

Dear Friends in Christ:

You probably know someone who needs a closer walk with the Lord.

That need will probably go unmet unless that person chooses to get out of his or her rut.

Even if I decide that I need a closer walk with the Lord, it does not necessarily follow that I can maintain the same schedule, the same mental habits, the same vices, and the same busy-ness and can expect a different result. I might need to make some changes. Einstein famously said that *insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result*. His hypothesis has not been refuted.

There is a place and time in which the Lord has promised to meet us. It is not the Supermarket or the Doctor's Office, or the Barcalounger in my living room. It is not working or recreation or travel or leisure or yoga.

It is not the television, or the interweb, TikTok, Youtube, or Facebook.

I see many people walking around with their heads buried in their smartphones or at least clinging to their smartphones as though their smartphones are *that to which they look for all good or that to which they flee in times of trouble* (Luther's definition of what functions as a god for us).

The place and time at which God promises to meet us is worship on Sunday morning—surrounded by the cloud of witnesses (Hebrews) and the body of Christ (I Cor.).

When I ask catechism students why we go to church, I get the predictable responses. We go to church to pray. We go to church to read the Bible. We go to church to learn, etc. They seem unconvinced when I tell them that we go to church to have union with Christ, or even that we go to church because that is where God promises to meet us and bless us. *Wherever two or three are gathered in my name* sounds a whole lot like Church.

The point of sacraments is that Christ comes to us in Holy Baptism and Holy Communion as one who promises to bless us.

The point of reading from Scripture and preaching is that Christ, the Word, comes to us in the Word. He comes to us as one who reminds, corrects, and rebukes (Law). He comes to us as one who forgives, restores, and saves (Gospel).

The point of confession of sins, hymn-singing, reciting the creed, and saying prayers is that the Holy Spirit might be able to communicate with our spirits and draw us closer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Back to the person you probably know—the one who needs a closer walk with the Lord: It falls on you to invite that person to come to worship with you. She or he might say, "No." But for those who say, "Yes," there is the probability that the Lord will keep his promise. He will meet them, bless them, and give them the opportunity for a closer walk with Him. That could change everything. Wouldn't that be grand?

Yours in Christ,

John Shepherd McKenzie