Dear Friends,

I sit here in a Sioux Falls public library working on the bulletin and MailChimp as Kileen, sits with her Mom, Arlene, and a brother and sister in the heart hospital as they work through Arlene's health and recovery. Arlene came down here for a heart valve replacement surgery. We were told if all goes well, she'll be released the next day (which is because Medicare only pays for one night in the hospital for such a surgery, even though most doctors recommend three to five days of recovery). The surgery was on Tuesday morning with just a 'minor' hiccup. That afternoon as they tried to wake her up, they began to realize that something wasn't right. Tests, more tests, and finally a MRI showed she had TIA's, a series of small strokes, that left her without the use of her left hand and eye. She could only use a couple word sentences, usually just one word: yes, no, maybe on Wednesday. Thursday morning, which is this morning, she could speak in sentences and seems more aware of her surroundings. Maybe, hopefully, with good rehabilitation, she can recover fully or regain some of those functions.

There are many in our church and community that have become the caretakers of their parents, watch them slow down and become more dependent, and have to say good-bye as they die and go into their next journey. There are those in our church who are aging and realizing their mortality and vulnerability. The Psalm for this week is Psalm 139. It is one of my favorites and almost takes over the 23rd Psalm. "O Lord, you have searched me and known… All my ways are not hidden from you… all the days of my life are written in your book… If I flee to the farthest reaches of the world or surround myself in darkness, even there you will find me, and darkness is as light to you." The 23rd Psalm promised that even if we walk in the valley of the shadows of death, we don't have to fear, for even there, God will lead and comfort us.

What comfort is there when our parents' health fail, when they or we find we can no longer be independent, and we need more help than we want or are used to? We can take comfort that we have family and friends who do watch over us and help us. That as imperfect as it is, our government has some programs in place to help us in times of frailty and vulnerability. God's love is a constant and walks with us, works through us, and prepares a feast when our time is done.

Peace
Pastor Enno