

Wall Street United Church, August 10, 2025

John 8:12 ESV *Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

Proverbs 3: 5,6 NLT

“Trust in the lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and God will show you which path to take.”

Mark 12: 29-31 *When asked by the Pharisee what is the greatest commandment of the law Jesus answered: “The most important one is this: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

Good morning everyone gathered here at Wall Street, to those watching from home or later on YouTube. And to those reading this sermon online! I’m happy to be here today helping with Pulpit coverage. Wall Street is richly blessed with a student minister, four retired Volunteer Associate Ministers (we call them VAM’S) and 3 Licenced Lay Worship Leaders (that’s where I come in), so I’m honoured to be asked to do my part in serving at Wall Street today.

It’s a mutually agreed statement these days that our world is in turmoil and a real mess. Between wars and genocides, unstable markets, tariffs and trade wars, even unsettling weather patterns and conditions, it’s hard not to be affected by something. It’s easy to be fearful or anxious. I admit I struggle at times. But there is a way to find hope.

This past February, I went to Thunder Bay to the Canadian Women’s curling championship. At dinner one night my friends and I were talking about all the U.S. and world “stuff” going on, our feelings about it all and how it caused us anxious moments. My friend told me that when she’s feeling overwhelmed or uneasy about anything, her teenage son just tells her to “*Stay in your lane, Mom! Just stay in your lane!*” Apparently, that’s today’s new lingo for being in your comfort zone ... staying surrounded by people and things that you know, doing what

you're good at, and what you know to be true. And finding comfort in that familiar place where you feel safe and at peace.

But we can't always stay exclusively in the 'safety' of our 'lanes'. We listen to the news, and sometimes we venture out into the world, or into the chaos around us. We are a part of this world and we can't run away and hide all the time.

Another way to describe our 'lane' is when we answer the call that God has placed on our life, and follow where God directs and plants us to use the specific gifts and talents he has given us. We come from many walks of life and have different giftings. Some of us may feel inadequate in comparison to a high-power politician or wealthy businessperson, but when we function through *our* special gifts, through and for the people we encounter in our God-given 'lane', we can all make a difference in the world.

So how do we do function if or when we get caught up or overwhelmed? As Christians, we have some pretty cool tools and resources to keep with us and help us in our lane. The word of God is as relevant and alive and needed today as at anytime. Most of us have a favourite scripture that we hold close depending on our situation, that gives us hope and encouragement. Let's consider the three short passages we heard this morning. These three alone are reason enough to stay calm in the storm; and to help us to hold firm and feel sheltered.

John 8:12 ESV *Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Here we are reminded that Jesus IS light, and that by following him we carry that light too. The darkness will not overcome our circumstances because of that light.

In **Proverbs 3: 5,6** we are reminded to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our limited understanding. We also are reminded to seek God's will, and that he will direct and guide us on our journey with him. So even when we don't understand, we TRUST that God knows, and that he will help us as we walk with Him.

Another scripture to hold close is from the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 12. Throughout his ministry Jesus taught about the importance of love. When Jesus was asked “What is the most important law?” Jesus said: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second one: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

Our church motto is *“God loves all. So do we.”* At Wall Street we continually ask Jesus to show us ways to love our neighbours... and in doing so, we show our love for Jesus in return. Sometimes we might feel that our actions are inadequate or don’t make a difference, but they do. Wall Street has a pretty good reputation in our community for reaching out to those in need and making a difference in many lives.

Often the love we can show is through what we call ‘random acts of kindness’. Like Jesus said, love your neighbour as yourself. Treat them as you would like to be treated.

I have a friend who was in hospital earlier this Spring after a bad fall. She normally relies on her mobility scooter to get her around town, and she motors all over on this thing, 12 months of the year. Just before her fall, she had been showing me how much road salt and grit was caked on her usually shiny red machine. She was afraid she’d be told she couldn’t keep it in our building as it was such a mess, but she wasn’t able to clean it herself, and that was weighing on her mind a lot.

So, one morning, while she was in hospital, I ventured out on her scooter, (my first time ever driving one!) and took it to the car wash. I pressure washed all the salt off. And then I dried it so it wouldn’t drip on the carpet, and I sent her a picture to cheer her up. She was so thankful to have it done, and said it was a big relief to her. That was such a simple thing to do on my part, but the action meant so much to her.

I saw this story on my Facebook feed not long ago — a story from Arlene Dickinson of Canadian *“Dragons Den”* fame. Arlene is a South African born, Canadian businesswoman who made a very good life for herself in investing, as an

author and as a television personality. She is described as a self-made multi-millionaire. She shared this story:

Tonight I had one of those moments that quietly stops you in your tracks. I was sitting with a dear friend at the chef's bar in a restaurant, watching the kitchen in action, when one of the chefs looked up and asked, "Are you Arlene Dickinson?" I smiled and nodded and he smiled back and said, "I thought so! When I was 10, my dad saw you in a grocery store in our small town in Ontario. He asked if you'd call me with a birthday message to encourage me to be an entrepreneur. And you did!"

