

## **An Update On Bishop Kusserow**

*The following message from our bishop was sent to pastors of the synod. I have received permission to print it in our newsletter so that our members can read about his recovery from his fall on October 30. Pastor Paul*

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to share with you the state of my recovery from my fall on October 30th, and a time line for my return to the office. But above all, I would like to give thanks. I cannot tell you how deeply and how personally grateful I am to God for being given the unmerited grace of surviving this fall so well. Over the past five weeks I have heard many stories of people who have suffered very greatly from similar falls. In contemplating these things, I feel humbled to receive such a gift. The Psalms are filled with confessions of thanksgiving to God for just this kind of unmerited grace, and we often read that the author or subject of the psalm then intends to give thanks in the great assembly. Those public expressions of thanks within the community of the people of God resonate in a new and personal way with me these days.

I also want to give thanks to you and to the members of the congregations and agencies and institutions that you serve for the equally humbling and unmerited outpouring of love and concern that you have shown me through your prayers and cards, meals and personal greetings. These gifts of love have been treasures for me, and a powerful witness to the strength of community that we share. How often in these last five weeks I have seen with new eyes what an astounding privilege it is to be welcomed into the Body of Christ through Holy Baptism.

Deep gratitude is also due to the called staff and support staff of our synod office. They have put in a great deal of extra work on your behalf, and have modeled hopeful and collegial ministry in my absence, in a time that we know is already very challenging for a number of reasons. I trust that you will join me in expressing heartfelt appreciation for their labor on behalf of this synod.

Finally, I would like to share with you a word of thanks for my family. Pam took a week off of work to be with me daily while I was in the hospital, and my parents came and moved into our guest room to provide daily care for me once I returned home. They are leaving this weekend because I am now largely able to care for myself at home, but their gift of a ministry of presence has also been a true joy to experience.

I continue to experience healing in my body daily, and I am told to expect a full recovery in time without any lingering physical disability. I have been relieved of supplemental oxygen, and of the neck brace, but I still have a brace on my right arm, I continue to take pain medication every four hours, and I am not yet permitted to drive. I plan to return to the office on Monday, January 4, and I am looking forward very much to being fully engaged with you again in the ministry that we share here in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

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Many of you know personally, or have heard from others, that a traumatic event can bear the gift of a renewal of priorities for living. As you might imagine, I am experiencing that kind of refreshment of my spirit through this event, which confirms in its own way the primary story that

we cherish: that God brings hope out of despair, joy out of sorrow, resurrection out of death.  
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

With you in Christ,

+Kurt

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As a service to grieving families, St. James provides a meal following the funeral. If you are interested in helping with this service during the year please check the following and return this slip to the offering plate or to the office.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can provide a salad, casserole or desert

\_\_\_\_\_ I can assist by helping out in the kitchen and serving at the meal.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to contribute \_\_\_\_\_ dollars for funeral meals.

Thank you for volunteering to help out when needed for funeral meals. Please sign your name and phone number and you will be contacted when help is needed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_