

Let us Need Each Other...
Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
Christ Church Cranbrook
June 7, 2026
Proper 5 Year A
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

May the God who creates us, redeems us, and sustains us, be with us this day, and remain with us always. Amen

This past week I presided and preached at the memorial service for a dear friend of mine, a priest, someone just two years older than me. Someone who taught me much of what I know regarding congregational development and leadership.

His memorial service was held in the city in Kansas where he successfully planted a thriving church in the mid-90s. That church is alive and well today. Mark was an insanely gifted man who on the flip side was almost incapable of asking for care, help, assistance, and sometimes even love.

He gave and gave. He was a stunning priest, with consummate pastoral care skills, who never seemed to quite trust that the rest of us, would be willing to love him as much as he loved us. It was maddening. And saddening.

As we prepared for Mark's service, as I gathered stories that would sum up a portion of his life, what I realized is that it wasn't just me, who he held at a distance. There were so very many of us, for whom he had cared, who wanted to be more connected with him, more helpful, more present. While I respect his decision to do many things on his own, I'm bummed that he chose not to invite more people to be with him as he battled his cancer valiantly and amazingly for more than 6 and a half years.

I couldn't help but think of Mark, as I reflected on the leader of the synagogue coming to Jesus and asking him to lay his hand upon his daughter who has just died, so that she may live. How he risked making his needs known. And the woman who has hemorrhaged for twelve years, she has been bleeding and ritually unclean for most of her life, how she reaches out, thinking to herself, if only I touch the fringe of his cloak, I will be made well.

I think on these people, how they asked for help. How they risked asking for assistance. They both violated norms and customs. A leader of a synagogue could have risked his standing by seeking out Jesus. He seeks out one who is known to consort with tax collectors and sinners. Yet he asks.

The woman is unclean, just the notion of touching a man with her malady violates all the norms and customs of the day. Yet she risks asking.

Each asks and Jesus answers and a community of care is created. A community of needs and gifts, talents and longings comes together. A community that changes the world.

As a young person, I hated asking for help, because I didn't want people to think I wasn't up to the task. This carried on later in life, as I began to wonder if I was good enough to be trusted the

responsibilities given to me. If I asked for help, would people think I didn't know what I was doing?

Ironically, it was my friend Mark who told me to stop answering every question asked at a vestry meeting. I was confused—if I know the answer why wouldn't I answer? Because he wisely said, if you always have the answer—and are always trying to prove you are good enough, smart enough, then there will not be space for other people to develop their own gifts and talents. “Be quiet Bonnie,” he said, “Leave some space for others.”

It worked.

My hunch is that parents do this a bit with your children as they grow and mature. Sometimes, as hard as it might be to just watch our kids, letting them figure things out on their own, making small mistakes, teaching them when to go it on their own and when to stop and ask for help. Waiting to step in until they ask. All the while enabling them to develop those muscles and learn that it's ok not to know everything, it's okay to ask for help, it's ok to risk depending a bit on one another.

When we risk asking for help, we allow our vulnerabilities and needs to be seen. When we fail to ask for assistance, we wind up intentionally or not, creating a wall behind which we hide.

In the next few minutes, we will have enough baptisms, confirmations, receptions and reaffirmations to more than fulfill everyone's need to be here. But we do this, we do this thing called church, with promises in front of everyone, in the flesh, because being with each other matters so very much. In a world where AI can write your paper, AI can dismiss your resume and AI make you think you think you don't need anyone, we know that our God was born in a barn. Jesus Christ is human being with needs and wants, and we who dare to follow him cannot be people who then ignore or dismiss our humanity. We are human, we bleed and we need and long to be loved.

When we ask, will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these people in their life with Christ. I invite you to say, “We WILL.” Loudly and then back it up with all your heart, all your soul. Be the church the world needs. Be the people of God, broken and flawed, who still show for up for each other and trust each other. We are all God's got.

Friends, our world needs us to need each other.

Together with God and each other we can do more than we can ask or imagine.

Amen.