



May 29, 2020

Letter from a Fool

Shakespeare wrote, “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.” Maybe he was distilling some Proverbs, “The wise lay up knowledge, but the babbling of a fool brings near ruin.” (Proverbs 10) “One who is clever conceals knowledge, but the mind of a fool broadcasts folly.” (Proverbs 12) “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing personal opinion.” (Proverbs 18) Or, maybe he had a specific person in mind?

It is easy to label people as fools. Probably because they did or said something silly. Or, maybe you just disagree with them. Or, maybe because they just don’t understand something the way you do.

We need to be careful with this label, however, because “But, I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire.” (Matthew 5)

It is one thing to be foolish, it is another to call someone, “a fool.” To be foolish is to do all that, Solomon, the attributed author of Proverbs describes. These ruinous, loud, and opinionated actions have no depth of knowledge to them, they reveal a limited understanding, and refuse to even address new ideas. To call someone “a fool” is to limit everything they say and do as disastrous and condemn them as a danger to themselves and others.

Sometimes this is a hard distinction to make in how we speak. It is better to try and make that distinction in how we approach the world. We want to think ourselves right and correct in everything we say and do. That is often because everything we have experienced in our lives has proved us, generally, correct, to ourselves. We may have grown and learned, but we have come to a place where our ideas and opinions are solid and wise.

When we start speaking as if we ourselves were the wise ones, that is the time when we often find ourselves looking like fools. Our declarations of rightness are met with responses from people whose experiences and lives have led them to different conclusions and proved them, generally, correct, to themselves.

There are two ways to handle situations like this. We can be like Paul in his Second Letter to Timothy, “For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teacher to suit their own desires.” (Second Timothy 4) We can condemn others as having found ideas that they like, forgetting that we like our ideas. We can even use this scripture to condemn others, forgetting that Paul was encouraging Timothy to witness to Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world. Timothy wasn’t to point to his own ideas, but to Christ.

That is the other way to approach those whose words and actions are different from your own; point them to Christ.

If there is one thing that we distill from Proverbs: it is that it is foolish to point to yourself in everything, but it is wise to defer to God in all things. Sure, the humility of wisdom may lead us to keep our mouths shut, may lead us to find God is not at the center of our ideas, and will definitely delay the pleasure of “winning” an argument. But when we lay aside our own foolish hubris we can truly hear other people, see how God is at work through them, and discover the wondrous life that can be found when we truly plumb the depths of an issue through conversation and discovery that fosters growth and new, heretofore, unthought of approaches to our situation. Then iron has sharpened iron, and all sides have grown and gained new understanding. (Proverbs 27)

When we realize what Isaiah tells us is true, “God’s thoughts are not our thoughts and God’s ways are not our ways.” (Isaiah 55) Our perspective is limited, but, with open ears and silent tongues, it may grow. Maybe not as high as heaven, but a little higher than before. So that we take pleasure in understanding and every word we say carries not our opinion, but true wisdom.

- One Who Thinks Himself Foolish

"Plan to Gather": Zoom Listening Sessions

While there are many approaches to returning to gathering, church council has approved a phase approach to gathering. The Saint Andrew “Plan to Gather” details how we will begin the process of gathering in three phases. At each phase, council will reassess and communicate with you – since factors seem to constantly change.

Pastor Jenn and Council members have been sharing information through Zoom sessions this week - the last one will be this Saturday. You are invited to call in via phone or join us on line to participate in a 20 minute overview presentation about how the decision for Saint Andrew was made led by Pr. Jenn followed by time for Q & A. All that is needed to call in by phone is the phone number, meeting ID, and passwords listed below. To participate via voice and video, you will need the Zoom app on your phone, tablet or computer and the link below.

Saturday, May 30 – 9:30 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83546185252?pwd=ejJVMVV3N3U5ZGMwNmIMZE5oUTEvdz09>

Or you can call in by using this phone number: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 835 4618 5252

Password: 932350

Council Update on "In Person" Gathering

At their May 28, 2020 meeting, your church council reviewed the "in person" gathering plans which were previously approved. This plan is to begin "in person" gathering for worship during Phase 3 which had no limit on the number of people that can gather together. At this time the following motions to amend the plan were approved:

1. A task force will be created to develop the procedures and training needed for safe "in person" gathering which also includes pre/post sanitation, cleaning, etc. Nominations for individuals are currently being sought. This task force will begin meeting in early June.
2. Review the ability for outdoor gatherings when Phase 2 (50 or less individuals) has been implemented.

The overall plan will again be reviewed at the next council meeting in June and we will continue to communicate any changes to the plan.

Nominations for the "Plan to Gather" Task Force

Saint Andrew is looking for nominations of individuals to be part of our "Plan to Gather" task force. Nominations will be received through the form located on the church's website: www.salc-wausau.org/forms and should be submitted by Thursday, June 4 at 3 pm.

This group will review information from our insurer, the Marathon County Health Department, the CDC, and the Synod to ensure best practice as we "plan to gather." Six people are needed for this work and we hope that it will be a cross section of Saint Andrew and people with various expertise.

Church council will review nominees to create a balanced team. Please consider nominating yourself if you think you may have skills to help out during this season of our life together.

Questions may be directed to Pastor Jenn: pastorjenn@salc-wausau.org

Summer Program Update



Faith Formation is looking forward to some new summer programming. Currently, we are working on creating an at-home VBS experience for children and families that will offer a flexible option for learning and fun activities. New programs may look a little different as we work through our phases of gathering, but we will keep you updated on new developments! Keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks.

Face Masks for Distribution Locally and Through LWR

As there continues to be a need for face masks both locally and globally, the quilting group would like to offer ready-to-sew kits for those interested in helping fill this need. They can be picked up and dropped off in the plastic bin located outside the north (Chapel) entrance of the church. Please call or email Linda Peterson to order kits: 715-573-4866; lindaksp@aol.com



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