



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A Call to Serve: Bishop deForest on Living Faithfully in Today's World

"I may be saved for all eternity, just like all of you [in worship this morning]. But I want my first moments in eternity to be surrounded more by people I helped than by people I hurt; by more celebration than condemnation; and by a Jesus more glad at me than mad at me."

This excerpt from Bishop Christopher deForest's sermon, preached during a service at Maiden creek in Blandon on November 10, captures the heart of his message.

The Gospel lectionary for November 10 was Mark 12:38-44, where Jesus observes people putting money into the temple treasury, noticing a poor widow contributing two small copper coins—all she had to live on. Jesus explains to his disciples that the widow has put in more than all the others, as she gave out of her poverty, while they gave out of their wealth.

Bishop deForest focused his sermon on Lutheranism, particularly since that Sunday was also Martin Luther's birthday. "Martin Luther himself would likely say that this story from the Gospel of Mark is a great example of the kind of things that got Luther all worked up in the first place," said Bishop deForest. He argued that Jesus would not want us just to "be like the widow" or celebrate "sacrificial giving" or "cheerful givers" as illustrated by the widow. Rather, he pointed out that Jesus was expressing strong anger at a system that ignored the plight of the poor and those harmed by economic inequalities and injustice. Bishop deForest compared Jesus' angry response in the Gospel of Mark to the time when Jesus overturned the tables in the temple.



Bishop Christopher deForest preaching and worshipping at Maiden creek, Blandon on Nov 10, 2024

He also paralleled the recent election with Jesus' reaction to the widow's offering.

"Lots of people voted, in similar anger. They – or someone they love, care about, feel concern for – are being forgotten," he noted. He reminded us that regardless of political affiliations, Christ died and came to save all of us. Quoting John 3:16, he said, "God so loved the world, that God gave God's only son, that everyone who believes in him, may not perish but may have eternal life." He emphasized, "Eternal life. Forever. Which I will spend, with these same folks. On all sides." That includes the widows and the scribes. The elites and the forgotten. The celebrities and the nobodies.



Bishop deForest concluded his sermon with a call to action: "While we're still here, and we can still offer love like Jesus, healing like Jesus, and side-by-side engagement like Jesus – with our friends and enemies, strangers and neighbors – well then, Jesus calls us out, the same as all his disciples – to get to work, while we can."

To read Bishop Christopher deForest's full sermon in his recent "On The Way" blog visit godslove.org/onthewaynov11

Submitted by: Stacey Burke, NEPA Synod Communications & Growing Young Coordinator

Learning Ministries' Day



Sponsored by the NEPS Faith Formation Resource Ministry Team

January 25, 2025
8:30am-3:30pm

Jordan Lutheran Church, Orefield

godslove.org/LMD

"What does it mean to be a Christian in a culture that challenges our faith?"

Registration information available soon