

# Faith & Fellowship

Vol. 88, No. 4

July/August 2021  
Interactive God



THEOLOGY

"NO"

p. 6

DISCIPLE-MAKING

Encourage  
One Another

p. 14

INTERNATIONAL  
MISSION

The Mighty Hand of the Lord

p. 16



CLB

[www.CLBA.org](http://www.CLBA.org)

**4** **Walk in the Light**  
Gretchen Ronnevik

**6** **“NO”**  
Michael Edwards

**8** **Ask in My Name**  
Evan Langlois

**10** **CLB Focus**  
ROY HEGGLAND

**11** **Praying for Boston**  
Mary Anderson

**12** **LBS Class of 2021**  
Lutheran Brethren Seminary

**14** **Encourage One Another**  
Roger Viksnes

**16** **The Mighty Hand of the Lord**  
Christina S.

**18** **CLB Forge**  
North American Mission

**19** **CLB News**

**20** **re:Think**  
Brent Juliot



**FAITH & FELLOWSHIP**  
*Volume 88 - Number 4*

**Editor In Chief/**  
**Graphic Designer:** Troy Tysdal  
*tysdal@clba.org*

**Contributing Editor:** Brent Juliot  
*bjuliot@clba.org*

**Copy Editor:** Aaron Juliot  
*ajuliot@clba.org*

**Cover Photo:**  
*Instants/iStock*

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com)

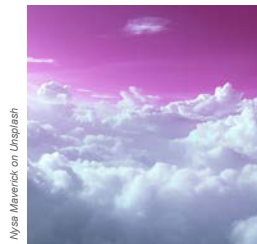
The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

**Quiet Moments**

Email prayer requests to: [pray@clba.org](mailto:pray@clba.org)

**He Guides the Clouds**

H.E. WISLØFF



Nysa Meinert on Unsplash

The sky is often covered with thick, dark clouds. The sun disappears and all is depressing. At such a time worries and fears may fill the mind. One stands feeble and helpless before powers with which we are unable to cope. Then, we hear these words, “Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud” (Exodus 19:9).

Even in the thick darkness he is near. Even if you cannot see him or note his presence, he is there. He will never abandon you to the darkness. You are too precious to him for that. The heavy overcast has a mission in your life, otherwise it would not have been permitted to cover the sky of your life.

He guides the clouds also. They must serve his plan and purpose.

Have you not heard that the grain still ripens in the dark of night?

Storms also contain grace and fruitfulness. Therefore do not lose your courage.

*Hans Edvard Wisløff (1902—1969) was a Norwegian theologian and writer. He was also the Bishop of the Diocese of Sør-Hålogaland from 1959 until his death in 1969.*

*Wisløff, H.E., Quiet Moments on the Way Home. Fergus Falls, MN: Faith & Fellowship Press, 1993.*

# The Note

TROY TYSDAL

In October of 2001, I was feeling lost and overwhelmed. I'm normally a pretty confident guy, but life circumstances had shaken me and I was beginning to doubt my ability to control my own destiny. My wife and I were engaged at the time and set to be married on November 15 in Florida, but the tragedy of 9/11 had family and friends wondering if it was wise to fly. We were also coordinating living arrangements, trying to relocate to a new city, and searching for employment. All that, combined with car trouble, had me feeling like a failure.

At the time, I was not a believer. I was agnostic—I thought there *could* be a God, but I wasn't sure. I remember sitting at my desk at work, feeling completely defeated, reaching for a pad of paper and writing a note to God asking for help.

At my apartment that night, I began to reflect on my moment of weakness, "What a dumb thing to do!" I thought. "If there is a God, he certainly has bigger problems to worry about than mine." I reached into my pocket searching for the note, intent on destroying it, but it wasn't there. In embarrassment I drove back to the office, believing I'd left the note on my desk, and fearing someone else would find it. But it wasn't there, either. Now I started to become concerned about what I'd written. I remembered being pretty frustrated at the time. I began to fear that I'd written something offensive, like, "God, get me out of this job. It stinks!" I half expected my boss to call me into her office on Monday morning and to lecture me for being unappreciative. But the meeting never came. In fact, from that moment forward, things began to turn around. That week I met a man who would eventually hire me as a salesman—and later became one of my most trusted and loyal friends, the wedding in Florida went off just as we dreamed without interruption, and in the midst of an epic blizzard, where landlord after landlord canceled our appointments, my wife and I found an apartment that turned out to be exactly what we needed.



After agreeing to terms on our new home, we drove to my parents' house to gather for Christmas. My confidence had been restored and once again I believed, with a little hard work, I could control my destiny.

## ACTS 17:24-28

The Apostle Paul said to the unbelievers in Athens, "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"

Our God is a God of order and detail, and all of creation testifies to his existence. That fact alone does not prove Christianity true. But it is reasonable to believe that a Creator, who pays such close attention to detail, would not just set the universe in motion and walk away.

We often live our lives believing we are self-sufficient. That we are in control of our own destinies. It is not true. The Psalmist writes, "All the days ordained for me, were written in your book" (Psalm 139:16).

This all-powerful God who marks our days needs nothing from us. He is completely sufficient, and yet he desires a relationship with us. He did not create humankind in his image just to walk away from us when things got tough. In fact, in the Garden of Eden, we see God do the opposite. As sin entered our world, we see God walking toward his creation and calling out. In that same spirit, we see God sending his Son—Jesus Christ—to die for our sins and take control of our destinies.

As my wife and I returned from celebrating Christmas at my parents' home, I opened the door to our apartment to find a small piece of paper folded up in the center of the entryway. As I picked up the note and unfolded it, I read the words, "God, please help."

Perhaps, after missing for nearly two months, the note simply fell out of a pocket or slipped from a book. At the time I was confused. I did not know what to think. But I can tell you what I believe today: Though I was far from him, he was near to me.

Do not doubt that he is near to you as well. Seek him, and you will find him. Reach out to him. He is closer than you think.

*Rev. Troy Tysdal is Director of Communications and Prayer for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren and serves as editor in chief of Faith & Fellowship magazine.*



www.CLBA.org



Lemon\_tmr/Stock

# Walk in the Light

---

GRETCHEN RONNEVIK

**F**rom the imaginative prayer of a five-year-old, to the awkward prayer in a circle of teens in youth group, to the elegant prayer of a seasoned saint—how should we approach God in prayer?

