

Neighbors in Christ,

Greetings, my beloved family and friends in the Risen Christ! May the promises found in the empty tomb this Easter season continue to guide you in all that you do and in all that you are. This month, I would like to invite you into a place of personal, professional, financial, and spiritual wellness – a journey that I would like to walk alongside with you.

Portico Benefit Services has developed The Wholeness Wheel, and it is increasingly used by ELCA individuals and organizations as an important learning and discernment tool. It illustrates that wellness is multi-dimensional — made up of spiritual, vocational, intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and financial dimensions of well-being. Spiritual well-being is intertwined with and influences our well-being in all other dimensions.

In Holy Baptism, we are daily cleansed of the wrongs we have committed and are joined with Christ and the communion of saints who call us out of love to serve one another. As members of the New Creation, we have received the gift of grace through Christ that we might have abundant life. Through this abundant life, we are to live well in our Lord and are best equipped to pass along our faith. This also means we are to turn to God for strength as we seek to live well with Christ, and one another. Our relationship with God is nurtured through prayer, devotions, worship, nature, art, and music. Explore who you are and whose you are.

God has created humanity to be social beings, and to live in community with one another. This means we are also to love and serve one another. We maintain these relationships through interaction, but also through forgiveness too. Remember to take time to nurture your relationships with family, friends, your congregations, and your co-workers on a daily basis.

We are also emotional beings. Being emotionally well means feeling the full range of human emotions and expressing them appropriately. Self-awareness is the first step – know who you are. Recognize and honor your own feelings and those around you – stress, contentment, anger, love, joy, and resentment – will help you live your life abundantly. While we are not all born perfectly healthy or able to live life without injury or illness, we can live well by tending and nurturing our body as a gift from God. Feed it healthy foods, keep it hydrated, build physical endurance through regular exercise, and respect your body's need for rest.

Being financially well involves making decisions based on our values, as reflected in the way we save, spend, and share what God has given us. Tending to one's financial well-being in this way requires us to be resilient, generous, and focused on sustainability. This also involves the vocations we are all called to, by following Christ's example of living a life of meaning, purpose, and service to our neighbor. Our vocation's make up our life's work and passions – that are the everyday roles through which God calls us to help make the world a better place for all.

This May...and every day, remember who you are and live your life to the fullest – see you in worship!!!

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Erik R. Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish

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