



## Wednesday Prayer

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Faith and Actions

**What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. James 2: 14-17**

The complete text for today’s reflection is James 2:1-10 and 14-17, and I encourage you to read all of it. However, verses 14-17 are what captured my heart. There can often be a gap between our faith and our actions. On my spiritual journey, I first had to learn that faith was a gift from God. I couldn’t earn it and I didn’t have to. Hallelujah for that!

After receiving this precious gift of faith (and even when my faith falters), what comes next? For me, faith without works feels wholly inadequate. And yet, living out my faith can sometimes feel so hard. As a survivor, I alternate between action to help others when I’m feeling strong and then sometimes just completely shutting down. Depression and anxiety of any kind can stop me in my tracks. The pandemic, polarized politics, wildfires, racial injustice, hurricanes, sexual violence, the list goes on, and I become paralyzed.

I attended the Survivor’s Memorial Celebration at Boom Island Park in Minneapolis recently with other members of Cherish All Children. We celebrated this amazing Memorial, which only happened virtually last year. Having survivors and allies together in person was so powerful. I was also grateful that I’d visited the Memorial earlier this summer, freeing me to feel the love and support swirling in the air for all of us, a refreshing and healing Holy Spirit breeze.

Most importantly, I realized that in attending the Survivor’s Memorial Celebration, I was standing on the shoulders of so many others, people and organizations that do amazing work. It reminds me that we are never alone. When I cannot act, others hold me up. In turn, when I am strong, when my joy and vision return, my faith guides me in service to others. I pray that others currently stuck or in pain, can relax, heal, and stand on the shoulders of the rest of us, until their own strength, faith, and joy return. God is here for us, and in turn we can use our faith to show up for each other. Faith with works is a beautiful thing!

**Love your neighbor as you love yourself. James 2:8**

**Amen.**

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Written by Nancy Rogness, former member of the Cherish All Children Bishop’s Task Force, team leader at Valley of Peace Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, MN, and survivor.