

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we celebrate the 12 days of Christmas in anticipation of the Epiphany celebration, we can take pause to reflect on our faith practices. During confirmation class, we intentionally have our students engage in faith practices. Not only do we require that the students regularly attend **worship**, we ask them to actively lead worship. We are engaged in **bible study** as we explore the creeds, the Ten Commandments and The Lord's Prayer. **Prayer** is always part of our class. We work on **encouraging** one another, **giving** of our time and skills (and often discovering skills and developing those skills). Finally we are engaged in inviting others to participate with us in our Christian vocation.

As the new year is upon us, I encourage each of you to deliberately and daily engage in a faith practice. From year to year I engage in a variety of bible studies. This year I am again going to read the psalms. Usually I tackle one a day, until I get to Psalm 119 which is 176 verses, Sometimes I spend a few days reflecting on a psalm. I can easily spend a week reflecting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm. I learn things about myself, my prayer life and the Christian community as I read and reflect on the psalms.

This is the year of Luke, so almost all gospel texts during our worship will be from Luke's gospel. This year our synod is offering a year long study of the Gospel according to Luke. Basically each week, half a chapter is studied. We are a little late in getting started because I am not on Facebook, so didn't have this available in December. However, we have copies of the study through February 9<sup>th</sup> available for you. Many discussion questions for youth and adults are included for your guidance. I would suggest doing a chapter a week until we catch up with the proposed schedule.

Of course we continue to offer daily devotional booklets which many of you have engaged with as part of your faith practice throughout the years. This is another option for Bible study.

Bible study is one of the faith practices. We all need to practice all of the components and I know that some are easier for us than others. Together we are a congregation engaged in the faith practices that help us become faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Pastor's Purse. Your generosity was greatly appreciated.

I continue to learn daily as I engage in faith practices and hope you will join St. Paul as we deliberately become more involved in our faith for the sake of the world and our own spiritual growth.

*May the Joy of Christ be with you in 2019.  
May God's Healing Presence sustain you.  
May the Holy Spirit increase your Spiritual  
Strength to serve each other and the world.  
Amen*

**SHARING  
BRINGS JOY**  
TO US. TO OTHERS. TO GOD.

Shalom,

Pastor Bev +