

Bearing witness on the sidewalk

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The Gospel of Luke ends with the Ascension. Before Jesus ascends, he reveals himself before the disciples and “opened their minds to understand the scriptures” so that they may be “witnesses of these things.”



As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, this is our task. We are called to witness. But we are called to witness in a way that goes beyond merely testifying to the events that have happened. We witness to the needs, concerns, joys, and celebrations in our community and the world around us as well. We witness to the change in our own hearts, and we let this transform how we engage they world through prayer and action.

At different times in the year, I put out sidewalk chalk in front of the church so that passersby can take a moment out of their busy day—walking their kids to school, their morning jog—to pause and write or



It is incredible to see children, parents, and

people in suits squatting on the ground with chalk in hand, taking the time to write a prayer as people walk by them. Sometimes the morning dew or a passing rain cloud will wash it all away, only to have the sidewalk fill up again the next day.

The prayers range from the mundane to the profound, from the hurt to the grateful. As people take time out of their day to scribble their prayers, they invite us in to witness a glimpse of their life.

As the prayers litter the sidewalk, those walking by are witnesses to all that their community has to say. As the prayers surround the church, we are tasked to lift them up and bear witness to these things.



Something as simple as sidewalk chalk can invite those in our church and our community to bear witness. A communal place such as the sidewalk can be a space where we remind one another that we are not alone—someone is listening, praying, and testifying to all these things. Sometimes a sermon doesn't need to be filled with the words of the preacher, but can be given to the congregation with chalk in hand, letting their colorful prayers be the sermon for the church, the community, and the world.

