

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL HOPE IN A TIME OF COVID

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

JEREMIAH 29:11

FOR SURELY I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU, SAYS THE LORD, PLANS FOR YOUR WELFARE AND NOT FOR HARM, TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE WITH HOPE."

God's Plan for All of Us

I was enrolled in a Pre-Ministerial program at Concordia College in St Paul, I left after my sophomore year and joined the Minnesota Army National Guard. I took a full-time job at Camp Ripley shortly after completing my Basic Training. I thought at the time I would return to college after a few years. Things happened and 33 years later I retired in 2005.

The first Sunday at First Lutheran after my last day at Camp I was looking at the bulletin and saw there was a 2-year Lay Ministry Course put on by the NE Minnesota Synod. I enrolled and my life changed on that day.

I assisted Pastor Carl Larson at Rejoice Lutheran in Baxter, a Mission Development Church for five years. I would accompany Pastor Carl to Text Study at First Lutheran in Brainerd where I became good friends with many of the area pastors. I did pulpit supply at churches in Leader, Pine River, Baxter, Crosslake and Cushing.

In the fall of 2010, I received a call from Bethany Lutheran in Cushing to fill in after their Pastor left for another call. I became a Synodical Authorized Minister and led worship 3-4 Sundays a month for 7 years. I also was asked to apply for a Hospice Chaplain position with Horizon Health in Pierz and I am still holding that position after 8 years.

I told you this story because it was not how I envisioned my retirement years after leaving Camp Ripley. God had other plans for me and the Holy Spirit guided me in all the paths I've taken in the last 15 years.

Many of you have similar experiences in your lives where you have been guided along paths of service in church and your communities.

Last year in his Advent Devotion, Pastor Hank told us this. "God's plan for our lives is that we be loving people, kind and compassionate people, merciful people, forgiving people, generous people, fair people—which is to say we should be people who follow the Way of God that Jesus lived and taught. That's God's plan for all of us; it's a plan for our welfare, a plan to give us a future with hope."



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GOD OF GRACE AND LOVE,
THANK YOU FOR LEADING AND
GUIDING US ALONG THE PATH THAT
YOU HAVE CHOSEN FOR US.
AMEN.