



The Work of Family Love
Pastor Larry E. Thomas

My friend and I were talking over coffee about life, work, and family. During the family part of the conversation, he told me about the challenge of caring for a family member who was alcohol-dependent and living with depression and other mental health issues. At some point in the conversation, I heard myself tell him, “You know, you’re doing the work of family love.” The next thing I knew he was telling me that I should write about that – that I should write about the work of family love. So, here goes:

I am a son; my parents are deceased. I am a brother; I have one sister. I am a spouse; I have a wife and three sisters-in-law and five brothers-in-law. I am a father; we have two sons, two daughters, two sons-in-law and a daughter-in-law. I am a grandfather; we have six grandchildren.

In the middle of a somewhat tense phone call with my late father, I asked him why he hardly ever said the words, “I love you.” He said it was probably because his parents rarely said, “I love you” to him. By the end of the phone call, we had agreed that from now on we would conclude every phone call and visit by saying, “I love you” and we did. I have continued this practice with my wife and our children. No matter what the subject of the phone call or conversation, I say, “I love you,” and the beloved reciprocates.

While it wasn’t easy for my father to say, “I love you,” he was a sacrificially loving man. He did the sorts of things one expects a parent to do; he provided shelter, food, clothing, safety, support and encouragement. Thanks to my father and mother I learned about Jesus at a very early age. We didn’t always see eye to eye and at times I was intimidated by his anger but all in all my dad worked hard at family love.

My most vivid memory of my father’s patient love was after we returned home from a motor trip to Colorado to visit family. I was ten or eleven years old. The hood of the family station wagon was covered with bugs. I offered to wash the car. Everything cleaned up nicely except the hood. Ever resourceful, I went into the kitchen, grabbed a steel wool soap pad and cleaned that hood up real nice except the paint looked dull and scratched. My father could not have been more gracious:

He thanked me for washing his car and asked me to not use steel wool soap pads to clean the car again. I didn’t.

Somewhere in a box or a file folder I have an old cartoon. Picture this: A large auditorium with a half dozen people scattered about; 99% of the seats are empty. The cartoon tag read: “The Annual Convention of Children of Normal Families.” The cartoon was published at a time when folks were writing a lot and talking about “dysfunctional” families and all manner of familial brokenness. The sad hard truth is that pretty much every family (starting with the Bible’s first family and the Genesis stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel) were and are broken and fall short of family members’ expectations, hopes and dreams.

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Special points of interest

- Bishop’s Letter on last page—
great read!
- Council Report pg. 4



**MOUNTAIN VALLEY
PRESCHOOL**



IN THE OFFICE

While Pastor is on Sabbatical you will see Erica H. and others helping out in the office . Stop by and say hi! Office hours will remain from 10-12pm each Monday.

Updates to events are communicated through Constant Contact and an email list of families and friends, if you are not on this list but would like to be included please let Kathleen know.

AA

Will meet Thursdays and Sundays in Luther's Lounge weekly at 7 pm Ogle Street entrance

GIRL SCOUTS

The Girl Scouts Leaders meet the 3rd Thursday of each month

(continued from front page)

Over the years I have come to learn that family, whatever the configuration (single; married; single-parented; partnered; extended; nuclear) is where humans learn to put love into practice. Relationships with family - parents, siblings; children - is love's learning lab. It's where we experiment with putting others first and self, second; it's where and with whom we learn to sacrifice for the sake of the other and where we experience the ordinary grace of others sacrificing for our sakes and putting us first. It's where we learn to forgive and to be forgiven.

My parents, my sister, my spouse and our children, are the people with whom I have learned to bear up and bear with (and who learned to bear up and bear with me!) The members of our family are the people with whom I learn to endure and to persevere. (And they with me.) Like my parents before me, we worked hard to teach our children what they needed to know—things they wouldn't learn in public school or Sunday school. Learning love was/is experiential: try; fail; try again. Like most parents, we did our best. Like all parents we fell short.

