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**2024 High School Chapel**

*Can be used as a farewell to graduating seniors*

**Invocation:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Opening Hymn (CW93 431 CW21 836 you can use all or just selected stanzas)**

1. I walk in danger all the way;  
   the thought shall never leave me  
   that Satan, who has marked his prey,  
   is plotting to deceive me.  
   This foe with hidden snares  
   may seize me unawares  
   if e'er I fail to watch and pray;  
   I walk in danger all the way.
2. **I** pass through trials all the way,  
   with sin and ills contending;  
   in patience I must bear each day  
   the cross of God's own sending.  
   Oft in adversity  
   I know not where to flee,  
   when storms of woe my soul dismay;  
   I pass through trials all the way.
3. Grim death pursues me all the way,  
   nowhere I rest securely;  
   he comes by night, he comes by day,  
   he takes his prey most surely.  
   A failing breath, and I  
   in death's strong grasp may lie  
   to face eternity today;  
   grim death pursues me all the way.
4. I walk with angels all the way,  
   they shield me and befriend me;  
   all Satan's pow'r is held at bay  
   when heav'nly hosts attend me.  
   They are my sure defense;  
   all fear and sorrow, hence!  
   Unharmed by foes, do what they may,  
   I walk with angels all the way.
5. I walk with Jesus all the way,  
   his guidance never fails me;  
   within his wounds I find a stay  
   when Satan's pow'r assails me;  
   and by his footsteps led,  
   my path I safely tread.  
   No evil leads my soul astray;  
   I walk with Jesus all the way.
6. My walk is heav'nward all the way;  
   await, my soul, the morrow,  
   when your at last with joy can say  
   farewell to sin and sorrow.  
   All worldly pomp, begone!  
   To heav'n I now press on.  
   For all the world I would not stay;  
   my walk is heav'nward all the way.

**Devotion – 1 Peter 5.7-9a**

***7****Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you**.****8****Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary,[*[*f*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Peter+5&version=EHV#fen-EHV-30461f)*] the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.****9****Resist him by being firm in the faith.*

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, our Lord,

The time of year is approaching. It’s heavy zoo visiting season. (Maybe you thought I was going to say graduation.) What happens during heavy zoo visiting? Little children having major breakdowns multiplies. Maybe you have a picture in your mind. There’s the mom struggling to move with the wide opened mouth of a wailing child whose body has become dead weight. What was the cause? Maybe it was the change of mind after the gift shop purchase was made. Maybe it was hearing the word “no”. Maybe the lion wouldn’t wake up. Maybe it was dropping an ice cream cone. Regardless of the trigger, you know the scenario that I’m talking about. You probably know the reason too. It’s what little kids do. They are on an emotional roller coaster of excitement often paired with some form of disappointment while on a routine that isn’t their normal day to day activity. Going to the zoo is special.

We’re preparing for something special too. Another time of year is approaching. It’s the end of the school year. It’s a time that is packed with a lot of emotion. There’s excitement to finish a school year and head into summer break. For seniors, it’s closing one chapter of life and entering the next. There’s joy and there’s sadness. There’s relief and fear. There will be a change in routine. As we prepare for that, our reading today gives us some good guidance and instruction. It’s from 1 Peter. It’s a section of Scripture familiar to us. It’s often one of those go to sections of Scripture that we have when we are overwhelmed or are harboring on the inside what a four-year old shows on the outside when they hear it’s time to go home from the zoo before they’re ready to leave. It says this, **7Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.** Jesus cares for you (and me)!

While we know that passage of Scripture, we often have our doubts with it. We don’t take Jesus at his word. We aren’t alone with that. A few examples from Scripture that come to mind are the accounts of Jesus disciples caught in a storm[[1]](#footnote-1) and Jesus at the house of Mary and Martha[[2]](#footnote-2). They forgot how much their Lord cared for them. The disciples were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee and when they approached Jesus they asked “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”[[3]](#footnote-3) They forgot how Jesus just recently told them that they would be fishers of men and were appointed to be his disciples. How could that happen if they were dead at the bottom of the sea! With Martha, she was so busy that she didn’t even give Jesus time to answer her prayer/question when she said, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work all by myself?”[[4]](#footnote-4) Her answer to help settle her anxiety was for Jesus to tell her sister Mary to help her. It wasn’t to hear what Jesus had in mind to help her.

