

I was asked to share some thoughts on our Stewardship theme.

Relationships & Connecting is one of the seven areas of stewardship listed by the ELCA and an important part of Lord of Love's Stewardship theme this year: Feed My Sheep, John 21:15-17. This passage is about Peter's love for Jesus and the service that Peter would do for Jesus because of that love. This passage is also about us.

Three times Jesus asked Peter of his love and responded with a way to show that love in service. Jesus said to "Feed my lambs", to "Tend my sheep", and to "Feed my sheep".

The theme of Relationships & Connecting has been my greatest Joy, saving Grace, and a Reflection of God in my life. Investing my time in connecting with others, in intentional relationship building, and in being open to the love that others are sharing and sending my way, has strengthened my faith and allowed me to be a vessel to share the Good News of God's love.

As I reflect on the three responses Jesus gives Peter (us) I am flooded with memories of times that we have done these things at Lord of Love. And yet, I wonder, am I, are we, doing enough? In these times of COVID and that we aren't able to gather in person as we used to, or as some of our members and friends begin to age or have health constraints, are we doing all that we can to continue Feeding his Sheep? Are we intentional in connecting with those in our church family? Are we building new relationships, sharing our Web services or beautiful music that is still being produced?

We are called to Tend and Feed the Sheep and Lambs. How are we doing that?

We have wonderful volunteers that continue to Feed our Lambs and are connecting through Virtual Sunday School and Confirmation. They continue to create relationship with our Lambs and share God's word & Blessings. (And maybe when dropping off supplies for Sunday School - it includes a Maple donut because a special young man loves Maple donuts and despite her best efforts – he doesn't give his up for Miss Heather. These are special memories that create relationships with our lambs.)

Our sheep need tending and feeding too. Take a moment to tend to your needs. Connect with God through word, prayer, music... Then be intentional about sharing your time and talents this month and reach out to connect with another of God's sheep or lambs. A note in the mail is such a special treat! A phone call, or text, a zoom chat. Build a new relationship or strengthen one.

The amazing thing about God's love and wisdom, when we honor him through Stewardship of Relationship & Connecting – we are a Blessing to others and we are Blessed abundantly.

My greatest gift in my faith journey has been all the relationships which has brought me an abundance of love, laughter, and joy.

God's Peace and Blessings to you.

Heather Christensen