



Southwestern Minnesota Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Sermon by Synod Minister Heather Culuris

June, 2025

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### Ambassador for Christ

2 Corinthians 5:

<sup>17</sup> So if anyone is in Christ, there<sup>[d]</sup> is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,<sup>[f]</sup> not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This Summer, our sermon series is delving into and exploring 4 different Biblical images for what it means to be the Church. Today, we heard the Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians saying: “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God.” As we consider what it means for us as God’s people to be ambassadors for Christ, I’d like to share a story with you.

Every Tuesday at 3 p.m., Mrs. Ellis, the silver-haired librarian, had a secret mission. She would slide a handwritten note into a random library book before reshelving it. No one knew it was her. “You’re braver than you think,” shed scribble on lemon-yellow paper, tucking it into a suspense novel. “The world

needs your laugh,” she’d write, nestled inside a joke book. She’d done this for 12 years, since her husband passed away. 12 years, every week, meant over 600 encouraging notes, hidden inside library books for readers to find.

One rainy afternoon, 14-year-old Marco flipped open a dusty atlas and found a note: “Someone out there is proud of you.” He stuffed it into his pocket. That week, his mom had been laid off, and he’d been putting his lunch money back in her purse for her to use. The note saying “Someone out there is proud of you” stayed with him, creased but always there and never thrown away, like a quiet message of hope.

Marco started visiting the library daily, hunting for more notes, searching for more messages. Mrs. Ellis watched him quietly, noticing how he’d linger in the cookbook aisle, because his mom’s dream was to open a bakery. One day, she “accidentally” dropped a note near his feet: “Follow the recipe, kid. You’ve got the ingredients.” Marco baked her a lumpy banana loaf the next week. “For the note person,” he mumbled quietly, pushing the banana bread across the desk. Mrs. Ellis smiled. “They’ll love it.”

Years passed. Marco's mom eventually opened her bakery, called "Yellow Note Cakes," with recipes pinned beside customer orders. On graduation day, Marco left a note in the atlas: "Thank you for seeing me."

When the time for Mrs. Ellis' retirement came, the library had a party for her. At her farewell party, the library displayed a clothesline strung with hundreds of yellow notes—that had been found in textbooks, romance novels, even a gardening guide. A nurse wrote: "This note got me through night shifts." A single dad wrote: "I kept your 'You're enough' note in my wedding ring box."

Now, the library has a new intern, Marco's little sister. She starts her mornings at the library each day the same way: watering plants, shelving books, and hiding scraps of sunshine and messages of hope. Mrs. Ellis still comes in to the library on Tuesdays. "Found one!" she'll say, waving a fresh note someone left for her.

Transformation, isn't it? Words have the power to sustain us with hope and grace and strength. It is amazing too to see examples of people who live their lives reflecting grace, love, and hope into our world.

This story about Mrs. Ellis sums up what it means to live our lives as ambassadors for Christ. In this passage we heard today from 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians,

we heard Paul proclaim: “So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God.” The Greek word that is used in this passage is “**presbeuō**”, which means ambassador. Here the word ambassador can also mean messenger, envoy, or errand-doer. The ambassador is one who is tasked with carrying crucial news, wisdom, or information.

In our day, we have people that also stand as ambassadors in our world. Countries have ambassadors to other nations, to speak for their countries, to be a messenger, an envoy on behalf of their nation. Colleges have student ambassadors, leading tours around campus, showing off the best of their school. Even the Superbowl has goodwill ambassadors in the cities that host the Superbowl, to help fans and visitors get to know the host city better.

So, what does it mean for you and I to be ambassadors for Christ? As people marked by the sign of the cross in our baptisms, our words and our actions are meant to carry Christ out into the world. In the words we speak, words of compassion, words of hope, words of justice, words of grace, we are ambassadors for Christ. Whether we speak those words out loud or in a letter or in a text or on social media, we are ambassadors for Christ. When we care

for our neighbor who is hungry, we are ambassadors for Christ. When we welcome the stranger with genuine hospitality, we are ambassadors for Christ. When we care for a child who is lonely or visit an elder in our community, we are being ambassadors for Christ. When our hands and hearts reach out to those who are suffering... When we stand with those who are easily forgotten or ignored... When we work to change our world for the better... When we speak words that bring life into hearts and communities... When our prayers lift up the needs of the world and the needs of those around us... Our words, our prayers, our actions matter to God and the world, because..... we are ambassadors for Christ.

This week, consider the story of Mrs. Ellis the librarian and how her words, written on scraps of yellow paper, carried important messages that those around her needed to hear, making her an ambassador of hope and strength in her own community. Then reflect on Paul's letter to the Corinthians: How are you being called, as individuals and as a congregation to be ambassadors for Christ in the world and communities that God has placed you in?