

Grace and Peace to you all,

As we continue to observe a Holy Lent this season, we are grateful to our preachers for faithfully offering us the Word of the Lord. This Sunday, we had the honor of receiving the Word proclaimed by the Reverend Evan Young. We thank Rev. Young for the exhortation based on Psalm 27 as we seek to have courage to show forth faith over fear.

As we think about what it may look like to show forth our faith this Lenten season, we can go back to the basics of our faith for strength. As we navigate the personal, communal and political aspects of our lives, we can lean on God and be assured of the help we need.

We can be honest that it is easier said than done. Moments of fear can seep in and take up residence in our hearts, minds and spirits. It can be hard to have faith in the midst of such fear. Some questions we can ask ourselves as we discern areas of growth in faith : Are we engaging the Word of the Lord? When was the last time we spent time reading and meditating of the Word of God? How do I feel afterwards? Am I engaging the Word of the Lord in community? What is the quality of our prayer life? Do I bring all of me, every aspect to me in prayer? Do I delight in my time in prayer with the Lord? How do we stay engaged and involved with our community? Do we know our neighbors? Do we spend time in our neighborhoods? What are the needs of the community? Do I have gifts, talents, energy to meet those needs?

This self-reflective inventory is meant as a starting point toward growth. Wherever we are, God is calling us to deeper and more intimate relationship. And closeness to God is a way to increase one's faith, especially in the midst of fear. Take time to go back and read *Psalm 27*. See how it speaks to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to allow new insight so that you can grow in your faith, and silence the fear.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Crystal