



Wednesday Prayer

16th Sunday after Pentecost – God frustrates the ways of the wicked.

(The Lord) upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry...sets prisoners free...gives sight to the blind...lifts up those who are bowed down...loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD. Psalm 146:7-10

It is easy for us, as Christians, to get caught up in our own busy lives and not think about sexual exploitation of children. But if we watch any local or national news even occasionally, we are bound to see something about children being mistreated, manipulated, or missing, and we realize what a broken world we live in. Instead of letting bad news make us feel hopeless, it's helpful to look back and see how far we've come...

Cherish All Children (CAC) was started by a Minneapolis Bishop's Task Force of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) in 2005. Our churches needed help in learning ways to recognize and prevent sexual exploitation that destroys lives and healthy relationships. This dedicated and faithful group set about to educate adults in ELCA churches and engage them in action to keep children safe. In late 2017, Cherish All Children came under the umbrella of Lutheran Social Service of MN, providing collaboration with the long-standing work LSS has done serving youth at risk of exploitation.

Fast forward to 2022, and we see so much more is being done. The Cherish All Children Primary Prevention Model seeks to stop the harm *before* it occurs, with four guiding principles: EDUCATE youth and adults about child sexual exploitation and trafficking and how to prevent it; EQUIP churches and communities with resources to prevent child sexual exploitation and trafficking; ENGAGE youth and adults to create a culture that promotes healthy relationships free from sexual exploitation; PRAY for the youth in our churches and communities and for an end to child sexual exploitation and trafficking.

The psalmist in today's Scripture promises that the Lord "frustrates the ways of the wicked." Many agencies in our community, state, and nation have a combined goal of ending sex trafficking and exploitation. All our efforts combined make a difference daily in "frustrating" those who seek to harm children. One of those agencies, the Minnesota Department of Health, has an excellent webpage, [Human Trafficking Myth or Truth](#) that I have found a useful teaching tool. The CAC Values statement says it best: "We are guided by our Christian faith to promote healthy and safe relationships, making a positive impact in our communities."

Lord, we trust you to uphold the oppressed, give food to the hungry, set prisoners free, and to frustrate the way of the wicked. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

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