

Pastor's Letter: February 3, 2021

Dear Church,

My grandma Evelyn was an avid Twins fan for many years. She cheered on all her favorites: Blyleven, Hrbek, Puckett, Hunter, Santana, and Mauer, just to name a few. Grandma rarely missed a game, even in the seasons that were forgettable. The Twins gave her something to cheer for and put her hope in.

One of Grandma's practices was to write a big "W" or "L" over every game on her Twins pocket calendar, depending on the results. "I sure wish my calendar had a lot more W's than it does!" she would say.

In a similar way, I sometimes wish I had more W's and fewer L's on my life "calendar." Losses are hard, no matter how many or how often we've experienced them. We've all lost loved ones. Maybe you also feel a sense of loss of health, experienced the loss of a marriage, or lost a farm or home. Maybe you just grieve the loss of "the way things used to be."

Sometimes losses come infrequently, while at other times they accumulate in short order. Right now, as our nation approaches half a million COVID deaths we are feeling a communal sense of loss like never before. In times like these it's easy to feel deeply discouraged, wondering what the future will bring for us and for our country.

Our faith reminds us that Jesus also felt pain, sorrow, and loss. Having been ridiculed, beaten, and nailed to a cross, he felt abandoned by God to the point that he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus knows and is ready and willing to receive us in our loss.

The experience of losing someone or something changes us forever. Things seem like they'll never be the same. But God has promised us that he won't abandon us! When the inevitable grief and mourning happens, we need only pray three simple words: *"Lord, have mercy," "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy."*

Indeed, Lord have mercy... on ourselves, on our families, our church, our country, our world. Amen.

Pastor Christoph