Those are scenarios similar to our lives. We know what Jesus tells us. We know that he invites us to outpour the worries and cares and hearts on him. But we forget. We don’t listen. We have a solution that we want and usually want immediately instead of trusting Jesus to instruct and allow what is best. We don’t remember how much he cares for us. Why? Well, think of the illustration of little children acting like little children when emotionally overstimulated at zoos. We’re sinners. Worry, rebel, refusing to listen is what sinners do. Because of that, we deserve eternal damnation in hell. But that isn’t what we are getting. Why? What does our opening verse say? It says, **“he cares for you.”** He cared for those disciples out on the boat. He cared for his friends in the Bethany area. His greatest act of care was going to the cross to take away our sins. There he paid for all of them. He paid for the sins we committed in our childhood when we made parenting a chore because of our tantrums. He paid for our sins that we’ve committed here at this school. He paid for the unloving and unkind thoughts, words, and actions we’ve had against our peers, instructors, staff, parents, and students. He cares for you! He took our sins away on the cross. He’ll keep caring for you. Whether it's current anxieties and worries or future ones. We have promises from our Savior. He even has conquered death and the fear that it causes. He did that by rising the from the dead. Jesus has promised us a place in heaven.

While we are ready and excited for that time to live in perfection with our Savior, we’re not there yet. He still has blessings for us on earth while we travel on our heavenward journeys. Some of those blessings are what is going to happen next – especially for you seniors. You’ll enter another phase of life. We have some encouragement in these words this morning too. Keep walking with your Savior! While there will be joys, there will also be struggles.

The rest of our section continues as we think of the journey before us. **8Have sound judgment. Be alert. Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him by being firm in the faith.** It’s not a lion sleeping the daytime hours at the zoo that our eyes need to watch for. It’s one on the hunt. It’s our enemy, the one who Jesus defeated, that wants nothing more than our destruction. He knows when to pounce through temptation and then accusation. He longs for nothing more than to take us away from our Savior. We know of some of those moments where his attacks have wounded us. By the mercy and grace of our Savior, who cares for us, he’s rescued us from those attacks. Why? Again, because Jesus cares for us! Through this institution/school family Jesus has given all of us the blessing of being in his Word daily. As you go into summer and head off to the work field, military, and/or college continue to stay connected to the Word and sacraments. For those of you coming back, we’ll be excited to have you. We’ll continue to work with your home congregations. We’ll be here to remind you of these wonderful words in 1 Peter. For those moving on, we’re still here for you – just in a different way. If going far away from home, connect to the local WELS/ELS congregation and their pastor(s). They’ll want to serve you with the Means of Grace. As the end of the year is here, yes, there is excitement. We’re not going to the zoo. We’re headed somewhere far better. We are continuing to walk to another phase of life with our Savior on our heavenward journey. Continue to cast all your anxiety, cares, and worries on the Lord. The Lord cares for you! Amen.

**Prayer:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, you see us growing up in an uncertain and confusing world. Send your Holy Spirit into our hearts that we may continue to grow in grace and wisdom. Give us the strength to resist temptation and courage to meet the challenges of each new day. Show us that following you is more satisfying than pursuing selfish goals. Make our unique gifts and youthful vitality a blessing to our families, the Church, and to all others in our lives that we encounter. Be with our seniors as they transition from this school to the next stage of their lives. Thank you for allowing them to be a blessing to us here. Guard them both physically and spiritually all the days of their lives. Help them walk in your ways until you finally call them home to heaven. Whether they continue with institutional education, enroll in the military, or enter the workforce help them to remain faithful to you and keep your Word as their constant companion. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Closing Hymn (CW 332 CW21 930)**

**Faculty/Staff & Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors**

1. Go, my children with my blessing, Never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you; You are my own.

In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever

Go, my children with my blessing – You are my own.

**All**

1. Go, my children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.

Here you learned how much I love you, What I can cure.

Here you heard my dear Son’s story; Here you touch him, saw his glory.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.

**Freshmen, Sophomores, & Juniors**

1. Go, my children fed and nourished, Closer to me;

Grow in love and love by serving, Joyful and free.

Here my Spirit’s power filled you, Here his tender comfort still you.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, Joyful and free.

**Faculty/Staff (and any parents)**

1. I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;

I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;

I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.

Go, my children, I will keep you and give you peace.

1. Matthew 8:23-27, **Mark 4:36-41**; Luke 8:22-25; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Luke 10:38-42 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Mark 4:38 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Luke 10:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)