As a child I learned my early lessons about love in action (the work of family love) from my parents, grandparents and our extended family. As a spouse and a father, I continue love's lifelong learning project as I interact with family members and other relatives. Sometimes I get it right. Sometimes I get it wrong. Some days, the work of family love is work; it's rarely effortless. At my best, it's the most important work I do. I'm a slow learner, so I have to start over again and again. I'm learning that sometimes love holds on for dear life and sometimes love let's go. Sometimes love is yes; sometimes love is no. Sometimes love's words soothe and sometimes love is silent.

The patience love requires, the perseverance, endurance and fortitude, is sometimes too much for me. (What's more, I'm pretty sure I'm not always easy to love.) The grace and gift of family love at its best mirrors God's love for us. Families broken by addiction, mental illness and abuse can and do stretch love's limits, sometimes to the breaking point. That's when it's time to get help. Pronto.

The late Texas singer songwriter Billy Joe Shaver's song, "I'm Going to Live Forever" is a primer on the work of family love. Mr. Shaver knows whereof he sings; his mother and wife died within a month of each other in 1999. His son Eddy, a guitarist who performed and recorded with Mr. Shaver died in 2000 from a drug overdose. Then Shaver's own health problems culminated in a massive heart attack. (Billy Joe died in October 2020.)

Over the years, these lines from "I'm Gonna Live Forever," have become a powerful reminder of the good and godly work of family love:

*You fathers and you mothers
Be good to one another
Please try to raise your children right
Don't let the darkness take 'em
Don't make 'em feel forsaken
Just lead them safely to the light*



Fellowship Hour Donations Needed!

If you would like to share a baked treat, or donate something else for all to enjoy, please drop it off in the kitchen before church. Questions? Connect with Courtney.



Sundae Sunday & Garden Blessing! Sunday June 2

following the worship service

All are invited as we gather together and ask God to bless *the Garden of Giving* followed by yummy ice cream sundaes

Visiting Pastors and Worship Format

What a treat it has been to have Cluster Pastors come to worship with us at Mt. Si! Thank you to Pastor Lara Forbes from St. Andrew's for teeing us off and being our primary contact for Pastoral Care. Thank you Pastors Larry Thomas and Mark Griffith for returning to some familiar stumping grounds and sharing enjoyable sermons! Thank you Pastors Dave and Nyla Schoeld from Sammamish Hills for tag teaming from your congregation! Coming up we still have Pastor Dave Thomas from Cross of Christ, and Pastors Kristin and Olaf Baumann from Our Savior's.

Several Pastors need to make it to 2 services each Sunday, so to accommodate, both congregations have adjusted their worship order to allow for travel time. While our congregation has moved Communion up earlier in the service, other congregations are moving the Sermon to later in the service. The result on our side, as many have noticed, is a shorter worship service. Thank you for your patience as we work out the kinks and the flow! For the Pastors who are able to attend the full service, we will be inviting them to lead conversations during Fellowship Hour some weeks. This will continue through Sunday, July 14. Pastor Krista will be back to join us on Sunday, July 21.

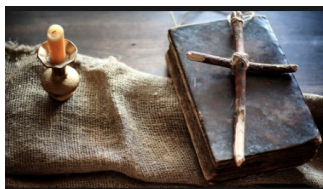
It is a joy to get to know these Pastors, and all are encouraged to come a few minutes early to Worship if you'd like to chat briefly with them (specifically those who have to leave mid-service!) If you missed them the first time around, check the schedule to make sure you know when they'll be back again.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

All ladies are welcome to join each Monday from 12:30-2pm. If you have any questions, please reach out to Vivian Waid.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Each Saturday @ 9am the men gather at Little Si Restaurant in North Bend for breakfast and Bible Study. The Study focuses on the readings for the upcoming Sunday worship. Reach out to Dave Spurling or Ed Benson for details.



