**Luke 11:1-13 November 9, 2019 (Agnes Schimke Funeral)**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ but especially to you the friends and family of Agnes Schimke,

Agnes’s Confirmation verse was found in our Gospel reading this morning from Luke chapter 11 verse 9, “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” And in this section of Scripture a few verses later we find these words in verse 13, “If you then who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

Agnes was blessed with a family who loved her. She had 3 children, and 6 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren, which we all heard about in the reading of the Obituary. And for you gathered who were her children I’m sure you can imagine and remember the good gifts that she gave to you, but there is another truth when it comes to Agnes’s life. In her time as head cook at Onekama Consolidated Schools she got to live her Confirmation verse and the continuing verses of Luke chapter 11, because in many ways the children that she helped prepare those meals for were her children as well. I remember a time when I saw Agnes at the house and brought her communion, and we talked briefly about her time as a cook, and I asked her what the favorite dish was that she made for the kids, and she simply replied, “They liked all of it.”

You can imagine the scene, a young boy or girl walking up to receive second helpings of whatever was being served that day, and Agnes looking out at them deciding if they should get another roll, another scoop, another taste. Would she be merciful? Would she be harsh? I’m sure it depended upon how much they had left and how many they had to feed that day, it’s not so black and white, but I’m sure that she wanted to give more because she had love for her other children, those who came into the cafeteria, excited to eat what she had prepared.

And as much as she was the one who served those children, she was a child when it came to her relationship to the Lord, because the roles were reversed when it came to forgiveness, life, salvation, righteousness, and all the wonderful gifts that God bestows in His house to His children. Here is where Agnes asked. Here is where God gives. Here is where we all are God’s children, no matter what earthly family we are a part of, no matter how long we’ve been in the family, no matter if we’ve fallen away and been estranged from the family and only recently returned. And when a member of the family passes away we all feel it, and we mourn together as brothers and sisters in Christ not without hope, not in despair, but still we mourn. We mourn for those who have left us in their youth, we mourn for those who have left us even in old age. As we heard from the words of Isaiah 46, “Even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you.”

We are a family of faith, and in a family you ask, you seek, you find. While we can imagine the child who would come up to Agnes for more food, there’s probably also many who wanted more on a regular and daily basis, and didn’t even bother to ask. It’s the truth in our own lives, what does it say about what we want if we won’t even ask for it? What does it say about how much we want to find something if we won’t even seek it? What does it say about how much we wish to enter somewhere, if we won’t even knock? Agnes fell into these same traps, she prayed the same words that we all do in the Lord’s Prayer, “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” She wasn’t a perfect person, neither are we. We are God’s children, we behave as children do, innocently and serving, but also with our own intentions and wants outweighing our needs. We don’t feel we should have to ask, so we take. We put ourselves before God.

Luke chapter 11 verse 13 “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” If you then who are….evil. Jesus is saying that even those of us who are sinful, evil, rotten to the core, will still give good gifts to our children and those we love, how much more will God our Heavenly Father who is perfect, and holy, and all powerful give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him as earthly children ask their earthly parents? Which is a recognition in this verse of two things: On the one hand we are evil, we are sinful and unclean, Agnes knew this even in the short time that I knew her. I didn’t know the Agnes that many of you knew, I met her less than a year ago and all throughout the time I knew her she was struggling with different health problems. There were times when she would get mixed up, and perhaps even a bit confused, but she was clear when we went through the service. She was clear when I read the confession of sins and she knew that was her confession as well. She was clear when we said the Lord’s prayer together. She didn’t shy away from the truth of her sinfulness, and neither should any of us. We are evil, we are sinful, but the other side of the verse is that God our Heavenly Father, loves us and is always in a state of handing us the gifts that truly matter.

I’ve heard stories of the cooking, and perhaps these past few days you’ve been able to talk about the wonderful things that Agnes loved to bake, but there is a greater gift that we all come to God our Heavenly Father and ask for. And it’s better than the rolls, and the buns, and the cakes, it’s the gift of the Holy Spirit. It’s the promise of eternal life because of the love of Jesus Christ, God’s very own child, who came to this world to die for our sins. Who came to this world to take upon himself our lack of faith, and the times we’ve failed to ask, and the very evil of our natures and our actions and our thoughts, and take it to the cross where it was paid for by his blood and his suffering and his death. He gives the gift of salvation to you. For free. Immediately handing it out to you, in the waters of Holy Baptism, creating in your heart faith to receive this wonderful truth, and so it is in our Baptism that we find rooted the greatest gift of all, the salvation of our souls and the comfort of knowing that Agnes is numbered with those standing around the throne, Agnes is one of those coming out of the great tribulation, Agnes, is a member of the multitude, clothed in the perfect white robe of Christ’s rigeousness, that we hear about in Revelation chapter 7.

It was the same reading that we heard this past Sunday on All Saint’s Sunday, and it’s back here less than a week later, because it’s important for you, Agnes’s family, whether a child of her own blood, whether a child that was fed by her at school, whether a brother or sisters of hers in faith, it’s important for you to know what she’s up to, and what she is experiencing now in the presence of Her Savior. “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes, and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” That’s where she is, with Raymond. And she’s standing. I can’t recall a time when I even saw Agnes stand in the short time I had with her, but take comfort in knowing, she’s standing again. She’s singing. She’s happy. Gone is her pain, gone is her struggle, gone is the cloud that disoriented and confused her, it is clear for her that she is in glory and she will bask in the light of Jesus Christ for all eternity. And you will see her again because that same gift of the Holy Spirit is yours, the really good stuff, forgiveness, life, the strengthening of your faith, salvation, righteousness, your identity as God’s redeemed and justified child it’s all yours, for free. Ask, seek, find.

And don’t despair, or think that God doesn’t want to give you these good gifts out of love, or become jaded like the world around us into saying that God seeks your destruction. Instead of hearing the lies of a world that is perishing hear the solid promise of God’s Word and when you hear these words remember Agnes, remember the grace and mercy I’m sure she gave to her children who came seeking one more roll, one more dessert, one more helping, and remember that God gives you the greater gift so that you will be in His presence eternally because he loves you enough to die for you. “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Amen

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.