Our approach will have less to do with our skill with poetic words, and more to do with what we believe about God. We will pray differently if we think that God is always angry with us, or if we think that God is like a Santa Claus in the sky, who just wants us to be happy. The foundation of all our prayer life is rooted in what we believe about who God is.

When we believe that God is holy and righteous, we have to deal with the reality of our sin and unholiness. If God is holy and we are sinners, what are we to do?

Two wrong approaches would be, 1) to lessen the holiness of God to make him more approachable, or 2) to lessen our sin, either by our perception of sin or by cleaning up our act “enough.” Both those approaches leave out Christ.

What Christ did for us is foundational for our prayer life, because while he maintains and lifts up the truth of God’s holiness, he also deals with our sin boldly. It is Christ who cleanses us from sin and clothes us in his righteousness.

“The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” (Psalm 145:18).

We may have wrong agendas as we make requests in prayer, so we must recognize the importance of truth, or you could say reality, when approaching

God. In fact, it’s only *in truth* that we can approach God. When we start pretending to be someone we are not, or pretending that it is by our own righteousness that God is pleased with us, we are losing sight of the purpose of prayer. God doesn’t need us to tell him what we think we should be doing. He wants us to tell him what is actually happening. He doesn’t need us to tell him what we think we should be feeling. He wants us to share what we are actually feeling. He doesn’t want us to pretend we have no struggles or doubts. He wants us to tell him about our actual struggles and doubts. God deals with reality, not pretense. He can handle the truth.

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ



## Ragged



When we mistake spiritual disciplines for to-dos, time slots on our schedule, or Instagram-able moments, we miss the benefits of Christ's continual and constant work for us. In *Ragged*, Gretchen Ronnevik aims to reclaim spiritual disciplines as

good gifts given by our good Father instead of heavy burdens of performance carried by the Christian. Gretchen uses Law and Gospel, presented throughout Scripture, to guide readers through spiritual disciplines including prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, and discipleship, among others. Spiritual disciplines have less to do with what we bring before God and are more about who Christ is for us, as the Perfecter of our faith.

Available at: [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

died for us" (Romans 5:8, ESV). God is aware that we are dust, that we need him to breathe. We are not always mindful of this.

So then, what does honesty in prayer look like?

It's terrifying to be honest before a holy God. This may be why we delay or avoid praying. Instead of confessing the sin that we are currently struggling with, we wait, and hope that we will get ourselves unstuck. Instead of confessing our anger, our unforgiveness, our hurt, our jealousy, we hope we will soon be over it. That way, we can reminisce about it with God later in prayer, and receive assurances that now that we no longer struggle, we are fine. Instead of asking God for things laid on our hearts, we edit and question our motives, and try to get our hearts in the right place first. But we can bring our hearts to God and say, "Help me sort out if this is good or not. Help my fickle heart. Please deal with my motives."

"For we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26, NASB 1977). God is aware that we have no idea what we are doing. His Spirit has it covered, and will fix all the wrong prayers, and sanctify us in the process. He's not asking for our perfection. He's asking for our brokenness, so that he may fix it.

Shouldn't we be careful how we pray? Shouldn't we speak to God with respect and honor? Honesty sounds like a terrible idea when you think of the holiness of God. I don't want to tell God when I'm angry at him. I don't want to tell him about the grudges I keep and don't know how to release. Many psalms provide the pattern

for confessing "our truth" in prayer. In the process, God's Spirit exchanges our truth for his truth, otherwise known as "the truth."

I have found that, often, wrestling with God is an act of faith. Bringing your honest prayers to God and saying "I need you to do something with this, because I'm at a loss..." is an act of faith. Admitting our doubts to God is an act of faith. "I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24, NKJV). Speaking what we know to be true boldly to God, so that he can change our hearts, correct our wrong thinking, release us from sin—it's all an act of faith. It's looking to him, not to our works, for our salvation. It's saying that we can't, but we know he can. God isn't waiting for us to get our act together; he's waiting for us to be honest with ourselves, and with him.

As Christians, we believe that the only way to deal with sin is to have it removed by God. That does not change after we are saved. This fundamental belief affects our prayer life. It means that we don't get our sin in order so that we can then approach the Father. Rather, because of Christ, we can approach the Father *with* our sin, so that we may be healed. It is wise not to censor our struggles with God. To do so would be to approach the throne with self-righteousness, instead of the freely given righteousness of Christ.

Yes, God often humbles us when we pray this way. However, humbling may be what we need. We don't always understand that to be released from sin and gifted with humility is *good*. It grounds us in the reality of truth.

Whether we are trying to make ourselves righteous through prayer, or we

are trying to be righteous enough for God to hear us, both approaches leave a core doctrine behind: we are made righteous through faith in Christ. We are not made righteous in any other way.

In 1 John 1:7, God calls it "walking in the light." To pretend we are not struggling when we are, is to lie before God. Like Adam and Eve, who hid their shame in the darkness, we are called by God to the light, so that he can set things right. God doesn't want us to sin, but if we do, the power of his blood can handle it. There is no stain he cannot remove.

To approach the throne of God boldly is to approach it under the reality of Christ's righteousness, not our self-righteousness.

"No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,  
And claim the crown,  
through Christ my own."

— Charles Wesley



*Gretchen Ronnevik is an author, farmwife, mother, and teacher of six children. Her course on Gospel Mentoring can be found at [www.gospelmentoring.com](http://www.gospelmentoring.com).*



poco\_bw/Stock

# “NO”

MICHAEL EDWARDS

Life is hard. Beset by sin and its consequences in our lives and in the world around us, we experience real hurts through our circumstances and relationships. As if that is not enough, we also contend with emotional, psychological, and physical suffering. Over the last 15 years, my own personal experience of suffering has manifested itself in what has been diagnosed as IBS, hypothyroidism, depression, generalized anxiety disorder, insomnia, panic disorder, hyperlipidemia, arthritis, laryngopharyngeal reflux, migraines, and dermatitis. A variety of medications and therapeutic strategies have been applied to these problems, but it is a rare day that I feel “well.”