THIRSTY FOR THEOLOGY

We will not be meeting while Pr. Krista is on sabbatical

We are going to the Mariners Game

Everyone is invited for a Mariner Game on June 15th at 4:15pm, which is also Faith and Family Day. The tickets will be on the main level and will be \$21 each. If you are interested in going, **please let me know how many tickets you would like by May 12th**, so I can get our tickets reserved. You can email me at terryaadams@hotmail.com



MAY SUNDAY LESSONS

May 5th

First Lesson:
1 Cor. 13:1-13
Gospel Text:
John 15:9-17

May 12th

First Lesson:
Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
Gospel Text:
John 17:6-19

May 19th

First Lesson:
Ezekiel 37:1-14
Gospel Text:
Acts 2:1-21

May 26th

First Lesson:
Romans 8:12-17
Gospel Text:
John 3:1-17

Quilters Group

Quilters meet on Monday mornings in the quilting room.



Garden of Giving

Plots are available!

Let Terry A. know if you'd like one, or if you'd like to help with the SVFB plots.

Plant now or join us to plant together on May 4



NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

If you would like an article to appear in an upcoming newsletter please send all information to Kathleen, mtsi.assistant@gmail.com no later than the 17th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

COUNCIL REPORT

Greetings from your church Council !

We are happy to support Pastor Krista's sabbatical break, and spending time with other pastors in the Synod and Cluster. This month Pastor and nine MSL members joined ten members from Sammamish Hills Lutheran in Belize for a 2-week mission. We loved meeting the students, teachers, parents and pastors there and developed many valuable relationships.

Council did not meet this month but are working several items on our agenda. The Fellowship Hall floor replacement (shared previously) will be scheduled soon, thanks to the donations we have received. Thank you for your support and generosity. We are learning from churches in our Synod Cluster how to achieve a balanced budget in post-COVID times, while still fulfilling our mission to serve, reach out and grow in grace. We thank God for the recent "in the black" financial months.

Serving in Christ's grace, Dave Spurling

The East King County Cluster is developing a plan to help us share resources among the cluster churches. The model that is being developed would be similar to a parish with multiple churches. The parish would provide services such as administrative help and accounting and bookkeeping for each of the churches. This would help the individual churches to combine resources and reduce costs. There are many details to work out and we will keep you posted as things progress.



Give blood.

Help save lives.



**Tuesday
May 14th**

Upcoming
Blood Drives:
September 17th
December 10th

Blood Drive **Mt Si Lutheran Church**

Fellowship Hall
411 NE 8th St
North Bend, WA

Tuesday, May 14, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)
or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: MtSiLutheran
to schedule an appointment.

If you are interested in helping with this blood drive please reach out to





It was a joy to serve on our Belize mission trip with Pastor Krista, Pastor Nyla, and 17 other members from our two churches. Belizean



people and delightful to meet and easy to love. The young people at the school and orphanage are receiving Christian instruction and skills training. Several expressed an interest in improving the lives of their families



and neighbors. A web page is being created to capture pictures and stories from our time serving these people, and to explain our thoughts about continuing to support this ministry that Pastors Dave and Nyla started nearly 20 years ago.

Dave S.



Sabbatical Planning Team Update *Lisa S.*

We're here, it's begun, Pastor Krista's sabbatical has commenced! And so far so good, I'd say! Our team has grown by one more person. Thank you, Erica, for joining us in keeping track of all-the-things, and for volunteering to be in the office each Monday, and print each week for Sunday morning. Thank you, Kathleen, for working with us as we all learn the cadence of a "regular" week to prepare for Sunday's service. Thank you, Terry for the on-call tech support you're providing as things pop up. Thank you to all the ministry leaders who are owning their area of responsibility. Thank you to our Cluster Pastors who are joining us each week. And thank you to ALL members who are stepping in to fill any gaps, take care of the facility so well, and communicate with each other so the gaps only happen one time! ... the list of appreciation goes on! We've got this, Mt. Si!

A caregiver's support group is being set up at the Mount Si Senior Center for every Tuesday from 10:30-11:45

Some caregivers wanting to attend these meetings need a volunteer to watch seniors that they provide caregiving for during the meeting.