Now in his mid-twenties, he told me that message had meant the world to him — that he's never forgotten it. That his dad was so proud. We took a photo together, and he said, "My dad is going to be so happy!" What struck me most was how it wasn't about him; it was about his dad caring about him. His gratitude for such a simple gesture reminded me that even the smallest things can matter more than we know. To him, it mattered. And to his dad. So to me, it meant everything.

It was a quiet but powerful reminder that we never really know the impact of a kind word, a moment of encouragement, or a small act of support. These things ripple out in ways we may never see. It made my night. And it reminded me how important it is to show up for people, even in small ways. ❤️🇨🇦

I couldn't help but think of this scripture from Matthew 25:40: "Jesus said: *Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me.*" When we look back at our acts of kindness, we realize how God looks into our lives, into our circumstances; and knowing our abilities, nudges us into action, making us a part of his plan, and enables us to shine his perfect light into life's challenging places.

In early June, as I was heading up to bed one night, I noticed a raging fire across the river in Ogdensburg, NY. I live right on the river in Prescott, directly across from the 'burg. The fire was in an abandoned warehouse and it was massive. I took a picture and posted it on Facebook with a simple 'prayer asking for safety for all involved' in the fire.

A retired minister I had met a few years ago and who has since moved further away, Rev. Diane Strickland, commented on my post. She wrote: "A friend from Brockville posted a picture of a fire across the St. Lawrence River. She was praying for safety for all those U.S. folks affected by it. This reminded me how important it always is to hang onto your truest self and be who you are in this world. Superpowers with a purpose to renew all creation are also found in humility, compassion and service. Thanks for the reminder, Cathie." And her kind words made a difference to me.

No matter the circumstances, we all do our best to make a difference: one act of kindness, one peaceful demonstration, one Friday morning breakfast, one bottle of cool water on a hot day, one winter coat or pair of warm socks, one simple prayer ... for a hurting community and world in great need.

Thank you, Jesus for showing us how to love God and our neighbours! And thank you for your 'light' that shines in and through us. Help us always to remember that even in the darkest of times... that Jesus' light cannot be overcome. And help us to remember to trust that you, Lord, will guide our steps, and that you will never leave us. By believing in these things we can stay calm, and carry on, even when we venture outside the comfort of our 'lanes', because we know that Jesus walks with us, by our side.

I've written and rewritten this section of my message many times this week. I've joked with Pastor Kim many times over the last few months that I would celebrate her election to Moderator, but I would also celebrate if she didn't make it! And that in my selfishness I had to admit how sad I would be to see her go.

Shortly after 2 p.m. Saturday (Aug. 9th) the results of the second ballot were announced at General Council and Pastor Kim was still in the hunt! At that moment I realized there is no way I would talk about this today without emotion. But that shouldn't surprise anyone who knows me. But in that moment, I also realized I felt more joy for her, than sadness for me. The final ballot was held late Saturday afternoon with Rev. Dr. Kimberly Heath and Rev. Dr. Samuel V. Dansokho as the final candidates. As you've already heard, Pastor Kim came out on top!

In Pastor Kim's first address to the Council last evening she opened with "*Holy Kadoodle!*" Her way of saying, "Wow, this has really happened!" Or maybe even, "*What have I done?*" 😊

Yes, sometimes God does call on us to change the '*lane*' we have been following and enter new journeys with Him as our guide. This has been a long and challenging time for her. At times I'm sure she felt uncomfortable or nervous starting out on this potential, and now very real journey... but it's a path she chose in direct response to that call from God to pursue this leadership position.

A favourite quote of mine: "*God doesn't call the qualified. God qualifies the called.*" In this case I believe God has been qualifying Pastor Kim for this role for many years, and God has called her now, to step into this role, for a time such as this! Pastor Kim also acknowledged her church family here at Wall Street, thanked you all for your support and said this would always be her home. (At least this time we were both crying. 😊)

We send our love and blessings to you Pastor Kim, today and always, and will continue to support you in whatever lane God calls you.

So here is a word today for the soon to be Right Reverend Dr. Kimberly Heath, (always PK to me) who will be installed as Moderator, Monday evening (Aug. 11th) in Calgary. And this word from God is for all of us too.

Jeremiah 29 verse 11... For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Thank you for the tools and gifts you give us Lord, for the words of comfort and encouragement. Thank you for your mercies which are new each day. Thank you that you remain present in our lives today, tomorrow and for always.... Amen.