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Oct

The Heavenly Call

Pressing On

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, YEAR A

For Paul, faith is a deeply embodied journey that calls us into the present, embodied reality of loving and living with God, self, neighbor, and all creation. We press on together here and now by the grace through which Christ saves us.

REFERENCES

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Psalm 19

Philippians 3:4b-14

Matthew 21:33-46

COLORS

Green

Planning Worship

Focus text: [Philippians 3:4b-14](#)

“What’s Paul’s problem with bodies?” I asked myself this (paraphrased) question often as a teenager, especially since Paul’s letters were a popular source for Sunday school and youth group Bible studies. It also didn’t help that I heard preachers and teachers over the years warn about the temptations and dangers of the flesh, using their own riffs on Paul to encourage young people to flee the ways of the flesh and choose the way of Christ. So, it’s no wonder that I started to read Philippians 3 as promoting a kind of escapist faith instead of an embodied one.

You may have congregants in your pews who feel the same. The thirty-year-old who was taught not to trust his instincts when something doesn't feel right. The eighty-year-old who learned not to be honest with the community about her pain because her body doesn't matter as much as her faith. The eight-year-old born with cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair and is told it's all ok because in heaven, he'll be whole and able to walk again. They've all received the message: our heavenly call, our journey of faith in Christ, is an escape from the body.

Thank Jesus, then, that's not what Paul is writing. For Paul, faith is a deeply embodied journey that calls us into the present, embodied reality of loving and living with God, self, neighbor, and all creation. We press on together here and now by the grace through which Christ saves us, the grace that gives us confidence and perseverance to continue. That's the other thing Paul tells us—we're not there yet! That is why we need one another. So, this week, consider using the following breath prayer in worship and throughout the week: ***(Breathe in) Help me press on, (breathe out) because I belong to Christ.*** May this prayer be a reminder that we are not alone—we belong to God, and through God, we belong to one another.

Dr. Lisa Hancock, Director of Worship Arts Ministries, served as an organist and music minister in United Methodist congregations in the legacy Northwest Texas and North Texas Annual Conferences, as well as the New Day Amani/Upendo house churches in Dallas. After receiving her Master of Sacred Music and Master of Theological Studies from Perkins School of Theology, Lisa earned her PhD in Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University, where she researched and wrote on the doctrine of Christ, disability, and atonement.

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