You may be suffering far worse. And maybe you’ve been encouraged by a Christian friend to “give it to God.” It’s biblical advice. The Apostle Paul says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition,

with thanksgiving, present your requests to God” (Philippians 4:6). By prayer, we can hand over our suffering and burdens in requests to God and know that he will answer and work for our good because he has promised in his Word to do so (e.g., Luke 11:1-13).

Maybe you’ve heard it said that God always answers prayer, sometimes with a “yes,” sometimes with a “no,” and sometimes with a “not yet.” Even though I pray “thy will be done,” I must admit that, deep down inside, I am really only satisfied with one answer: “yes.” And when it seems like God has not answered my prayer, when it seems as if he is distant from me, if my suffering has not changed for the better, I tend to call this a “not yet,” because I don’t want to face the “elephant in the room” possibility: that God’s answer is NO. But, if “...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”

(Romans 8:28), then a NO from God is always for our best, even when it hurts and it will go on hurting until the end of our earthly lives. How can this be? A NO from God to a prayer for relief from suffering is always coupled with a YES for something far better.

Paul had good reason to pray against anxiety. His experience of suffering is well-known: imprisonments, beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, robberies, sleepless nights, hunger, thirst, and exposure, all while dealing with false accusations against him in the church. More than that, “...I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Some theologians have conjectured that this “thorn” may have been anxiety or depression, temptation, guilt, or regret over his previous persecution of the Church, or a chronic illness. While we don’t know what his specific suffering may have been, we do know, by this description,

***“He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”***

**2 Corinthians 12:9**

that it was painful and ongoing. There was no earthly solution and Paul heeded his own encouragement, calling out to God in prayer.

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me” (2 Corinthians 12:8). Paul didn’t just pray for its removal; he pleaded for its removal. He prayed and prayed and prayed. And, on the third time, he got his answer: NO.

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God said, “NO. I will not remove it.” Why? God said, “My grace is sufficient. My grace is a far better answer to your suffering than even the removal of the suffering entirely, because my power is made perfect in weakness.” At the end of his rope, at the end of his strength, Paul found Christ’s strength.

“That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Contrary to how all of us naturally think, Paul now delighted in suffering—but not in some masochistic way. He hated his pain and had pleaded with God to take it away. But when God said, “NO, my grace is enough,” Paul experienced a radical change at the core of his being. Where there had been weakness, now there was Christ.

The old nature prays, “Give me less suffering.” The new nature prays, “Give me more Jesus.” And he will not leave you alone. “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

Jesus’ power extends even over our greatest suffering—death. “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). The victory is Christ’s alone, and he has given that victory to you. When everyone else is boasting in their strength, you can boast in your weakness, because when you are weak, then you are strong in the power of Christ.

Paul says to the Corinthians and to us, “You may see depression; I see Christ. You may see anxiety; I see Christ. You may see guilt; I see Christ. You may see chronic illness; I see Christ.”

Think about this. Maybe you are seeing your suffering all wrong. Maybe in praying that God would take away your suffering, you are asking him to do something he will not do. If he does not take away the thorn he has given you, it is to keep your eyes and hopes solely on Christ and his power. And maybe this is not only so that you will more clearly see Christ and his work for you, but also that others will more clearly see Christ and his work IN you.

Let’s be honest. Most of us have prayed to God FAR more than three times to take away the thorns we’ve been given. Unlike Paul, we don’t accept NO as an answer. But maybe, like Paul, there should come a time when the content of our prayer changes from “give me less suffering” to “give me more Jesus.”

It may be that I will rarely experience a day again in which I feel “well,” but God has promised grace that is more than enough. May we all be content and trust God when he says NO, for it is in our weakness, not our strength, that Christ’s power rests on us. And that is enough.



*Michael Edwards is Senior Pastor at Good News Lutheran Brethren Church in McAlisterville, Pennsylvania.*



Cecille\_Arcursi/Stock

# Ask in My Name

---

EVAN LANGLOIS

**W**hen I was a young Christian, Dave Skaret was one of the coolest guys I knew. In my mind, he was one of those iconic characters, like James Dean, Steve McQueen, or Paul Newman, who loved muscle cars and motorcycles, and had the stories of building hot rods and drag racing to go with them. Dave was a skier and would often tell me of helicopter ski trips out west that he'd taken with his brothers and friends. He was a carpenter by trade but was particularly known for being a phenomenal cabinet and furniture maker, often described as an "artist in wood." In my eyes, Dave was a man who had been everywhere and done everything. It seemed that every time I

talked with him, I learned something new that somehow made him even cooler. And on top of all of that, Dave was a Christian man who loved the Lord and was an incredible example of faithfulness.

After seminary graduation in 2007 I received my first call to ministry, to serve at Bethany Lutheran Brethren Church in East Hartland, Connecticut. I was excited for my first call into ministry, but I was also excited to serve at Dave's home church. I was looking forward to serving with him, to spending time with him in his cabinet shop and maybe learning a thing or two from him about woodworking.

But in September of 2007, Dave was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. In the weeks and months following, Dave

endured surgeries and treatments with the hope of curing him. Now, as an "official" pastor, I took to prayer with complete confidence that God would answer my prayer and cure Dave. I had it all laid out just how God ought to do things: He would heal Dave, and Dave would become the incredible mouthpiece who told everyone about our powerful God who is able to work miracles, and people would find themselves believing in Christ and his grace because of it.

Yet despite my constant and fervent prayers, in August of 2008 Dave went home to be with his King. I grew frustrated and angry with God because he didn't heal Dave. Throughout Dave's battle with cancer, I expected that God would



**Jesus said, “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”**

**John 14:13**

hear and answer my prayers for Dave’s healing. Each day I told God again of my great plan for healing Dave and worked to convince God (and myself, for that matter) of how great it would be for his Kingdom if God would just do things my way. But when it didn’t happen my way, I withdrew from God, wondering what good it did to pray in the first place.

The Bible encourages us over and over again to come to God in prayer. Through faith in Christ, we are invited before the throne and told, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13, ESV). With all that this verse says, we often focus mostly on the first three words: “*Whatever you ask...*” These words invite us, indeed, to ask for anything, even what seems to be the most impossible of requests. After all, our God is all-powerful and everything in heaven and on earth is subject to his authority! In the beginning God spoke all things into being, and still today “he commands even winds and water, and they obey him” (Luke 8:25). He is able to do *whatever* we ask. Physical and emotional pain, stress, anxiety, depression, broken relationships, and any other ways in which we may need to be healed—he is able!

So, when God doesn’t bend to our will and answer our prayers precisely, what are we to think? If he is able, but doesn’t do what we want, then maybe he just doesn’t like us. Or maybe he doesn’t really care. Or maybe, worst of all, he doesn’t really exist. Haven’t we all been tempted by these thoughts at one time or another? When we want something so desperately, yet he doesn’t answer the way we want, we might question

everything that we know of our God and find ourselves completely discouraged.

Listen again to the whole invitation: “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” It’s not that he doesn’t care about our requests, rather he answers those requests that are asked in his name. In other words, he answers those requests that are according to his nature, to his character, and to his will alone. Francis Pieper wrote, “...we must not forget that the will of Christians, as far as they are Christians, coincides entirely with God’s will and that accordingly they ask God to give them not what their whim dictates, but what accords with his command and promise.” Even Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). In Jesus’ humanity, he prayed that the Father would stay the pain that he was about to experience. That prayer was not answered. If Jesus’ life had been spared, how would our salvation have been won? So, the Father’s will wasn’t to spare his Son, but to win salvation for all. His will has eternity in sight, not simply time on this side of glory.

I thought that I knew how best to affect eternity with my prayers for Dave. I thought that my will would be the most effective. At the end of my prayers I would just add the magic formula, “In Jesus’ Name.” But God, through my “unanswered prayers,” was simply revealing to me that he had a different plan. He was inviting me to follow his lead, even if I didn’t understand where God was leading.

In my own life, I see how this seemingly

unanswered prayer for healing is used for his glory. My understanding of prayer is not the same as it was and my prayer life has changed. God has taught me to watch where he is leading and to see where and how he desires to work, not simply how I want him to. In this, he has helped me keep eternity in sight and opened to me the eternal, where Dave resides today, healed not only from cancer but from sin that clung to him throughout life on this earth!

God’s will is good and he invites us to pray in faith, knowing that he is working. Our prayers, therefore, are best offered when we remember that he knows best how to bring people into his Kingdom. As we trust him for our own salvation, we also trust that he is working to bring about salvation for others, and through prayer we allow him to show us where he is working. To understand this is to pray in faith that our Father is good and his love endures forever.



*Rev. Evan Langlois is Pastor of Praise Christian Fellowship in Barkhamsted, Connecticut.*

## CLB Shared Ministry: Contribution Report

**\$2,900,000**

2021-22 Fiscal Year Goal

**\$169,545**

Received Through 5/31/21

The CLB Fiscal Year Ends April 30, 2022.

# I Love You, Dad

**ROY HEGGLAND**

Imagine with me for a moment that you are a member of a very loving family, and your dad is so kind, considerate, and loving that he is the definition of Love. In fact, if you were to look up “love” in the dictionary, the major definition would be “Your Dad.” He loves you so much that he wants you to know who he really is, who you really are, why there was a rift that separated you from him (and that still separates most of the people in the world from him), and what he has done to adopt you into his family. He wrote a book for you (which is really a long love letter to you) and pleads with you to read it.

Here is where the bad news comes into the middle of all this Good News. Since your dad has chosen to create and strengthen his relationship with you in two primary ways, the first being his letter to you, the only way you can really get to know dad is by reading that letter. Imagine now that you hardly ever read his letter or read it only once a week when all the family gets together to listen to his letter being read to them. Remember that dad is the most important person in the world for his family. What kind of relationship will you have with your dad if you do not know much about him? How will you ever be able to tell anyone else how good your dad is and

what he has done for them, too? Worse still, imagine that even if you do read his letter, you never speak to him except on the occasions when you are in dire straits and call out to him for help. Once the emergency ends, no more talking to dad.

I hope I have described what you would view as a very dysfunctional relationship between you and your dad. But when this little vignette is applied to us and our relationship to our “Dad” in heaven, does it strike too close to home? I was convicted by this little story as I wrote it. I do not always take time to read his letter on a regular basis and must “catch up.” I often utter prayers on behalf of others or myself, but they are usually asking him for help.

The Good News is that he hears and answers those prayers. The bad news is that I did not pray just to praise him for who he is. I did not pray to thank him for who he is, what he has done, and all the gifts he has given to me. I did not pray that his will would be done in my life and in this world. I did not pray just to glorify his name. I did not pray just to have a conversation with the most important person in the universe, who loves me beyond comprehension and is waiting for me to have a loving conversation with him. Just him and me!

I think that the major reason for prayer

(after all, he knows everything already, even what we will converse about) is to build a beautiful, trusting relationship with our Father, who wants to be always in intimate contact with us.

Why else would Paul write as he does in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)? “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Jesus told Martha in Luke 10:42, “... but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” He was telling Martha that listening to and conversing with him (reading Scripture and praying) was the good (best, necessary) thing.

Right now, I am giving thanks to my “Dad” that he has given me life, loves me with unending love, and has placed me in the corner of his family that we call the Church of the Lutheran Brethren (CLB). I pray that our appreciation for his gift to us of the CLB will spur us on to good works, including giving, so that God will use us to add to his family.

*Roy Heggland is Associate for Biblical Stewardship for the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.*

Support the CLB:

**ONLINE:**  
www.clba.org/giving

**BY MAIL (USA):**  
P.O. Box 655  
Fergus Falls, MN 56538

**BY MAIL (CANADA):**  
P.O. Box 739  
Birch Hills, SK S0J 0G0



# Praying for Boston

MARY ANDERSON

**W**e gather in small circles in a corner of the Boston Common to pray for the people of the city. Despite the 91-degree heat, I get goosebumps as I stand in that circle, knowing that our presence here is an answer to previous prayers, and thinking about the day when I'll be able to look back on our prayers today and see them answered.