What is needed? Spend an hour or so each week talking to the seniors and engaging them in conversation, or working on some of the activities available in the lobby.

Demelsa ("Dee") Riley is the activities coordinator. She believes one person would be adequate as this gets established, and could grow to a two-person need.

Please contact Dave S. to find out more or if you're interested in volunteering.



The Sunday flower chart is in the Fellowship Hall outside of the library.

You are welcome to sign-up for a Sunday to provide one vase of flowers for the altar.

NEWS FROM THE PEWS AND/OR BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

If you would like an announcement to be in an upcoming NFTP and/or bulletin insert, please send all information to Kathleen no later than Monday if you wish it to be included that week. Items received after Monday may not appear until the following week. Please indicate if you wish the announcement to appear in NFTP, the Bulletin or both.

**MAY
BIRTHDAYS
&
ANNIVERSARIES**



*Tom Chase 1st
David Wilkerson 1st
John Keiser 4th
Alex Adams 8th
Jenna Haynsworth 9th
Ava Lee 13th
Paul Ritzenthaler 20th
Jim Garhart 30th*



*Mike & Kim Buckmaster 1st
Charles & Pat Thomas 19th
John & Anne Keiser 22nd
Ed & Jane Benson 26th*

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please reach out to the office so we can make the correction.

**Celebrating
75 years
1949 to 2024**

**Mount Si Lutheran Church is celebrating 75 years
of Serving - Reaching Out - Growing in Grace**

Saturday, Sept. 14:

Special guests, music, and dinner to follow

Sunday, Sept. 15:

Special worship service and we are blessed that Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee will be able to join the celebration

Please be sure to check out the photo bulletin board, photo albums, trophies, and other memorabilia from years past in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you to Sue Oster and the Historical Review sub-committee for the nice displays.

If you have contact information for former members, members who have moved, or regular attendees that you would like Mt. Si to send an invitation to, please have the names/addresses to Sheila Rodriguez by May 20th. You can email Sheila at sheila.rodriguez6591@gmail.com.

The next planning committee meeting will be Monday, May 20th @ 11:00am. Please join us if you can

Some highlights of Mt Si Lutheran Church's Rich History (cont'd):

- *Started renting out facilities to outside groups: AA/Al-Anon June 1991;*
- *Started "Food Bank Sunday" once a month to collect donations for the*
- *Food Bank February 1992*
- *Wrote first mission statement May 1993*
- *Wrote first vision statement October 1993*
- *Celebrated 40th Anniversary spread over four weeks June 1989*



VBS

**July 22 through the 26th
Monday through Friday
9 AM to 12 noon**

We are looking for volunteers who want to help support our new Vacation Bible school program this year. There are lots of jobs that are easily for all people of all ages to help with please contact Erica if you have any desire to help with this fun summer project, the workload would be minimal. It's fun to see the kids and sing the songs and fellowship together.

Proud Supporter of Snoqualmie Valley

BACKPACKS & SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Use the QR code to find out how you can help as well

We are beginning to gather supplies and funds for backpacks this year. We are looking at a total of \$4000 to fully fund 300 backpacks for Snoqualmie Valley students. More information will follow about times to help with preparing backpacks and when distribution will take place.

For more information please talk to:
Erica Haycox or
Janey Benson



Please

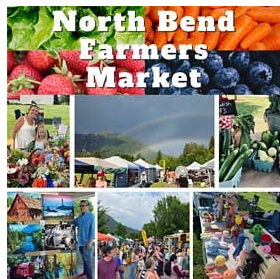
Make a gift online through our website:
www.mtsilutheran.org/onlinegiving

Thank you for your continued generosity.

- Treasurer

Confirmation/Easter Sunday

What a blessed Easter we had! So much packed into this very special service. Congratulations to confirmands Judah T. and Kaelynn S., thank you for sharing your Statements of Faith. Blessings sent for those heading to Belize, for Pastor Krista's Sabbatical, and saying goodbye-for-now to Marlin O. Always a joy to worship with all in the Mt. Si Lutheran family.



