

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 6/23/2023

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

Judith Viorst has written a delightful children's book titled Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. In it, Alexander wakes up with gum stuck in his hair, trips on his skateboard, drops his favorite sweater into the bathroom sink while the water is running, loses out on the prizes in the cereal box to his brothers, and on and on and on. Now many of us realize that in the scope of the things of life, these are just minor inconveniences and annoyances. Even when they happen on the same day, it's not the end of the world as Alexander hears from his mother at the end of the book. But nonetheless, sometimes someday just feel like a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

I had one of those last Sunday. Things actually had been building up to this. For a number of weeks, I'd been dealing with oozing in my ear canal and an itchy, watery eye. Perhaps allergies, so I'd been treating them as such, though they have been getting worse rather than better. Then on Friday, I fell on the stairs bruising my tailbone and twisting my knee. But I had been handling these small challenges and didn't think too much about them. But then, during the announcements in church, I forgot which week it was and made several announcements that were really for the following week and gave the wrong dates in the statements about them. Names are very important, and I try very hard to get people's names correct, but Sunday I called two people by the wrong name. I spilled the communion wine. Twice. And once on me. I sang the wrong verse of one of the worship songs. And there were other things as well. I was just a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

But even when we have days like this, there is good news. We are not alone. GOD is with us and provides help and support for us. Though a bit embarrassed, I was grateful for the number of people who kindly and graciously, but not overtly, corrected me about the wrong day so I could give the accurate information to the congregation. We heard the good news that even in our terrible, no good situations, GOD comes to us. In fact, JESUS didn't come for perfect people but to be with us in our imperfection. Like even when you spill wine on yourself.

GOD does that. GOD is present with us. In the promises of scripture, and the help and support of others, and even in the hope that tomorrow won't be so bad, GOD comes to be with us. Through the words and actions of JESUS, and in the faith and power provided by the HOLY SPIRIT, GOD is there to walk with us through the troubles and problems.

And this is especially true when those troubles and problems are so much bigger than just singing the wrong verse. Even when we feel lost and alone, GOD is there. And in the midst of GOD'S faithful people, we find support, and correction, and direction, and forgiveness, not just from them, but from GOD. So, though, on days that just are not going well when the temptation is to look down, we can look up to the GOD who comes. And we can look around at the help GOD provides. And even when that help doesn't remove the difficulties, we can be comforted in knowing that we are not on our own and that GOD has provided. GOD comes, and GOD is there and, most of all, GOD will never leave.

In CHRIST'S love,
Pastor Jeffrey