

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP DAVID B. ZELLMER

Dear Friends in Christ,

If you listen to the news or read the paper, you might hear an echo in these words from Isaiah. Whether it's politics, the changing climate, the economy, – you name it – the chorus sounds like some variation on the themes: “worst ever!” “catastrophe!” While a lot of folks may feel just fine about the current state of the world, Isaiah does put his finger on a spiritual problem that we all suffer from: the suspicion that God has “hidden God’s face,” and “delivered us up to our guilt.” And no wonder! Because when it comes to our life with our neighbor, or our treatment of the earth, or how we’ve related to God, we always stand in need of repentance.



But don't you just love the bold and devious turn that Isaiah makes? “Yet, O Lord... you made us!” Or more precisely, “you are making us” – “we are the clay in your hands.” Now, as much as ever, our communities, towns and cities need to hear the proclamation that God is still God, and we are still not. This is the time for the good news that God has not abandoned us, and that, in Christ, God has joined us. God is still working on us. God will not let go of us.

This is what it means to be the church. To stand in the middle of all the swirling anxious mess and declare that God is with us! *Even in uncertain times!* Everything we do should be directed toward this aim – to let the world see God with us in Jesus Christ. When we share a meal, we point to Christ who fed the 5000. When we comfort the bereaved, we lift up the one who wept at Lazarus' tomb. When we bring in the children for Christian education, we do it at the command of the one who said, “let them come to me.” When we speak a word of healing we do it in the name of the Jesus who hung from the cross and said, “Father, forgive them.”

On behalf of all the anxious and not-so anxious communities around our synod, I say, “Thank you!” Thank you for your proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ! Thank you for your generous spirit that makes people want to listen to your message in the first place! Thank you for your time and talents that make the sharing happen. And, of course, thanks for your financial giving that enables the good news to go forth—not only to your locale –but also, through your mission support, to the whole world. And remember: God is still God now, and forever!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop David B. Zellmer".

Bishop David B. Zellmer

There is no one who calls on your name, who rouses himself to cling to you;
for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt.
Yet, O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter;
we are all the work of your hands.

Isaiah 64:6-7