

## Sermon Notes

## Life Notes

### Steps to the Cross #2: Jesus Serves John 13:1-17

#### Opener:

What's one "gross-but-necessary" chore you'll do?

#### Go Deeper: *(Exploring the Bible)*

1. In John 13:1, what does it mean that Jesus "loved them to the end"? How does that frame everything that follows?
2. Why does John emphasize Jesus' security in John 13:3 (coming from God, returning to God)? How does identity shape humility?
3. What does Jesus mean in John 13:8 when He says, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me"? What "washing" is He pointing toward?
4. How does Philippians 2:5-8 deepen your understanding of John 13?

#### Live It: *(Applying to Our Lives)*

1. Where are you most tempted to serve only when it's noticed, convenient, or appreciated? What does Luke 9:23 confront in you?
2. When service starts to "cut down your ego," what do you usually do—withdraw, resent, or persevere? Why?
3. What's one relationship where "taking the low place" would look like a concrete act of love this week?
4. How does knowing you are already clean in Christ (forgiven, claimed, secure) free you to serve without fear?

#### Daily Bible Readings (March 1-7)

Sun:	John 13:1-17	The Towel & the King
Mon:	Philippians 2:1-11	The Mind of Christ
Tues:	Luke 9:18-27	Cross Daily
Wed:	Mark 10:35-45	Greatness Reversed
Thurs:	Ephesians 2:1-10	Saved for Good Works
Fri:	1 Peter 4:7-11	Serve by His Strength
Sat:	1 John 1:5-9	Cleansed & Honest

## Upcoming Week

### Sunday, March 1

#### COMMUNION WEEKEND

8:30-11am Morning Fellowship, FH  
 8am Worship & Communion, WC  
 9:30am Worship & Children's Church, WC  
 11am Contemporary Worship & Children's Church, WC

### Monday, March 2

9-11:30am Food Pantry  
 12:30-2:30pm GriefShare, C4  
 4pm Confirmation Class, C1

### Tuesday, March 3

6:30pm "Seekers" Small Group, B7  
 7pm AA Men's Meeting, C5

### Wednesday, March 4

9-11:30am Food Pantry  
 10am Men's Bible Study, C1  
 12:30pm Al-Anon, C4  
 1pm Bell Rehearsal, CH  
**4pm Lenten Worship, WC**  
**5pm Soup Supper, FH**  
 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal, WC  
 8pm AA Meeting, C5

### Thursday, March 5

9:30am Women's Ministry Board Meeting, C1  
 10am Prayer Group, B7  
 11am Al-Anon Meeting, C5  
 11:30am Stephen Ministers, C4

### Friday, March 6

OFFICE CLOSED

### Saturday, March 7

8am Men's Bible Study, C5  
**2pm All About Broadway (offsite)**  
**Bus leaves @ 12:45pm**  
 4pm Worship, WC

CH = Chapel  
 FH = Fellowship Hall  
 C5 = Fireside Room  
 NR = Nursery  
 WC = Worship Center  
 C4 = Community Room

