

# What is Your Superpower?

By: Meagan McLaughlin

August 23, 2020. God has given all of us gifts, not just for ourselves, but for the good of all of God's creation. What gifts did he give you? What are your superpowers?

Readings: [Isaiah 51:1-6](#), [Romans 12:1-8](#)

\*\*\* Transcript \*\*\*

A few years ago I got to go to Heifer Ranch in Little Rock, Arkansas with a group of youth. We spent a week doing different projects around the ranch — taking care of their animals, tending the crops as they grow for their CSA, packing food boxes. And we gathered to learn about food justice all around the world, and the benefits that a community can get from having healthy animals, and even how to make pizza completely from scratch, with just goat milk, corn, oil, and tomatoes. We even made our own cheese from the goat milk. The cornerstone event of being at Heifer Ranch, though, is a night in what they call the Global Village. The Global Village is a long trail around a lake, with houses set up that look just like what you would find in places all over the world — from Guatemala, the Philippines, Thailand, and many other places where Heifer International has worked with local communities to address issues of poverty. And they also included a refugee camp.

So I was assigned to the Appalachian House for the night with three of our ninth grade boys, two of whom were Cub Scouts working toward Eagle Scout. One of them was a Master Fire Builder — which was a great asset for our house, because the first task of the Global Village evening is to trade what you have for what you need to make dinner over a fire. Fortunately for us in Appalachian House we had all the firewood, and that made our job of trading for food and supplies really easy. To add some extra challenge to the experience, one of the kids in every group was told that they were pregnant, and so they wore a water balloon in a sling the entire time that we were making dinner.

The boy in our group assigned to wear the balloon happened to be the Master Fire Builder. He had been so excited about the evening, and expected to make good use of his fire-building expertise. But once he put the sling on with that heavy water balloon, and we arrived at our house and began to get settled in, our Master Fire Builder quickly realized that he didn't feel like he could do anything at all while wearing that fragile, cumbersome balloon. "I can't do anything!" became a refrain. It turns out, the other Cub Scout in our group was quite a good fire builder himself, and after a short time the two Scouts were busy at work discussing the best way to set up the fire, and which sticks would make the most viable kindling.

As I watched them, I noticed that our Master Fire Builder was not only really good at building fires, but also had a really profound way of supporting and empowering his friend, offering insight and encouragement in a way that allowed his friend to recognize and develop his own gift for fire building. In the meantime, our third Appalachian villager just kept finding ways to help. He gathered sticks and broke them down. He cut carrots, and then potato, and went for water. He washed the dishes, helped stir the pot, and transferred food into bowls so that we could eat. And I still say today, I think we had the best dinner in the entire camp! Scrambled eggs, carrots, potatoes, and onion. And the Cub Scouts even knew how to make really good rice — not the instant kind — over the fire, something I would never have been able to accomplish. And later in the evening, when we noticed that there were two wasps in the house where we were sleeping, I found myself able to trust them when they assured me that the wasps were as tired as we were, and would not bother us overnight.

The gifts that each Appalachian House member had were all valuable, and together they allowed us to eat well, stay safe, and have fun along the way.

So a mere six months ago, February 26, we celebrated Ash Wednesday together — my first Worship time as your Pastor. Remember that? Time gets so weird in times of transition, doesn't it? Karen and I can hardly believe that we haven't lived here forever. I have a hard time remembering what it was like before. And yet it's only been a short time, really. A short time in which I have learned so much already. And part of what I have experienced in these months is what my Appalachian House team learned during their night in the Global Village.

I noticed it first in that Worship Team, as various gifts of creativity, organization, Biblical knowledge, and music came together in a way that energized all of us, and give us life now as we continue to re-imagine Worship in Corona-tide and beyond. I have seen it in the ways in which gifts we didn't need in the same way before — gifts for making use of technology in so many different ways — have become essential, and Mike and Dave's willingness to share those gifts has supported our Worship life together as we join in Worship from all over the country, even at one point from the middle of a lake! Most recently, I have been so grateful for those who have expertise in building maintenance and construction, as we have faced multiple challenges in caring for the Mead Center.

And this is exactly what Paul talks about in our reading from the letter of Romans today. God has given all of us gifts — each one of us — not just for ourselves, but for the good of all of God's creation. Isaiah tells us we were formed out of the earth to bring God's love and justice to the world, and God continues to teach us and form us. Paul calls us not to give in to the messages that we hear that tell us we need to stand on our own, look out for ourselves, or that we don't have anything to give others, but to be transformed by the Spirit, and recognize our place in the body of Christ. To recognize that we, as God's children, are all parts of one another, and if any one of us is missing, we all lose out. Christ's body is not complete without us. And as we grow in wisdom, we get better at seeing God at work in us, in others, and the world around us.

And we continue to learn about the gifts we have been given throughout our lives. All of you heading back to school this year have the chance to work on building the gifts you already have, discover new gifts you didn't know about before, and to help your students and your classmates and your friends discover their gifts too. School can seem disconnected from our faith lives sometimes, but really it is sacred space to learn about who God created us to be. And those of us not in school are called to keep learning, too.

This week, at our Council meeting, we talked about the visioning work that we're beginning. We're asking those big questions — where are we today? What is working well for us, and what needs to be transformed? Where is God calling us, as we look ahead to what is in store for Christ Lutheran Church?

Asking these questions can be a little scary, because change is hard. And it can be really exciting, as we unleash the gifts among us in our family of faith, and seek God's will for how we can be church in our community today. And one of the important places to start is to recognize the gifts of God among us. I asked the Council when we met this week, and I asked the children this morning, and I ask you now: what are your superpowers? What are the gifts that God has given you, to be shared with your family, and your neighborhood, and this community of faith?

In a moment I'll share some of the gifts that the Council shared at their meeting, and we'll pull the white

board back up and see some of the gifts that the kids named as well. So, as we did with the kids a little bit ago, take a minute to share your superpowers with us by typing them in chat, and I will do my best to add them to the white board as we sing the Hymn of the Day.

The promise of God stands firm, in the midst of pandemics and all the challenges we face in our life. God's word will guide us, and we all have a place in the body of Christ.

What are your superpowers?

\*\*\* Keywords \*\*\*

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