



BETHLEHEM STAR

Go and...rest



Go and...rest. Perhaps you've heard someone going 100 miles an hour say "I'll rest when I'm dead." It's meant to be a sort of funny commentary on our 24/7 lives. But we underestimate the power and importance of rest.

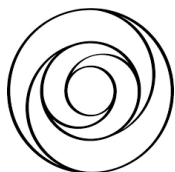
As most of you know, I'm into fitness...and specifically into the sport of triathlon. Part of what I like to do is put together my own training plan. There's a lot of science that I've learned over the years that goes into that. One of the most important, and sometimes mentally hardest aspects to include is adequate time for rest and recovery. Training for a triathlon involves lots of swimming, biking, running, and weight lifting. In particular, long and high intensity workouts cause micro-damage to the muscles. They then need that rest and recovery time, because it's in the healing of the micro-damage that muscles get stronger. If you don't schedule rest and recovery, you'll become over-trained and vulnerable to illness and injury. And you won't perform as well. So the majority of workouts in a given week are not super hard—in fact some are super easy workouts known as recovery workouts. And most people include a rest day—a day to not do anything very active. It's especially important for older athletes. Resting can be hard for endurance athletes. The same can be true in our every day lives. We're sure that if we take time to rest, something disastrous will happen. But more often the opposite is true.

Rest is also a part of our faith. It's known as Sabbath. We are not Jewish, so we don't practice Sabbath as rigorously. But we do ourselves spiritual and physical harm if we don't find some way to practice Sabbath.

How will you find ways to rest—to practice Sabbath?

Christ's peace,

Pastor Kris



Seeking the Spirit

Virg Unverferth

I am enrolled in the Spiritual Direction program through the ELCA. It is a 3 year program that was established in 2005 as a vision to provide soul care to clergy and soul seekers alike. We are being taught the art of spiritual direction and spiritual formational practices.

Your soul is your spiritual essence, but do we rely on that for our guidance, or are we directed by external forces in this world? Psalm 139:1 says “O Lord, you have searched me and known me.” God knows us, but how well do we really KNOW ourselves, KNOW others, and let others KNOW us. I have always thought I had a strong faith, but since my father died, I can now say that I KNOW it is strong as that was the strength and presence that got me through that difficult time. When we talk to others, do we really delve into KNOWING them? In today’s society we often rush to judgment about others or let others influence our feelings about certain people. How can we do that without really KNOWING that person’s story or situation? As followers of Jesus, we KNOW by his works that he loved everyone unconditionally. And, finally, do we let others KNOW us? Do you share with others when you are struggling with either physical, emotional, or psychological stresses or do you try to put on a brave face and not let others in? Are you afraid that others will judge you or shun you because of your situation, or do you trust that others will love you unconditionally.

Often, in today’s society, judgments about others are made on what we think their income level is, their political party affiliation, their religion, their gender or sexual orientation, or their ethnicity. These are all part of our external selves. Our internal self, or soul, is God within us. When you next consider how you KNOW yourself, KNOW others, or let others KNOW you, ask yourself if you are KNOWING in this way based on the external world or God’s loving voice inside your soul.

Lent

Lent is a very special time in the church year. Traditionally it’s a season of repentance. I typically view it as not only that, but a time of reflection, learning, more attention to spiritual practices, and time to grow as a community of faith. We begin the journey with Ash Wednesday on February 14. We will have weekly midweek services which will focus on the parables of Jesus. We will use a similar dinner church format with opening song and prayer, meal and cleanup, a message which could be video (probably some from The Chosen) or other resources for the parables. There will be a short discussion afterwards, followed by prayer and song.

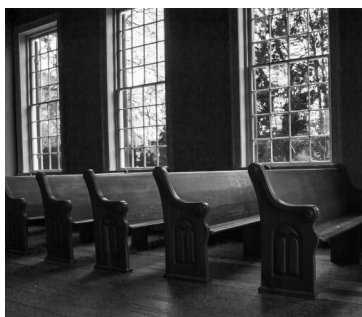
I would also encourage you to strengthen your own faith practices. Participate as much as you are able in the services. If you haven’t already read Mark, work on that. If you’re looking for a devotional, here’s a link to Luther Seminary’s: [Lord Jesus You Shall Be My Song](#). I love the song it’s based on and I will probably use that. I’ll have a few print copies at the church—let me know if we run out and you want one.

If you want other suggestions for spiritual practices, talk to Virg or me.

A View from the Pew (01/27/2024)

By Preacher Woman's Husband

I was struck by the coincidence of Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday this year. I am sure that there have been other instances, outside of Christmas, of important days in the church and made-up holidays falling on the same day, but I can't recall that it has. Nevertheless, let's set the record straight; Valentine's Day is



an opportunistic exploitation of our emotions perpetuated by the greeting card and candy industries. In my unfiltered opinion, it's a day for rookies, who are often hoping against all hope it will lead to something else besides an expensive dinner, flowers, and jewelry. It seemingly could be cast as a form of pagan idolatry. For an interesting (short) read on the history of Valentine's Day I recommend a National Public Radio piece from 2022 titled, "The Dark Origins of Valentine's Day" by Arnie Seipel. It affirms my jaundiced view of this commercial holiday and suggests that it leads to more divisiveness than meaningful togetherness.

In today's world we are also emotionally exploited by divisiveness. Instead of seeking togetherness it seems we are labelled, categorized, and bunched into groups defined by ideologies and secular belief systems seemingly designed to separate rather than bring us together. For us, Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the season of Lent and is a remembrance of Jesus' 40-day fast in the wilderness after being baptized and before he began his ministry. It's also time for us to be reflective about our place in the world and, in my view, to be thoughtful about how we live out our call as instructed by Jesus when he was asked which is the greatest commandment in the law. He replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Matthew 22:37-39). The second is easy to say but harder to do at times; the ashes on our foreheads remind us that we may fall short. Yet they also remind us to seek the Lord our God and to share the Good News in a way that is inviting and welcoming, seeking to find common ground in our beliefs and faith lives, regardless of where we find our fellow travelers. In sharing our journeys, I am convinced that we will find our faith lives enriched as we grow in Christ and like him, invite others to join our journey in the pews, on the streets, and in our homes.

Sip and Paint

We had a great time at our Sip and Paint event and got to know some of our Davey neighbors. Here's a couple pictures. To see more pictures, check out our Facebook page.



Worship is at 10:30 am Sundays, in person or online—or you can join us later on YouTube. Links to the bulletin and YouTube channel can be found on our website:

<https://www.bethlehemdavey.org/worship-in-person-and-online>

Calendar

January 28 10:30 am—Worship

Annual meeting following worship

February 4 10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion

Pastor Kris will be on vacation Feb. 4 after worship through Feb. 13

For pastoral emergencies, call Pastor James Sells—402-759-6347

February 11 10:30 am—Worship

February 14 **Ash Wednesday**

Worship with imposition of ashes will be at **6:30 pm at Zion and 8:00 pm at Bethlehem**. The services will be identical so go to whichever one fits your schedule.

February 18 10:30 am—Worship with communion

February 21 6:30 pm—Lent Midweek at Zion

February 26 10:30 am—Worship

February 28 6:30 pm—Lent Midweek at Bethlehem

Pastor Kris—402-499-4993

krisbo90@gmail.com

Church Website—bethlehemdavey.org

[Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey](#)



Council president—Jeff Atkinson—402-432-6212

Council members—Charlie Brown, Linda Sestak ,
Jerri Daugherty, Curtis Olson

February helpers

February starts a new year for our helper schedule.

Please sign up on the sheet at the church.