

LIVING OUR **BAPTISM**...*Five gifts of discipleship*

When a baptized Christian affirms the faith (often called confirmation) the presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism and asks the question: Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

**to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?**

RESPONSE: We do, and ask God to help and guide us. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 236)

And so begins a daily claiming and re-discovering of the God-given gifts of discipleship. These gifts overlap and are intertwined as one gift flows into another and into faithful living.

FIVE GIFTS OF DISCIPLESHIP ... *during Lent*

Lent is an ideal season of the church year to promote the five gifts of discipleship. There are five weeks during Lent before Holy Week. The following series could be implemented during a mid-week Lenten series or on Sunday mornings.

THEME: LIVING OUR BAPTISM **SCRIPTURE:** The Letter of Paul to the Philippians
Encourage each person to read through the book of Philippians

Week 1: **Live among God's faithful people**

Scripture: Philippians 1: 3-11 (or Philippians 1:27-30)

Lent always begins with the reading of Jesus being tempted in the desert. He is able to resist and choose God's way. Sometimes we are not as strong, choosing paths which are not healthy or of God. It is not easy. But God gives the gift of community to teach us, accompany us, and encourage us. In the beginning of Paul's letter to the Philippians, Apostle Paul reflects his love for Christian community.

Discussion Question: What does it mean for you to live among God's faithful people?

Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of the church. We are especially grateful for those who have taught us what it means to be Christian, those who have modeled love, kindness, and mercy. Bless our church and guide us to be a model of faithful living. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Week 2: **Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper**

Scripture: Philippians 3:7-11

For centuries, Christians have been encouraged to give up something during the season of Lent, and in doing so, increase an appreciation of the sacrifice of Jesus. Apostle Paul recognizes his own personal sacrifices to follow Jesus, but he confesses how much he has gained. The sacrifices pale in comparison to the gain in Christ. More than anything, Paul wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Hear the word of God.



Discussion Question: What does it mean for you to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper?

Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Open our hearts to the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Open our lives to your freeing love; for you alone can feed our hungry spirits through your Word and satisfy our every need. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Week 3

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

Scripture: Philippians 1:12-20

Lent invites us to go inward and become more contemplative. This is an important part of the Lenten journey, but Jesus did not die to keep it a secret. His death and resurrection are meant to be the good news proclaimed from the housetops. Apostle Paul found courage to boldly proclaim Christ—despite imprisonment and threats of death. He even discovered how God used the negative experiences of his life to proclaim Christ.

Discussion Question: What does it mean for you to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed?

Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the good news of Christ Jesus. Use our lives to boldly proclaim your good news made known in Christ. Use our words and our actions to reflect the goodness of your love. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Week 4

Serve all people, following the example of Jesus

Scripture: Philippians 2: 5-11

We associate acts of loving kindness and mercy with the season of Lent. Through art, music, preaching, teaching, and other means, the church tells the story of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. But the example of Jesus is more than his death. Throughout his life, Jesus served. He was a servant leader, one who was willing to get down on his knees and wash the feet of the disciples.

Discussion Question: What does it mean for you to serve following the example of Jesus?

Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of service. We are recipients of your love made known in Christ. Fill our hearts with compassion, so we might serve out of a spirit of love rather than under the mantle of obligation. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Week 5

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

Scripture: Philippians 4:8-9

Holy Week tells the story of Jesus—a story filled with injustice and violence. Though innocent, Jesus was sentenced to a violent death. Where is the justice and peace? On our behalf, Jesus encountered injustice, violence, and death itself in order to bring a new order—one in which the lion and lamb might lie down together. Until that time comes, we continue to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. We press on.

Discussion Question: What does it mean to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for the promise of a world of justice and peace. Your love for your beloved humanity is breathtaking. To send your son Jesus Christ to live among us and die for us is humbling. Allow us to partner with you to bring justice and peace in all the earth. Show us the way. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.