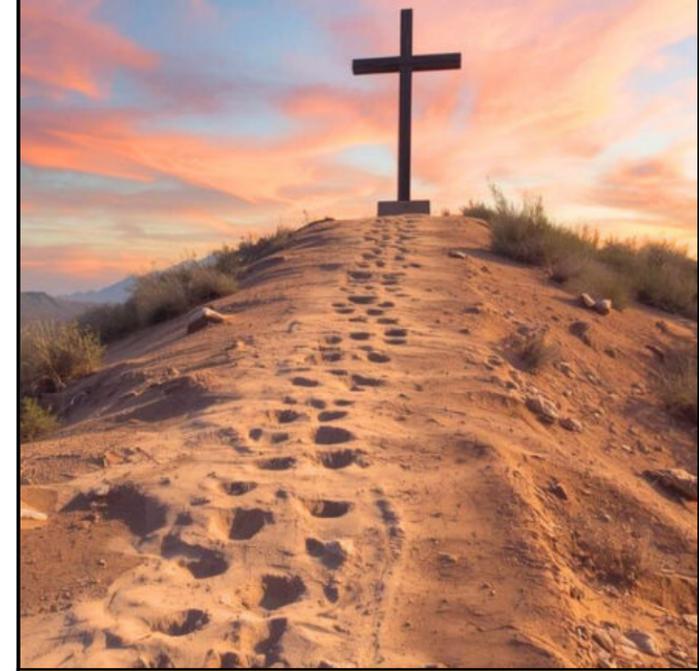
#### Victory Lutheran Church

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# STEPS TO THE CROSS



FEBRUARY 28 & MARCH 1, 2026

## Jesus Serves John 13:1-17



Todd Mathison, Lead Pastor  
 Denton Bennet, Associate Pastor  
 Dirk Duhlstine, Chaplain  
 Kristin Holton Prouty, Director of Worship & Music



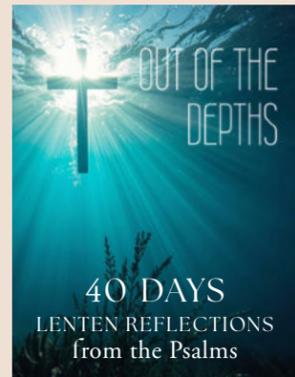
Connect with us!



## GOD TIME: God is Our Only True Source of Safety

"Praise be to the Lord, for He has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield." - Psalm 28:6-7

We were out on a boat for a sunny evening joy ride. We marveled at our good fortune that no one else seemed to be on the lake! Then, seemingly out of nowhere the waves started churning and then we saw flashes of lightning in the distance. We had quite a few people on board having invited our friends to come along with us for a peaceful ride on the lake. But now it appeared that we had placed their lives potentially in peril. We were still far from shore and my mind kept thinking of how badly this was going to end. Stories of boats capsizing and people being struck by lightning ran like a newsreel in my head. I was imagining the headlines, "Careless boaters caught in major storm. Casualties. Details at 11:00." We pulled down the bimini and made sure everyone had on their lifejackets. We steered the boat into the waves so we would not capsize and we powered up the engine trying to head toward the closest shore. We even told everyone to stay low in the boat and to hold on. We were doing all the "things" that we were taught to do in an emergency, but the one thing we did not do that should have been the very first thing, was pray. After the scary night was over and we were safely on shore, I remembered to send a prayer of Thanksgiving to God, but I had neglected to reach out to Him during our true hour of need. We were relying on our own strength instead of asking for His strength.



During Lent, we are reminded of the fact that God never abandons us. When we are surrounded by trouble, God is truly our only source of protection. He is our safe harbor in the storm. Psalm 91:2 says of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Prayer is our best help when trials come our way because it keeps us in communication with God. Whatever you are going through this day, remember to communicate with God through prayer. He is our true source of safety.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, we can try to do things on our own, but we are never truly on our own. Even when we don't call out to You, You are near. Thank you Jesus, for dying on the cross for me. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

## GATHER TIME: Upcoming Events



### Melodías de Puerto Rico - Carlos Feliciano Sunday, March 8 @ 3pm

Experience an afternoon of Puerto Rican lyricism as tenor Carlos Feliciano and pianist-composer Luis Rodríguez present a vibrant program of art songs celebrating the island's poetic and musical traditions. The concert will highlight beloved folk rhythms—including the danza and décima—featuring some of Rodríguez's own evocative compositions. Join us for a performance that honors Puerto Rico's cultural heritage with elegance, passion, and contemporary artistry. Freewill offering and reception to follow.

### Annual Spring Luncheon Saturday, March 14 @ 11am

Both men and women are warmly invited. We've got a great program again this year! *Mosaic* serves nearly 5,000 people in 12 states. Services are designed for people with disabilities, mental and behavioral health needs and autism, as well as aging adults.

Come learn more about what *Mosaic* is doing! We will include a silent auction. If you feel led to contribute, we welcome donations of new or homemade gifts. Catered lunch will be served. Ticket \$12. Deadline: March 8th.



