

September – The Presence of Christ

TEXT: Psalm 105:4

*Keep your eyes open for God, watch for his works:
be alert for signs of his presence.*

INTERACTION

Many of us live in such a fast-paced world-moving through work, school, appointments, meetings and a variety of other activities that fill our days to the brim. It's rare that we slow down enough to see the blessings in our lives or God's presence in our lives.

We have come to realize that in our hurry, we miss so much of what God wants us to see and to experience. We know and believe that God is present within us as well as all around us and everywhere we go. We believe that one God exists in 3 persons – God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, working within our lives. I appreciate the psalmist's words telling me to "keep my eyes open...be alert for signs of God's presence." ***Now, pause a moment, pair up and share where you see or experience God in your lives. (After several minutes of sharing, return to the large group.)***

REFLECTION

With my eyes open, here are a few ways that I see or experience God's presence.

God's creation is full of God's presence. Nature displays all of God's wonders and declares glory to God. I feel God's presence when I see the blue sky with puffy, white clouds, colorful fragrant flowers, birds chirping, the stillness of a hawk from its high post, stars twinkling in the sky, a full moon, lakes and streams, wild flowers along the road, a double rainbow, a gentle breeze, a crane's haunting voice, otters' playfulness.

When church members prepare the Sunshine Supper for our community, Christ's presence is everywhere! Christ is in all of the faces of those who buy and prepare the food, those who serve and eat the food, those who share meal conversations, and those who clean up afterwards. With Christ's presence and our hands and feet, amazing moments occur!

When checking out after shopping, I'm reminded that Christ is present in the faces of the salesperson assisting me. It only takes a moment to smile and say a kind word-knowing that I'm speaking to Christ in disguise.

Knowing that Christ is present with us during the hard moments is a reminder to treat all of God's children with respect and kindness. When talking with people we disagree with or don't get along with or may not like at all. Can we see Christ's face in others? (Take a moment to silently consider this.)

I have made many trips home to Rochester, MN through the years to visit my family. On a trip home to visit my mom in the hospital, I knew that God was present with me as I traveled, but even more so when I saw an eagle in flight along the Mississippi River! Later, while sitting with Mom in her hospital room reading, I came across the verses from Isaiah 40:28-31: "...those who wait for the Lord...mount up with wings like eagles..." Wow! After spotting an eagle, this was another sign of God's presence. It was a comforting reminder that no matter what happens, God would always be present in the midst of everything! (I think of these times as a "God moment" or a mini-miracle.)

ACTIVITY

As you move through your week, be aware of Christ's presence all around you. Where did you witness God's presence and activity in your life? Where did you see Jesus in another this week? Jot down a few notes on index cards to later share with the rest of council.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for the gift of this day. Thank you for your constant presence within us and all around us. As we go out in the world each day, nudge us to keep our eyes wide open and to be alert for the wondrous signs of your presence. Amen.

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