

# NOVEMBER

## "Crossing the Road" by Deaconess Kristin Lewis

### Hymn Suggestion

"Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" (ELW #708) or "Where Charity and Love Prevail" (LSB #845)

### Scripture

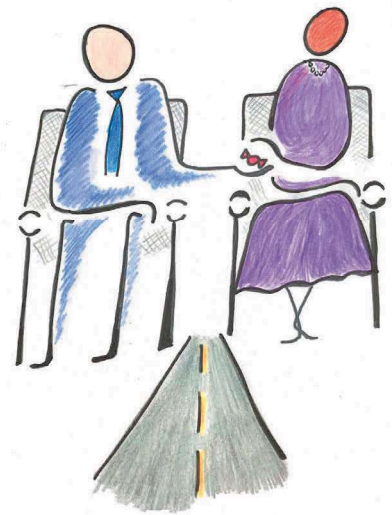
*"Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.' But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' "*

*[Jesus then tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan.] [Jesus asks] "Which of these...do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.' "Luke 10:25-29; 36-37*

### Devotion

Following the Memorial Service for Senator John McCain, a clip showing former President George W. Bush slipping First Lady Michelle Obama a piece of candy began to go viral on social media. During a time when political, social, and ideological divisions seem to be growing, this moment illustrated a truth - that of the basic humanity in one another no matter our political affiliation or other identities. After all, don't we all enjoy a piece of candy sometimes?

Challenges arise from divisions as we are often drawn into silos within our communities that primarily engage people who are similar to us. The silos can be comfortable spaces where we aren't challenged to think deeply or question why we think or act a certain way. But the concern is that, in so doing, we miss much of our calling to be a part of the world God created.



In Henri Nouwen's book, *Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith*, he writes, "*We become neighbors when we are willing to cross the road for one another.*" He then points to separation and segregation between races, young and old, gay and straight, sick and healthy, prisoners and free, Jews, Gentiles, Muslims, and between Christians - Protestant and Catholic. Nouwen concludes, "*There is a lot of road crossing to do. We are all very busy in our own circles. We have our own people to go to and our own affairs to take care of. But if we could cross the street once in a while and pay attention to what is happening on the other side, we might become neighbors.*"

Throughout his ministry, Jesus crossed many roads to listen deeply and reconcile people to community. He walked across the road and reached out to those considered unworthy - tax collectors, widows, orphans, and the diseased. He saw their full humanity - who it is that God created them to be. Calling us to love God, Jesus also commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

By creating and using community crosswalks to listen deeply and hear the stories and experiences of our neighbors, we meet the image of God they bare for us. We are called to create space to hear the fullness of our neighbors' experience and to share ours - including stories that reveal our world's brokenness. In that holy space, God's Spirit can connect us and guide us to a place of healing to live in community as children of God. It can be as sweet as sharing a piece of candy.

### **Questions for Reflection & Discussion**

- Have you been impacted by a relationship with someone that seemed very different from you?
- How might we open ourselves to make space for and listen to our neighbors even if their experiences challenge and make us feel uncomfortable?

### **Prayer**

*God of Love, guide us and give us courage to cross the road to meet you in our neighbor. May Your Spirit break down our silos and weave us into the community you call us to be. Amen.*

### **About the Author**

Deaconess Kristin Lewis is from Valparaiso, Indiana. She serves at Purdue University Northwest as an academic and student success advisor.