God has been teaching me about his sovereignty and the power of prayer in the last few years. In 2016, a group of CLB pastors in New England started to gather and pray together. Eventually they formed the group "Cultivate New England" and started to plan for a church plant in Boston. I remember hearing about their plans and feeling excited for this area of the country where I have roots. At the time, my husband was a pastor at Triumph Lutheran Brethren Church in Moorhead, Minnesota, and we felt very settled in our ministry there. But I followed Cultivate's Facebook updates, and joined them in their 2019 prayer focuses as they posted each week about a different Boston neighborhood to pray for. I watched the videos and heard about the prayer walk that the supporting churches held in Boston, to pray for a future church plant, and for who God would call to plant that church. What I didn't know yet—and neither did they—was that they were praying for my husband and me.

It's been an amazing journey to see how God has answered the prayers of these people to call us to move across the country in the midst of a pandemic, to live in Connecticut for a time, as we prepare to move into Boston next summer. Hence, the goosebumps. Some of these very same people gathered in the same area several years ago, praying in



Mary and Kristian Anderson gather with a group to pray for the city of Boston.

faith that God would call someone to this city. And he has!

Now we enter a new stage of prayer. Where in the city is God calling us to settle? Who is he calling to join us in ministry? And who will he put in our path to become the future members of our church?

I don't have any of those answers yet. Sometimes I feel like we're way out of our depth here. But that's where I can rest in God's sovereignty. If we were moving to Boston intending to make something happen in our own strength, counting on our talents, then we certainly would be out of our depth. But I know that this is God's church, not mine. And I can go back to prayer, trusting that he will guide us in this process.

WMCLB has always been a mission-supporting organization. Will you support

us in this mission? Pray for open hearts in Boston, a true mission field where only an estimated 3% of people have heard an authentic presentation of the gospel. Pray that God would call several couples or individuals to join us in Boston to be the core team to start this church. And pray that we'd follow his leading every step of the way.

Mary Anderson and her husband Rev. Kristian Anderson have been called by Cultivate New England and the Church of the Lutheran Brethren to plant a church in Boston, Massachusetts.



Visit WMCLB online: [www.WMCLB.org](http://www.WMCLB.org)  
Email: [WMCLBcontact@gmail.com](mailto:WMCLBcontact@gmail.com)





L to R: Dr. Gaylan Mathiesen, Dr. Eugene Boe, Paul Fraser, Dr. Brad Pribbenow, Giovanni Ramos, Dr. Daniel Berge, Claire Rose, Wes Asheim, and Dr. David Veum.

# LBS Class of 2021



LUTHERAN BRETHERN SEMINARY

## WES ASHEIM, MASTER OF DIVINITY

Wes grew up in Portland, North Dakota and attended North Dakota State University for his undergraduate degree. He met his wife Anya while both worked at Inspiration Point Christian Camp and Retreat Center, and they have now been married for over 22 years. They have two sons, one in college and one who just graduated from high school.

Over the last 17 years, Wes has served as Youth Director in

Le Sueur and Maple Plain, Minnesota; as Associate Pastor in Connecticut for five years; and as Pastor of Swan Lake Lutheran Church outside of Fergus Falls, Minnesota for most of 2020.

For the last six years, Wes has been able to serve in ministry while taking seminary classes through the distance education option at LBS. Wes is currently serving as Associate Pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Maple Plain, Minnesota.

## PAUL FRASER, MASTER OF DIVINITY

Paul grew up in Belle Plaine, Minnesota. When he was in fourth grade his family moved to Le Sueur, Minnesota and began attending Word of Life Lutheran Brethren Church. After graduating high school, he attended Minnesota State University–Mankato for one year before taking a year off to attend the CheckPoint program at Inspiration Point Christian Camp and Retreat Center. After CheckPoint he returned to MSU–Mankato to finish his undergraduate work, graduating with a degree in

biology and a minor in geography. During this time he met his wife Alexa. They have been blessed with two sons.

Paul began attending Lutheran Brethren Seminary in the Fall of 2018. He and his wife are currently looking forward to participating in ministry opportunities to serve churches here in the United States, while keeping their eyes open to ministry opportunities as international missionaries to Asia.

## MARCUS GOODMAN, CERTIFICATE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Marcus was born in LeClaire, Iowa—home of Buffalo Bill and the American Pickers. Marcus moved to Washington state in 1990 and quickly fell in love with Washington and a young lady named Kim, to whom he is now married. Marcus lives in Tumwater, Washington. He and Kim have two daughters.

Marcus serves as an elder at Peace Lutheran Brethren

Church in Olympia, Washington and on the Pacific Region North executive board. He enjoys walks with his wife, riding motorcycles, and fishing. Marcus and Kim have a heart for the lost and are praying their mission field would be made clear to them. Lord willing, Marcus will continue his seminary studies at LBS in the Fall of 2021.





### **GLENN MERTZ, MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

Glenn Mertz is married to his wife Jackie and they have two adult children. The Mertzses live in Elyria, Ohio, where Glenn currently serves as a State Chaplain at Lorain Correctional in nearby Grafton. Before responding to his present calling, Glenn spent 30 years in radio and hosted a Christian talk show where he

was blessed to talk with many local and national ministries and pastors. Glenn says, “It is the pastors I met and my own pastor who encouraged me to begin this journey in Seminary and I plan to continue.” Glenn is a life-long Lutheran and attends Grace Lutheran in Elyria, Ohio.

### **GIOVANNI RAMOS, MASTER OF DIVINITY**

Giovanni Ramos is married to Diana and together they raise their three girls. Giovanni received a B.A. degree in Public Relations from Montclair State University in New Jersey and served in various lay ministry settings, while also working in a corporate environment for GAF/Standard Industries in Parsippany, New Jersey for six years.

While working for GAF, Giovanni began attending Hillside Lutheran Brethren Church, where he was encouraged to go

to Lutheran Brethren Seminary and was offered the church’s financial support. Before moving to Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Giovanni began taking online classes part-time through the Seminary’s distance education program while working full-time at GAF. Giovanni finished his Master of Divinity degree on campus, while serving Stavanger Lutheran Church of Fergus Falls.