## GO TIME: Victory @ Leisure World Update Pastor Nathan Hilton

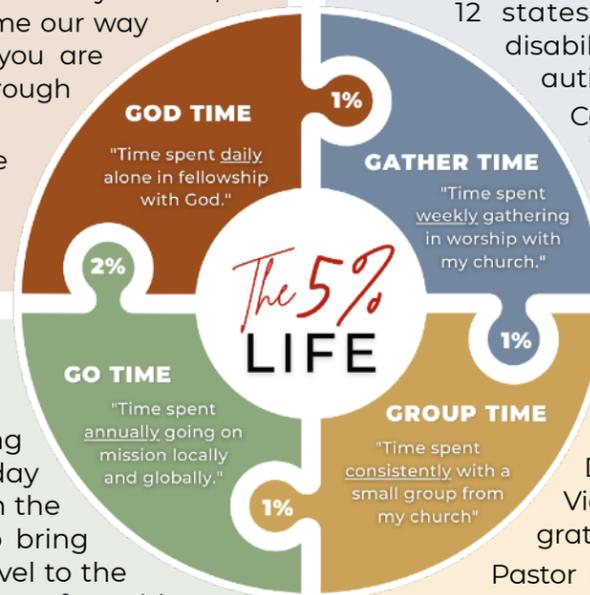


Victory at Leisure World is our micro-site campus serving the Leisure World community, and we gather every Sunday at 3:00pm for a full traditional worship service centered on the Word, fellowship, and relationship. This campus exists to bring church closer to those who may not always be able to travel to the main Victory campus, while still experiencing the same heart of worship and community.

One of the most meaningful parts of our time together happens after the service, when we share coffee, donuts, cookies and refreshments. That fellowship time is where conversations deepen, friendships grow, and people truly share life with one another. It's a reminder that church is not just something we attend, it's a community we belong to.

As a micro-site, Victory at Leisure World reflects the mission and spirit of our main campus while meeting the unique needs of this community. Relationships are built and strengthened here through the work of the Holy Spirit as we gather around God's Word. On the first Sunday of each month, we celebrate Holy Communion together, and I have the privilege of preaching and walking through Scripture with our congregation.

My hope is that this campus continues to be a place where people feel known, cared for, and spiritually supported, whether through worship, fellowship, or pastoral presence during life's challenges. Victory at Leisure World is about sharing life, encouraging faith, and growing together in Christ.



## GROUP TIME: Farewell to Pastor Renée Bennett

On February 16, 2026, on behalf of Victory Lutheran Church, I accepted Pastor Renée Bennett's resignation from her role as our Discipleship Pastor. While this news brings a sense of loss to our entire Victory family, we receive it with understanding, compassion, and deep gratitude for the two years Pastor Renee faithfully served among us.

Pastor Renée came to Victory on February 1, 2024, and from her very first day, she brought a passionate commitment to proclaiming the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and walking alongside our congregation with genuine love and care. Over these two years, she has been a steady, grace-filled presence—in our pulpits, at our bedsides, teaching confirmation, and in the lives of those navigating grief, illness, and the journey of faith. Her theology was sound, her heart was tender, and her love for this congregation was evident in everything she did.

Pastor Renée's resignation comes not from a desire to leave, but from a place of deep personal need. She and her husband, Jeff, are facing an extremely difficult family situation, and in her own words, she is no longer able to commit to providing "the level of care and support that our Victory family needs and deserves." We honor that honesty. We honor that sacrifice. And we hold her and Jeff in our prayers as they walk through this season.

Pastor Renée leaves us anchored in the same hope she always preached—the promise of Jeremiah 29:11, that God has plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us a hope and a future. That confidence in God's faithfulness is perhaps her greatest gift to us, and it is one we carry forward.

On behalf of the entire Victory family: Pastor Renée, thank you. Thank you for your proclamation of the Gospel, your shepherding of our souls, and your love for a congregation that will not soon forget you. We release you with our blessing, our prayers, and our deepest gratitude. May God continue to meet you and Jeff with His faithful, unwavering grace.

— Pastor Denton and the Victory Lutheran Church Staff

