

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 4/4/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, April 5 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for our Lutheran agencies who are providing humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian people. Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companions and ecumenical partners in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. Lutheran World Relief teams are working to deliver urgent support and care, like food, shelter, and other critically needed items, medicine, and support for clinics. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service is providing care to refugees and immigrants who arrive in the United States and assisting in resettlement endeavors.*

In Exodus 3, Moses asks God what God's name is. God graciously answers Moses and tells him. The name God gives as recorded in the original Hebrew is YHWH. In order to provide a pronunciation of this name, over time we've added an "a" and an "e" to get the name YaHWeH. In the Latin transliteration of the name, it comes out as Jehovah. By the way, Jews believe the name of God is so holy (You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.) that they will not even speak the name lest they misuse or abuse God's name.

Hebrew scholars and rabbis explain, however, that the letters represent breathing sounds or aspirated consonants. When pronounced without the inserted vowels, the name comes out like the sounds of breathing: YH – inhale; WH – exhale. When God breathed into the first being's nostrils to give it life, God was speaking God's name.

Think about what that means. When a baby gives its first cry—its first breath—the infant is speaking the name of God. When things are awesome or difficult, the gasp that we give is God's name. A groan or a moan that in a moment that is too great for words is actually a cry out to God. Even an atheist speaks the name of God every time s/he breathes. (I hope knowing that would not cause an atheist to try to stop speaking God's name permanently.) When we are sad, we plea to God in a heavy sigh. Taking a deep breath before attempting something challenging is asking God for courage. When we are joyful, our lungs burst with the name of God. When we breathe slowly to calm down, we are praying.

Being alive means speaking God's name constantly. Inhale. Exhale. YHWH. God. Breathing is living in praise of God. Waking or sleeping, we breathe with the name of God our lips. Every moment of our life, we do what Psalm 150:6 encourages us to do: *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey