (one of his historically successful tactics), and with temptations to sin (and in these he is very clever – read Genesis 3). Walking with Christ faithfully brings a joy the world will never know or understand unless and until the Holy Spirit pricks their conscience, stirs their soul, and opens their heart to receive Christ. All good gifts are from God’s gracious hand. And knowing this stirs our hearts to gratitude, our mouths to praise, and our spirits to find ways to express His love in our lives. All are blessed by God, but not all know to give thanks to Him. Remember when 10 lepers were made clean by Jesus and only one(!) returned to give Him thanks and to praise God? Those of us who bear the Good News need to feel in our hearts that we are that one --- giving thanks and praising God. At FELC, we have a trust. We have been given a beautiful building in which to worship our Lord and Savior, and it and all its parts are ours to care for, so that it will be here for generations to come, serving the community. We have been given each other to” bear one another’s burdens”, to share in joys and stand alongside in adversity. Here in this place we witness; we are fed through Word and Sacrament; and we find ways to show our gratitude. How great is your joy? Is it expressed through generous gifts of all you have: time, talents and treasure? Want to increase the expression of your joy for the gifts God has given you? Some ways to consider: 1) Grow your participation in worship; 2) Grow your prayer life and your spiritual preparedness by reading more of Scripture; 3) Grow in your financial expression by any amount the Lord lays on your heart ($1 more a month, $1 more a week; 1% or 5%; $5 more than your past habit at every birthday, anniversary, or significant milestone; or a larger amount or %age according to your circumstances. And, watch how the Lord will bless you as well as this congregation! Scripture says (Malachi 3:10): “Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And thereby put Me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.” We are blessed to be a blessing. Praise be to God!

Serving with joy,

Pastor Lisa