

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Living Among God's Faithful People" 3/9/22

Welcome to a Word on Wednesday. We are on our Lenten journey. When one is baptized, they, or their parents, make a covenant with God 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. As we journey through Lent we will look at these as gifts of discipleship. A reading from Philippians.

Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. ... I am so pleased you have continued on in this with us ... So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and you will not only love much but well ... making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God." (Phil 1:3-11)

How we live is a witness to our faith. We reflect our faith to those with whom we live. We do not go through life alone.

When we look at the situations, we have faced we realize - I got through this because I was not alone. God accompanied me and I was surrounded and supported by God's faithful people.

These are the people who support us. To whom we turn when things go badly, when we hurt, when we feel we've been treated unfairly. They encourage us and strengthen us to go on? They put their arms around us, surrounding us with love and prayer.

We are called to live together, in community, with God's faithful people. We realize we are not alone as we rejoice, as we struggle, as we make life changing decisions. We walk with and are upheld by, people who understand, who have gone this way before us. Just as we were helped during our struggles, we are blessed to assist others when they face the same difficult demands and decisions.

We are each clothed in Christ and we find a unity in Christ. We are church together because of who we worship, not separated by how we worship. We are the one body of Christ and we come together to love and support each other in our common ministry of loving others, feeding the hungry and caring for those in need.

The Holy Spirit has changed us all, our hearts and desires are made new in baptism. We desire to meet together, to sing, pray, and worship – with others. We want to break bread together. We want to give and receive God's love.

All are welcome and the whole is not complete without each of us. We know something is missing when we don't gather together with others.

When we live among God's faithful people, we recognize our brokenness and we recognize our unity in the body of Christ. Our life, the life of the church, the entire body of Christ is transformed as we come together for worship and for ministry. Our new self is seen by others as we live out the promises we made in our baptism.

We give thanks for the gift of the church. For those with whom we live and serve. Those who ride the waves with us. Those who have taught us what it means to walk with Jesus, those who have instructed us in our faith, who have prayed with us, encouraged us, and modeled faithful living for us. Those who have shown us how to mentor others in the way of God.

People of God, as we journey together through Lent, thank you, for living out your baptismal promise and for letting me journey with you.

This is my prayer: May your love flourish and may you not only love much but well, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.

Please pray with me. God of the journey, thank You for traveling with us, for guiding us, protecting us, and loving us. I agree to keep my covenant to live among God's faithful people and I pray You will help and guide me to do so. **Amen**