

Sunday March 14 – **Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Readings: Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Prayer: *God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen*<sup>44</sup>

Focal Verse: “Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”  
Psalm 32:1

Reflection: There is nothing more exciting than a celebration: a birthday, an anniversary or a holiday. For some children and youth, just coming to school in the morning is a celebration. If we were to peek into the homes of our students, I am afraid we might be greatly saddened by the tension, the stress caused by lack of time, the anger and the shouting. Therefore, I believe it is our calling to make our classrooms to be places of celebration every day.

Several years ago, I came across the re-telling of the “Prodigal Son” story in a rather humorous form, “THE PRODIGAL SON in F-MAJOR.” I apologize to the author...I have no one to give credit to...although I applaud their creativity...and a smile crosses my face each time I read it aloud:

Feeling footloose and frisky, a featherbrained fellow forced his fond father to fork over the farthings, flew far to foreign fields, and frittered his fortune feasting fabulously with faithless friends. Fleeced by his fellows in folly and facing famine, he found himself a food-flinger in a filthy farmyard. Fairly famishing, he fain would have filled his frame with foraged food from fodder fragments.

“Phooey! My father’s flunkies fare far finer,” the frazzled fugitive forlornly fumbled, frankly facing facts. Frustrated by failure and filled with foreboding, he fled forthwith to his family. Falling at his father’s feet, he forlornly fumbled, “Father, I’ve flunked and fruitlessly forfeited family fellowship favor.”

The far-sighted father, forestalling further flinching, frantically flagged the flunkies to fetch a fatling from the flock and fix a feast. The fugitive’s fault-finding fraternal one frowned on fickle forgiveness of former fol-de-rol. But the father figured, “Filial fidelity is fine, but the far-flung fugitive is found! What forbids fervent festivity? Let flags be unfurled! Let fanfares flare!”

The father’s forgiveness formed the foundation for the former fugitive’s future fortitude.

Hopefully, the re-telling of this age-old story in a fun way might re-ignite that sense of celebration and bring a smile to your face and to the face of your students. Each student needs to be celebrated just for who they are and for the potential that is inside them.<sup>45</sup>

What do you hear?

How does it make you feel?

Toward what are you being drawn?

What do you sense you should do?

<sup>44</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Worship

<sup>45</sup> ELCA, Hands for Helping, © 2009, contributed by the Rev. Dr. Jean A. Zietlow, senior pastor and supervisor of the Early Learning Center, First Lutheran Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma.