

King of Glory Lutheran – June 10-11, 2017
Trinity Sunday – Matthew 28:16-20, “Breathe and Jump”
Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry

God through Christ's promise is with us always.

On this Trinity Sunday, may God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer and Holy Spirit the Sustainer be with us. Amen!

Just a few hours ago, we celebrated the wedding ceremony of Hannah Pensack-Rinehart and Kabir Gemachu Hageyo. The vows they made with each other in God's presence reflect a promise to be for and with one another forever.

“Will you love him, comfort her, in sickness and in health, in good times and struggles?” And miracle of miracles, they both answered, “I will!” It is amazing, isn't it? Truly, standing in front of an altar making those promises, no one can see what the years ahead will bring: years of plentiful rain, years of drought, years of questions, years of doubt. And yet, we're crazy in love enough to make that commitment anyway.

At the heart of any nurturing relationship is a promise, a commitment. Think for a minute about your best relationships: friend, spouse, neighbor, co-worker even. You've come to know that person over time. You've had conversations: deep ones and silly ones. We've spent quality time together making memories. Laughing. Opening up and learning they hold your vulnerability with care. When we trust that this other person is there for us, consistently, a relationship can grow and deepen.

It doesn't all happen right away, the trust builds slowly; like putting bricks on a wall. They are put there one brick at a time. Cemented in. Then another brick. And another.

I suspect that is what happened for the disciples, too. As they walked from village to village, there was plenty of time to talk and learn from Jesus. They saw how consistently he cared for others. He was present. He listened. He loved. They made memories. They witnessed miracles.

The last days of Jesus life and his resurrection must have been an emotional roller coaster for them. Now He was to leave them again. But Jesus' last recorded words in Matthew's Gospel are these. “Remember, I am with you always. To the end of the age.”

They needed that promise. It came on the heels of a gigantic command. “Go into all nations! Spread the Good News of my life! Baptize people in my name!” Oh they needed Jesus to be with them if they were to continue ministry.

“I am with you always.” That sounds like a promise to me. That sounds like a vow. “I am with you always.” Jesus says. For the disciples, that meant right now. For us it means right now. And tomorrow. And next week. And next year. Jesus promises to be with us always.

Can we imagine if He hadn’t made that promise? What if Jesus short life and several years of ministry was all we had to go on? What if the Holy Spirit hadn’t come to be among us? What if Jesus had ascended and then it was all over?

He’d done amazing ministry and performed incredible miracles during His life. Those stories might have been passed on much like other famous people like Mother Teresa or Mahatma Gandhi. But what if that had been all?

We wouldn’t feel His presence. We wouldn’t be able to pray to Him and find comfort in the here and now. People would not be baptized in His name. We might not even be worshipping Him.

The promise was for the disciples whom Jesus loved and it is for us. “I am with you always.” Present tense. I am here. I promise. I will show up – for you! That is my vow.

So do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus stands next to you at the kitchen sink when you’re washing dishes at the end of a long day? Do you believe that Jesus is sitting at the conference table with the boss and the other company managers? What about when we’re watching TV or mowing the lawn. Do we believe that Jesus is with us right now during worship?

Babies around the age of 7 months begin to have separation anxiety. If a toy gets taken away, they think it doesn’t exist. If mom or dad walks into the next room, babies think they are gone forever. Before our 8th month of life, we have no short term memory. Babies cannot understand that if they cannot see a toy or a parent, it still exists, it’s simply not in front of them.

God in God’s goodness created a way for Jesus to be with us even when we cannot see Him. The Triune God exists – one God in three persons. God the Father,

creator, continues to create each new day, each sunset and flower and tree. The Holy Spirit comes as our advocate and sustainer, whispering guidance and support. God the Son promises to be here – now.

In the movie, *When God Left the Building*, a young police officer tells his own version of trusting that God is with him. Every night before he goes out on patrol, he says a prayer. He prays that if this is the night for a policeman to get hurt, he asks God to allow it to be his turn.

How do we come to trust Jesus' promise to be close? If we grow relationships with people we can see and be near, we also need to be in Jesus presence. One way to do this is to breathe. Yes, breathe! God the creator put breath into our bodies when we were born. God the Spirit is wind and breath. God the Son is with us.

The average person takes about 16 breaths per minute, 960 per hour and roughly 23,000 per day. When we breathe, it can remind us to be in God's presence. Often before I enter a hospital room, or a meeting, or make a phone call, I breathe. 'Lord Jesus, I know you are here.' Then ask for what you need or want. 'Give me the words they need to hear. Give me courage. Calm me. Protect me.' The great I AM, promises to be with us always. In every minute. In every breath.

I was watching a father and his little girl at the pool one afternoon. She was practicing jumping off the side of the pool into the water. Dad kept voicing his promise. "I'll catch you! I promise!" Still she hesitated. To launch oneself into thin air takes great courage when you don't know if Dad's words will match his actions. "I'm right here! I'll catch you!" Finally the youngster took a big breath, held her nose and catapulted her body into outer space. Dad's huge hands caught her and she came up out of the water with the biggest Cheshire cat grin! "I did it!"

Now she knew. Dad's hands would catch her. He wouldn't let her be hurt. And if she did get hurt, he would be near.

Here's my question. If we trust that Jesus is with us always, what would we dream, dare or do? Let me say it again. What would you dream, dare or do, if you trusted that Jesus was with you always?

(<http://www.davidlose.net/2017/06/trinity-sunday-a-the-great-promise/>)

The disciples took Jesus at His word and began to preach and teach in His name. The early church took form and shape because Jesus was with them giving them

courage and comfort. He was right at their sides, encouraging them with the Holy Spirit and protecting them in danger.

What would you dare to do? Take an old dream out of the closet and dust it off to see if it still has potential? Would you call a friend and offer an apology in order to set the relationship straight? Could you try new parenting techniques or read the Bible with your spouse? Maybe it's something small, perhaps it's a huge audacious goal. It might feel like jumping into thin air, not knowing if God will catch you.

I am with you always, to the end of the age. If Jesus who fed thousands, healed lepers, and made the blind to see – if that Jesus is with us, well, chances are 100% He'll catch us every time. Jesus is crazy in love with each of us. That's why He's promising to stay! There's nothing we cannot do together. He's standing there ready and waiting – let's take a big breath, hold our noses and jump! Amen.