### **GREG ROKOS, MASTER OF DIVINITY**

Greg Rokos was born in Edmonton, Alberta in 1984. He was baptized, grew up in the church and later went to Bible College. After completing two years at the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute in Camrose, Alberta, he left knowing that God was calling him to a life of service in full-time ministry. Greg has worked a wide range of jobs, from running heavy equipment to working in the kitchen at the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute.

Greg married Dena Haaland in 2005 and they have four children. They are currently living in Camrose, where Greg serves as one of the pastors at Resurrection Lutheran Brethren Church. He has a passion for working with young adults and young families, especially in smaller groups or one on one. In his spare time, he enjoys working with his hands, hunting, fishing, camping, and working on home renovations.

### **CLAIRE ROSE, CERTIFICATE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

Claire Rose was born and raised in Chatham, New Jersey. She is a Registered Nurse, having received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Messiah College in 2004, and her Master’s in Public Health with an emphasis in International Community Health from New York University in 2009. She and Dan married

in 2010, and they welcomed children Ashley in March 2013 and Austin in October 2014. She and Dan have been called by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren to serve as missionaries to Chad with Lutheran Brethren International Mission.

### **MATT SCHWEITZER, MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

Matt Schweitzer has been married to his wife Emily for nearly nine years. They have five children. Matt has served in many ministry capacities in churches since 2008, mostly in Worship Leading and Young Adult Ministries. He has spoken for and led worship gatherings at various retreats and conferences.

While in Seminary, Matt worked in a part-time capacity at Emmaus Road Church in DeWitt, Iowa in Worship and

Student Ministry, using nights and weekends to complete his coursework. Matt plans on continuing at Emmaus Road in pastoral ministry. He is grateful to the students and faculty who have been an encouragement to him throughout this program, and very thankful for his church family for their constant flow of support in prayer, finances, and childcare over the past three years.



Rescued/kevron2001/Stock

# Encourage One Another

ROGER VIKSNES

I saved a kid who was drowning once, while I was at the ocean. At least I think that I saved him. I may have just interrupted his pleasant afternoon. Whatever the case, I vividly remember, in the middle of that experience, feeling that I was possibly not going to make it. I was exhausted and then nervous, as I struggled to get the two of us to solid ground. To be honest, in a figurative way, this past year has felt very similar, and I am guessing that I may not be the only one who feels like that. For me, in my time as a pastor, there have been a few seasons where I have felt “in over my head” and God has provided in wonderful and often unexpected ways. During two of those seasons, God provided a person

to do what might seem a very insignificant thing, but which meant the world to me.

The first was when I started my first full-time job as a pastor. I was just out of Seminary, 26 years old (while looking more like 16), and I was the pastor of 59th Street Lutheran Brethren Church in Brooklyn, New York. Prior to that, the biggest town I had ever lived in was Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Now I was living in a city of nine million people, pastoring my first church, serving a very multi-ethnic community—which I knew very little about—and on top of it all, my wife and I were about to have our first child. To say that I was *in over my head* and feeling like I was drowning is an understatement. But unlike one struggling in the water,

I’m not sure I would have been able to articulate exactly what help I needed. Thankfully, however, God knew exactly what I needed. He always knows. And what God provided was an incredibly caring church elder named Lloyd Lister, who every Tuesday morning at exactly 9:05 would call the church office, ask me how I was doing, and then read a word of Scripture and pray for me.

There is a line in a Dr. Seuss book that says, “They weren’t that big, they were really quite small. You might think such a thing wouldn’t matter at all.” It would be easy to have that same sentiment toward a little weekly five-minute call of encouragement. But you would be wrong. It meant everything to me. Lloyd

***“Encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”***  
***Hebrews 10:25***

read the Bible and prayed, trusting both the power of God’s Word and the power of the God he was praying to. Too often we can second-guess ourselves, thinking that we don’t have some incredible words of wisdom to share with each other. Other times we mistakenly think that we do have the perfect words. The truth, however, is that the Word of God is always the perfect thing to share as we simply trust the Holy Spirit to work through his Word.

Fast-forward almost 20 years, to the bountifully stressful year of 2020. This past year has been hard. And I don’t say that in an attempt to measure my challenges against yours. It has been hard for everyone. And again, like my first year pastoring, I have felt *in over my head*. What I knew how to do, I was no longer able to do, and I was struggling mightily to keep up with the immediate move towards digital ministry and distanced caregiving. I tried. I worked hard. Once again, however, I felt like I was drowning. But again, God knew what I needed.

This time God called upon Elroy Vesta to care for me. Pastor Elroy is the pastor of Liberty Lutheran Brethren Church in Fargo, North Dakota, and has been for years. I have known of Elroy for a long time, but I would not say that I have ever

had or taken the time to really get close to him. So I wasn’t really expecting nor would I have probably chosen for it to be him that God would use as my new encourager. But that is exactly what he has become. Monthly throughout this last year my phone has rung, and I get excited when I see that 218 number pop up because I know that there will be that sweet and cheerful voice on the other end of the line saying hello, asking me how I am doing and what specifically I need prayer for, and then reading God’s Word to me and praying for me.

Now at first, I thought, “I wonder how I got so blessed that Elroy would think to call me?” And then I heard other pastors bring up his name and that same number calling them. Many other pastors, in fact, and all of them saying the same thing: “Elroy has been such a blessing to me during all of this.” Again, you might think such a thing wouldn’t matter at all. It is only a three- to five-minute phone call. But it does matter. It matters so much. While people were wondering what they could and couldn’t do during a pandemic and social distancing, Elroy has reminded me that simply reading the Bible and praying for others is still the perfect option, be it face to face or over the phone.

If I can tip my hand, I have wanted to write this article for months now, partly because I wanted a platform to be able to say thank you to these wonderful men of God and let them know that their “little” act of ministering to me has meant so much. But I also want to share this to encourage you never to doubt the power of God’s Word and prayer, nor doubt that you can be the one God is raising up to deliver them to someone in need. In 1 Peter 2:9, we are told that as children of God we are a royal priesthood. That can sound intimidating, but part of what that means is simply ministering to others by listening and by administering God’s Word and prayer. So don’t get so caught up wondering about what big thing you can do for someone that you overlook the power of the “little.”

*Rev. Roger Viksnes is Pastor of Bethany Lutheran Brethren Church in East Hartland, Connecticut.*





Mcclellan, Noam, Evangeline, Christina, Verity, Matt, and Bastion.

# The Mighty Hand of the Lord

CHRISTINA S.

A friend lamented from across the ocean, “I just wish there was more we could do,” as I finished updating her on Matt’s condition.

It was Fall of 2020, and Matt was continuing to recover from a spinal cord injury he incurred during a motorcycle accident, while sightseeing with a friend. We had been in France since late 2019 to attend language school for a year in Albertville, in preparation for working with Lutheran Brethren International Mission in Africa. Two-thirds of the way through our language-learning year, Matt was injured. He would finish out our time in France living in a rehabilitation center in another town, over an hour away, during Pandemic Year.

“You know that the best and most tangible thing you *can* do is pray,” I had replied.

The community of language school students was steadily providing meals to our family; a few other families were instrumental in providing transportation and childcare, along with mental and emotional support; opportunities to continue learning French were provided. We were *physically* covered. During this time of physical isolation—being far from the U.S., family, and long-time friends, and during restrictions and the confinement of the pandemic—the Lord laid it on my heart and mind, almost immediately and necessarily, to engage all these “faraway people” as the Body of Christ in the most tangible means of support there is. Prayer.

Soon after friends were delivered the news about Matt, we gathered in Christ’s name at the dining table. Our five kids anxiously danced circles around us as

we went in and out of conversation with each other and with the Lord. Christ told us that if only two of his followers agree on earth about anything we ask, it will be done for them by our Father in heaven (Matthew 18:19)! Therefore, as we supplicated for Matt’s physical body, the frustration about cultural and language barriers, as well as the distance between us and Matt, we were agreeing and asking for the most physical and practical of things: our daily bread, the Lord’s will to be done on earth, delivering us from evil (see The Lord’s Prayer). As more and more people became aware of the situation and involved in prayer, the more it became evident that this was more than mere coping or pleading for what we wanted. This was the Body of Christ, coming together before the Lord to tend to a wounded member. “If one member



***“Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.”***

***James 5:13-14***

suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Corinthians 12:26, ESV). The opportunity for this lifestyle of petitioning, suffering, and rejoicing in praise and thanksgiving *together*, has continued to show us how the practice of corporate prayer is critical to the believing followers of Christ.

As a family, we have often aimed to be “praying CATS.” We use this fun and helpful acronym to encourage one another to know *what kind* of prayers to pray, namely those of *confession, adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication*. The simple idea of saying confession prayers first (“I’m sorry God for...”) makes you right with him and others, before going into prayer requests (supplications) by way of adoration (“I love you God because...”) and thanksgiving (“Thank you God for...”).

To start, some important things come from confession! James 5:13-16 tells us that confession, even to one another, leads to healing, as the prayers of righteous believers have great power as they are working. *Talk about tangible!* Confession also leads to the Lord’s faithfulness and justice, purifying us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9), thereby making us more effective pray-ers in the supplication realm. Peter explains that repentance leads to three key points: “that your sins may be blotted out, that times of

refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus” (Acts 3:19-20, ESV).

A glance at the Psalms displays the prayerfulness of the psalmists as they petitioned their cases before the Lord, but they also reveal much beautiful language focused on adoring our Creator for who he is and thanking him for what he has done. For example, Psalm 145 gives us a model for praise, adoration, and worship of God: verse 21 proclaims, “My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.” In Psalm 107 (ESV), verses 8 and 31 give an inspired example of thankfulness, in repetition: “Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!” The Apostle Paul also often implores believers to adore and thank God for who he is and what he has done, specifically in giving us Christ as the propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 9:15).

I appreciate that “CATS” can begin our family’s prayer time with confession and repentance, thereby freeing us to adore and thank the Lord for what he has done, *before* we bring our petitions to him. These times of pleading before the throne are commanded of us by Christ himself, as he delineated his seven-point

prayer during the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-13). The divine opportunity of petitioning allows us to communicate adjunctly with the Almighty and the community of Christ-followers.

We have been daily encouraged by the Body praying for us, as we see the Lord doing mighty works of healing, but also for the eternal purposes of his kingdom! Prayer provides opportunities for worship with our brothers and sisters as we praise and thank God together. The mighty hand of the Lord is working not only in our story, but in yours as well. The prayer “grapevine” allows us to adore and thank God together, as we continue to confess and petition our afflictions and pain before him in prayer (“Save me, O God!” Psalm 69:1) and we are set on high by his salvation (Psalm 69:29, ESV)!

*Christina S. and her husband Matt have been called by the Church of the Lutheran Brethren to serve as missionaries in Africa.*

# CLB



# FORGE

*North American Mission*

## Mission

- Church Planting
- Church Vitality

## Equipping

- Podcast
- E-Newsletter
- Resource Sharing



What is the CLB Forge? It is a new North American Mission website and hub for all kinds of resources to connect, equip, and encourage our network of Disciple-Making congregations in the mission field of North America. This includes pastors, church staff, lay leaders, volunteers, and parishioners across the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

Want to get connected to what other churches and the North American Mission department are offering? Search resources on the Forge! Looking for the home of the CLB Forge Podcast? Check out all the episodes on the Forge! Want to make sure you

stay up to date on all things North American Mission? Sign up for the Forge e-newsletter!

The driving idea behind the Forge is to connect our congregations in leveraging our resources and our gifts. This new resource will gather excitement and momentum as we build connections and find the resources beneficial toward becoming a Disciple-Making Movement.

Check out the website at [CLBForge.org](http://CLBForge.org) today! Join us by submitting a resource, signing up for the e-newsletter, or subscribing to the Forge podcast.

# [www.CLBForge.org](http://www.CLBForge.org)

## Elder Ordained in Le Sueur



L to R: Elder-in-Training Nick Olson, Elder Al Van Ravenswaay, Elder Paul Quist, Elder Jared Ronningen, Elder Phil Lee, Elder Jeff Mootz, Rev. Jason Lang, and Dr. Mark Erickson.