We will again be offering a craft booth for kids at the North Bend Farmer's Market. It will be every Thursday beginning June 6 through September 12. In the past we have had an average of 60 kids visit us to do a craft activity each week. In July we will be teamed with the "Power of Produce" (POP)

group that has activities to teach kids about vegetables as part of a healthy diet. Our crafts will be complimentary to each weeks POP lesson. We will have signup sheets in the narthex beginning in May for you to volunteer to help man our booth. If you enjoy working with kids, this is a great opportunity to help us reach out to our community.



2024 Day of Service
May 18th

We will serve together at
Encompass Learning Center in
North Bend
from 10am-Noon

Last year over 800 volunteers from other churches and organizations came together to serve the community! Sign-up using the link in below.

Nearly 30 other opportunities are available if another time or activity is a better fit for you, or those you know!

[click here to sign up](#)



I have a confession to make, I am a terrible pool player. I am so bad that the last time I played, the person I was playing with stopped the game and said, “You are the worst pool player I have ever played with.” (I had told him I was horrible but he didn’t believe me.) I’m using this story as a very thin tangent to talk about gifts and the Spirit ... bear with me.

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, we read, “Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

As many of you know, Paul was writing to a congregation in Corinth after receiving some correspondence from them and hearing their concerns. Throughout this letter Paul emphatically makes it clear that no one is spiritually better than others – no one has better faith, no one has better gifts, no one should eat better than another at the Eucharist table. Paul is adamant in this. (He is talking about this because of some struggles in the Corinth church. You are welcome to read the entire letter of 1 Corinthians to get more context.)

Paul emphasizes that because we all receive faith through the Holy Spirit, no one is spiritually superior. Paul further emphasizes that because we all receive a variety of gifts given by the Holy Spirit, no one has a worthier gift than another. And, to emphasize this point, Paul writes that the Spirit does not give only one kind of gift to all. Because the church and the world need diverse gifts, the Spirit gives different gifts to different people. In other words, Paul is simply saying this: same Spirit – lots of gifts.

You hear this? In a society where we emphasize certain gifts and skills and abilities above others (and often feel like we have fallen short), we hear in 1 Corinthians that the Holy Spirit gives a variety of gifts to a variety of people. Specifically, YOU have been given a variety of gifts, and this is good.

Further, these Holy Spirit gifts – they are not meant to benefit the individual person but are to benefit the entire community and world. Paul emphasizes that these gifts are not to be used in selfish ways or in self-seeking ways. Paul clearly states that if a gift cannot be shared, and shared for the good of others, it is not from the Spirit. Ultimately, the purpose of these different gifts of the Spirit is to share in God’s love and grace and mercy with all through Jesus Christ our Savior.

As Americans, we have often been told (and maybe believe) that as individuals we are responsible for ourselves. We are not to rely on others – we are to be strong and self-sufficient. We are taught that to have freedom is to be autonomous. But let’s be clear. This is far from what we read in 1 Corinthians. Paul says each person receives gifts for the common good. Paul says that each person receives the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. It is in community where the gifts from the Holy Spirit shine. It is in community where the Holy Spirit is made manifest.

You see, it is God’s intention that we are to be with one another – for one another – as the community of faith, as the body of Christ, as the Church on earth. The Holy Spirit has given a variety of gifts to a variety of congregations and individuals. And together we are called to bring these gifts together to help bear one another’s burdens, to love and pray together, to bring justice and new life, to be made manifest in the Holy Spirit for the common good.

Honestly, it doesn’t matter that I am a terrible pool player. But it does matter how I both share the gifts that God has given me and how I reach out to others in mutual support when I am in need.

I would love to hear stories from you about your gifts being made manifest in the Holy Spirit – individually and in your congregation. How are each person’s gifts being shared in your own particular congregation? How is your congregation sharing with another congregation? What gifts were missing from your particular place of worship that you have found outside of your space? What gifts have you been able to share with others?

May we live into what we often say in worship, “The gifts of God, for the people of God.”
Amen.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee