

## Lenten Devotional March 9, 2018

### Scripture

#### 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

<sup>16</sup>If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! <sup>17</sup>For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. <sup>18</sup>What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. <sup>19</sup>For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. <sup>22</sup>To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. <sup>23</sup>I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings. <sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup>Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. <sup>26</sup>So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; <sup>27</sup>but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

### Devotional

#### The Rev. Kellie Wild '09, IMPACTS Program Director, East End Cooperative Ministries, Pittsburgh, Pa. / Field Education Supervisor

It's all about relationships. I work with many people whom some would refer to as the disinherited or those who are marginalized by society. Many of the folks with whom I spend my time do not feel comfortable around Christians or in our churches because they do not feel welcome and accepted. On the other hand, I am often approached by individuals in churches about what they can do to get the people who are marginalized to come into their churches. What I say to these well-intentioned church folk is that people who feel marginalized are not going to come into your churches just because you say your doors are open. Until you are willing to go *out* of the church's doors and engage in building genuine relationships with others, your doors are not open. We need to get to know people and their stories so that we can then share the story of the gospel. I have heard many times over the years that people do not care what you know until they know that you care. You see, we in the church are focused on getting people to come into the church when, like Paul, we need to be going out to the people and speaking to them in a way that shows we care about them as persons. What would it look like if, instead of focusing on getting people into the church, we took the message of the gospel *out* of the church and *to* the people?

### Prayer

Gracious God, you speak to each of us in unique ways so that we know of your love for us. Help us to go out of the safety of our churches and into the world to build genuine relationships with those who may not know the message of the gospel so that we may be able to speak and act in ways that allow your love to be shared with others.