

Passing on the Faith

King of Glory Lutheran
Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry
Generosity Appeal Weekend

2 Timothy 1:5-14

⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, and this grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹² and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day the deposit I have entrusted to him. ¹³ Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Luke 17:5-10

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶ The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

⁷ “Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table’? ⁸ Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me; put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink’? ⁹ Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’ ”

Paul is clear that faith is both received and passed on through generations with the help of the Holy Spirit. As we bring our gift intents for 2026, we are giving to a vision that God alone can see to pass on faith.

Paul writes a letter to Timothy – a personal one. It's clear that Paul knew three generations of Timothy's family: his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. Lois believed in Jesus and she clearly taught her daughter Eunice about Jesus also. Then Eunice taught Timothy and so the faith was passed down.

They didn't have Sunday School classes back then. There weren't any Veggie Tales videos or story book Bibles with pictures. If lucky, their village might have received one letter or a part of a letter to study and discuss at a house church service. But they also knew the stories of the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, and told and re-told those stories to teach them to one another and the children. This was their faith formation.

My grandmother Ruth taught Sunday school to my mom. My mom and dad taught Sunday school to me and my siblings. A woman at church who knew Grandma Ruth once told me some things about her...her faithfulness in the women's circle, making funeral lunches and the way she held her Bible. Those were words of encouragement to me, even when Grandma couldn't understand why I wanted to become a pastor instead of a pastor's wife. That was difficult for her! She died before I was ordained, but she gave me her blessing.

Who taught you about church? Who gave you your first Bible? Was it a family member? A neighbor? Or did you, like Jeff at my first congregation, walk yourself down the street to church? Jeff's parents didn't attend, but his friends did. He wanted to be a part of that place called 'church'. So each Sunday, Jeff, got himself dressed and out the door.

When I knew him as a man in his sixties, Jeff taught Bible study, grew flowers for the altar, ran a restaurant and told everyone he could about God's love. His parents didn't give him the gift of faith. But his church community did with the help of the Holy Spirit. They had planted seeds – tiny but mighty, which took root and gave shape and form to Jeff's life.

For those of us sitting here, faith has been received. Someone or multiple people have helped pass on the faith to you and me. What a gift! We know Bible stories. We understand the power of prayer. We have this community to encourage us, hold us, pray for us and teach us.

Then we too, are given that lovely responsibility to pass on the faith to others. We plant seeds that God will water. One Easter, a colleague of mine was greeting the worshippers at the door after service. A young girl, maybe five, looked up in

earnest at the pastor and said, ‘I don’t understand. Who is this Jesus?’ The pastor knelt down and took a few moments to tell her about God who came to earth, loved people, died and rose on Easter morning. Maybe the girl brought her parents the next Sunday. Maybe she’s now in college and attending campus ministry. Maybe she married and then divorced with great pain. God knows where she is and is holding her tight.

We sing verse one of Hymn of Promise.

Faith is about trusting what we can’t see, right? Faith is about current situations; joys and challenges. Yet it’s often about a hoped for future. A time that is yet unknown...held only by God.

When faithful volunteers take monthly dinners to students at LuMin / CSU, I’ll tell you a secret. They love it when KoG comes. They like our food the best. It is homecooked and has a full menu; not just pizza or lasagna every month. Faith is served up in potatoe bars and taco nights, and brats on the grill every May. Students – at a critical time in their lives – are making decisions and figuring out their vocational identities, even who they think God is. God is present in those meals and our members. Do we ever see the graduated seniors again? Rarely. Do we know the impact we’ve had? Not really. But God does. I’ll guarantee when they talk of worship in college, they will mention Pastor Paul and the food from King of Glory. Faith received. Faith passed on.

Every spring, we take an offering only for gifts to World Hunger. Those monies go to people all over the world. Men learn about new farming techniques in drought-stricken places. Women can have a baby in a birthing clinic with the help of a trained professional reducing death rates. Children receive books and pencils, or a story Bible. All these ministries are done in Jesus’ name; the ELCA doesn’t hide God’s Good News. Seeds are planted, faith is nurtured, passed on so there can be a future and hope. We show up, not physically. But we show up in the background and God does the rest. **We sing verse two of Hymn of Promise.**

When we near the end, people often look back to reflect. What was accomplished, what is yet left undone, what legacy am I leaving?

We might worry that we weren’t enough, that we didn’t do enough, but there isn’t enough faith to get us over the finish line.

Even now, I encourage you to leave those questions behind. Jesus said if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, it's enough! Mustard seeds are the tiniest of all seeds. In God, you are enough. You have enough faith. You have received the gift of faith, and even now you are passing it on through acts of love in word and deeds to friends and strangers alike.

This isn't your typical Generosity Appeal sermon, asking for money. Although we do take cash, checks and credit cards.

Instead, I'm hoping that you are dreaming with me God sized dreams; even if we aren't here to see the endings. God can bring more people who yearn for hope and have literally tried everything else. God can deepen our faith through Bible study, small groups, and service in the community. Those are the goals which we are specifically going to fund. With the faith we have been given, we entrust God to do a work among us. We plant the seeds for the next generation and the next one after that and the one after that.

We give thanks for the Lois' and the Eunice's in our lives that we might be them for the next generations of people who walk through King of Glory's doors; something God alone can see. Amen!

We sing the last verse of Hymn of Promise.