On May 9, 2021, Jared Ronningen was ordained as an elder at Word of Life Church in Le Sueur, Minnesota. Dr. Mark Erickson officiated.

## Bronson Installed



L to R: Rev. Nick Mundis, Elder Jason Lindahl, Elder Rick Anfinson, Elder Mike Eastling, Rev. Rocky Bronson, and Rev. Danny Bronson.

On May 16, 2021, Rev. Danny Bronson was installed as pastor at Community of Joy Lutheran Brethren Church in Eagan, Minnesota. Rev. Nick Mundis officiated.

## Elders Ordained in Ferndale



L to R: Elder Mike Olinger, Elder Tim Blomquist, Elder Matthew Helland, Pastor Chris Leingang, and Associate for Ministry Support Rev. Phil Heiser.

On May 16, 2021, Tim Blomquist and Matthew Helland were ordained as elders at Cornerstone Community Church in Ferndale, Washington. Rev. Phil Heiser officiated.

## Gundersen Called Home



Rev. Willmore Marshall Gundersen, 79, of Fergus Falls, Minnesota passed away Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Willmore was born in a Norwegian-speaking Christian home in West Orange, New Jersey on April 29, 1942, to Palmer and Aagot (Olsen) Gundersen. The family attended

Eagle Rock Norwegian Mission Church where Willmore began playing the guitar.

In 1958, Willmore attended his junior year of high school at Hillcrest Lutheran Academy in Fergus Falls where he met JoAnn Aarhus.

At age 21, Willmore was invited to go to Norway to sing and preach alongside Arne Aano, a Norwegian Evangelist. Willmore lived the next ten years in Lyngdal, Norway where he built his home along a fjord. His passion was to help people come to know Jesus and to live for him.

On November 28, 1970, Willmore and JoAnn were united in marriage in Lake Mills, Iowa. After their marriage, Willmore and JoAnn moved to Lyngdal and began raising their family. Willmore continued in full-time ministry as a traveling evangelist with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission Organization.

In 1978, after graduating from the Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls the family moved to West Orange, New Jersey. Willmore served as the Lead Pastor at his home church, Eagle Rock Lutheran Church. Four years later, the family moved west to Cooperstown, North Dakota where Willmore served as the Lead Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church.

In 1990, the family moved to Fergus Falls, and Willmore resumed his evangelistic ministry overseas with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission Organization.

On May 19, 2021 Willy suffered a massive stroke. After two days in the hospital, he was transferred home and was cared for by family and hospice. He passed away peacefully in his sleep early on June 1 surrounded by family.

Willmore's life ambition was to live a life spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to whomever would listen, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news" (Romans 10:15)

**Faith & Fellowship** is the official publication of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, 1020 W. Alcott Ave., P.O. Box 655, Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0655, issued six times a year (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December) by Faith and Fellowship Publishing, 1020 W. Alcott Ave., P.O. Box 655, Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0655. Phone (218) 736-7357. The viewpoints expressed in the articles are those of the authors and may or may not necessarily reflect the official position of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (CLBA). Periodicals Postage Paid at Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56538.

(USPS 184-600) • (ISSN 10741712)

SUBSCRIPTIONS: **Faith & Fellowship** is offered to its readers at no charge. We would encourage your continued support with a donation, and if you would like to be on our mailing list, please contact our office. Periodicals Postage Paid at Fergus Falls, Minnesota. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please give both old and new addresses and allow four weeks.

Direct all correspondence, including submission of articles, to: **Faith & Fellowship**, P.O. Box 655, Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0655; Telephone, (218) 736-7357; e-mail, [ffpublishing@clba.org](mailto:ffpublishing@clba.org); FAX, (218) 739-5514.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Faith & Fellowship**, P.O. Box 655, Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56538-0655





## The Other Person in the Room

**P**icture yourself and just one other person in a dentist’s waiting room (think pre-COVID, even pre-smart phone days). Do you attempt a conversation? Maybe, depending on your personality. And it could turn into a nice visit. But if the person ignores you, do you feel annoyed, irritated with their coldness? I hope not. They don’t know you. They don’t owe you anything. There is no preexisting relationship.

What if the room is the living room of your home? Another person walks past without saying a word or acknowledging your presence in any way. All through the course of the day, there is no interaction between you and this other person in your home. This could only happen if your relationship with that person is fractured, almost non-existent. *Because we always acknowledge our loved ones.*

Let’s say you do interact with this person, but your conversation is limited to topics necessary to your coexistence. What bills are due, who will take out the garbage, who has TV rights for the next hour? If one is a parent and one is a child, the child’s requests are basic: “What’s for supper?” and “I want to go to Johnny’s house to play.” The adult speaks only in demands: “Clean your room!”

These are pictures of two human beings together in a room who have no relationship or an unhealthy one. The communication level is directly related to the existence and quality of the relationship.

Now realize that there is *always* another person in the room with you!

“God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being’” (Acts 17:27-28).

In the last phrase, St. Paul quotes the Cretan philosopher Epimenides, and applies it to God. What’s this truth about God? God is omnipresent. His presence envelops every human being, whether we are conscious of it or not, whether we believe it or not, whether we acknowledge him or not. *There is always another person in the room with you.* Are you oblivious to his presence? Do you acknowledge him, but at the lowest level? “What’s for supper?” “Can I have a new toy?”

If you are God’s child, what does he want to hear from you? Anything and everything that comes to your mind, that weighs on your heart. Prayer is a conversation with your loved one, your cherished friend, your Father—with whom you have a fantastic relationship because of your Savior, his Son Jesus Christ!

*Rev. Brent Juliot is Contributing Editor of Faith & Fellowship magazine and Pastor of Living Hope Church in Menomonie, Wisconsin.*

Periodicals Postage Paid at  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56538

For change of address:  
Faith & Fellowship  
P.O. Box 655  
Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0655



**CLB FORGE**  
EST. 2020 North American Mission



**PODCAST** Episode **45**

Rev. Mike Natale and Dr. Ryan Nilsen have a conversation about why mission matters and how to engage your church, with Dr. Gaylan Mathiesen, Professor of Evangelism at Lutheran Brethren Seminary.



[www.CLBForge.org/podcast](http://www.CLBForge.org/podcast)

