

Pastor's Post #3

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6). What a wonderful gift for you and me during this Coronavirus Pandemic! I am speaking about God's gift to you and me, God's gift of prayer. Time spent in worry and anxiety is much better spent in prayer.

The Small Catechism teaches us: "Our Father who art in heaven. What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear Father." When I went through Catechism Class taught by Pastor Karl Krueger at our Holy Cross Lutheran Church, North Miami, Florida, I recall Pastor Krueger asking us to memorize Matthew 7:7. Matthew 7:7 reads: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Those words of Jesus meant quite a bit to me in my Christian life and faith. But, it was not until I began in the ministry 13 years later that I studied the context of that verse. Studying the context blessed me to realize that this asking, this praying, that Jesus calls for us, invites us, and downright commands us to do occurs within a relationship. Verse 11 of Matthew 7 (the context that I am referring to) states: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" Those words of Jesus teach us that our praying takes place within a relationship, the relationship that we have with our Heavenly Father through the work of Christ. I have a relationship with our two daughters. I am their father. They are my daughters. In that relationship of father to daughters, I know how to give good gifts to them.

Now, that's not saying that I gave my daughters everything they wanted! I remember very well an incident that occurred when Annie was only 4 years old. I was working in my office at home. I looked up and across from my desk was Annie. She got right to the point. Annie wanted me to go to WalMart to buy something for her. She looked at me and said: "Mom does not think that I need it, but I wonder if you are of a different opinion?" To hear my 4 year old daughter say that floored me!

I, a poor, miserable sinner, know how to give good gifts to my children. How much more will our Heavenly Father give good things to you and me who ask Him! He is our dear Father. You

and I were dead in trespasses and sins, but our Heavenly Father sent His Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior. He sent His Son to purchase you and me back from sin and from death and from the devil by shedding His precious blood. God is our Father in Jesus Christ our Savior and in His atoning death to pay for our sin. God is our dear Father and you and I are His dear children. We are born again in Jesus Christ in our Baptism. The Holy Spirit gives us faith and now we are God's true children and He is our true Father. No wonder that Jesus taught us to pray with the words, "Our Father who art in heaven."

It is within that relationship that God our true Father has with you and me His true children that we pray to Him, "as dear children ask their dear Father." Our Father who is in heaven gives good things ("good", that is, what is good for us and according to His will) to you and me who ask him.

The Lord bless and keep you and your family.
Pastor Lindsay Watkins