



Wednesday Prayer

6th Sunday after Epiphany – The Church as true community for all

“...For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters are anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:3-9

These words were written to a church community over 2,000 years ago. However, similar quarrels and power struggles often arise in our communities of faith to this day. This can become quickly apparent in matters that push us outside of long held “comfort zones.” This may be especially true when exploring topics such as diversity, inclusion, trauma-informed practices, and community resiliency.

Many factors may contribute to a youth’s vulnerabilities. One factor is living with disabilities. People living with developmental disabilities are 7 times more likely to become victims of sexual violence than the general population. The state of Minnesota recently launched its “Treat People Like People” campaign. The message is clear. An intentional culture shift towards supporting and celebrating the unique gifts that people with disabilities bring to our communities is a foundational piece in the prevention of abuse.

<https://treatpeoplelikepeople.org/stories/>

Similarly, at our recent Cherish All Children annual event, we heard from Logan Sand, program manager of Lutheran Social Service SELF (Seeing and Exploring Life’s Future). SELF offers a curriculum taken at a more comfortable pace for youth living with developmental disabilities. Self-advocates assert themselves as strong, resilient, and as having AMAZING gifts to share.

<https://www.lssmn.org/services/youth/health/sex-education/special-education>

Building upon natural strengths of music, art, ritual, and fellowship, the Church has a unique potential to help prevent and heal trauma. For many, this may sound like an overwhelming endeavor. However, like the apostle Paul, we know with Christ as our true leader, building a healthy community that celebrates and supports diversity strengthens our ability to provide God’s love to each other and surrounding communities.

Heavenly Creator, plant seeds of hope and nourish our efforts with your sustaining love as we strive to build communities of faith that are a place of true belonging for all people. Amen.

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