

## **2023-09-17 Promise Pointe SERMON**

**By The Reverend Cheryl Kester-Schmidt**

We Lutherans believe that together in Jesus Christ we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully. Today is the 10th anniversary of “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday. This annual day of service is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) — one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor.

The ELCA’s first dedicated day of service, in September 2013, was held to celebrate the church’s 25th anniversary. We have embraced “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday as a way to be church together. In this moment, we bear witness to the love and concern God’s people have for one another – this is work we do every day - loving our neighbors here at Promise Pointe and an opportunity to improve our community.

Our service allows us to explore our most basic Lutheran conviction: “All of life in Jesus Christ — every act of service, in

every daily calling, in every corner of life — flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace.”

Today we are the Church together with Sister Rebecca and Promise Pointe. We have an opportunity to share Jesus’ love through our service as we accompany the beautiful souls of Promise Pointe on their journey in the world.

God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah is also a baptismal promise for each of us in Christ. *“I will bless you ... so that you will be a blessing”* (Genesis 12:2).

My sisters and brothers, we live in a broken, fractured and divided world. God calls us to embrace this world and care for one another. Love prevails, Christ lives in us, offering unyielding love, no matter what we do or who we are. We have no hoops to jump nor concessions to give.

God’s work. Our Hands. Beloved Children of God! Look at your hands. Your hands have learned new skills as a baby, They have played musical instruments. They have learned to drive a car and may have driven huge trucks or tractors in Kenya. They

may have fixed someone's favorite food. They have squeezed the hand of the one we married or ones we love. They have patted the backs of cranky babies to bring up burps or held their hands as they took their first steps. They have cared for a spouse or loved one as they ran into Jesus arms.

The good news today is God will use our hands to share the Good News of Jesus Christ until at the last our hands are stilled.

My sisters and brothers, we are made in the image of God! God is a generous God! We are made to be generous too! This day we are a blessing to others as we serve God with our grace-filled, generous hearts and hands.