

*“I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” – Joshua 1:9*

Neighbors in Christ,

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you always. Amen. Welcome to February, my beloved friends and family. We continue in this season of Epiphany where we seek and find the manifestation and signs of Jesus Christ’s glory in our lives. The lessons over the last weeks have told us stories of Jesus’ early ministry, according to the Gospels of John and Luke, and his actions as a mission developer and miracle worker in Judea. These miracles, or marvels, have not only given the power of God to the people in his presence, but have also helped grow and strengthen the faith of those who believe in him, and the Creator God which Jesus comes from. These signs are the beacon of light that the early believers held onto; that in itself is a testament to what faith means and how we are called to share in that with one another.

These past few months have been cold. They have been dark. These last months have been chock full of loss and grief. Covid continues to interrupt the normalcy we long to return to, and too many of our family and friends have been called home to God. I hope and pray that as we move forward, the sun and the temperatures begin to rise again. I apologize if I sound bleak, but I am sure you know what I mean. I have been using these weeks of the Epiphany season to look for those golden rays of sunshine that remind us that God is here.

I have also been looking to this verse from the Book of Joshua. The beginning of the book tells that Moses has died and how God tells Joshua to pick up where the mighty prophet left off and carry God’s chosen people Israel to the Land of Milk and Honey. The journey will not be easy though and it is the responsibility of the people to remember and praise the One who set them free; God will continue to provide for them, but they need to remember God is with them, always.

Sounds kind of similar to us, in a certain way, doesn’t it? God is with us, but sometimes we forget that at the most important times, we need to be reminded too. The sun is going to rise again, my beloved, and so will the temps too. Let us keep our faith and remind ourselves that we are all in this same boat together, though we share in different situations...but we are all still together, none the less. Remember God. Remember one another. See you in worship (maybe not at your church). And remember that you are loved. Peace be with you and take care!

In His sake,

Rev. Erik Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish