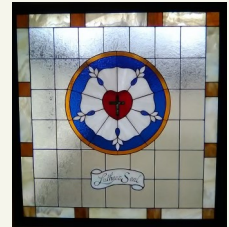




NEWSLETTER

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Grace Lutheran Church

Birthdays

1/05: Jodi Wright
1/16: Micki Gettman
1/16: Bill Whalen
1/25: Peggy
Lilienkamp
1/28: Matthew
Springer
1/30: Charlie
Chambers

Anniversaries

1/08: Joe & Debbi
Lynn
1/16: Bill & Joanne
Michel
1/28: Harold &
Vonnie Suelter
1/19: Bill & Diane
Thompson



The Obstacle is the Path



I came across the following proverb in the back of a prayer discipline book I have: *The obstacle is the path*. To be clear, it is not from the book of Proverbs. But it relates to our faith nonetheless. Let's take a few minutes to consider this proverb.

The obstacle is the path. It seems counter-intuitive. An obstacle is, by definition, something which obstructs a path. How can the obstacle **be** the path? But it is also true that obstacles force you to take a different path than the one first assumed. Consider the times you are driving down the road, only to be met by a roadblock and a big orange sign pointing down the next street over that reads, "detour."

The obstacle is the path. As you think about it more, it might occur to you to ask the question, "The path to what, exactly?" Once that question occurs to you, the proverb starts to make a whole lot more sense. Obstacles in life *are* the path to form and shape us into the men and women we are today. I can't help but think of my last year at the Seminary. Just in the month of January 2025, we got snowed in, I was in two car accidents, and our heater stopped working. Each one was its own obstacle. At the time, they were obstacles that I did not appreciate going through. Looking back, those obstacles were the path to forming me into the man I am today.

The obstacle is the path. This proverb also applies to our lives of faith. There may very well be obstacles which God uses as the path towards growing our faith, deepening our love for the neighbor, and altogether forming us into the kinds of men and women that He has created us to be. A couple examples:

The man who worked all night on a Saturday night, yet nevertheless gets him and his family ready to go to Bible study and church that Sunday. *The obstacle* (his exhaustion) *is the path* which leads his family to see that God's Word is more important than sleep. *The obstacle is the path* which forms him and his family to stand firm on the Word.

Or consider the man who is at odds with his next-door neighbor. He would just as soon never see his neighbor again. But he lives next door, and they leave for work at the same time each morning. He hates this neighbor. But *the obstacle is the path*. Seeing this hated neighbor every day forces the man to grapple with his own unforgiveness and with the words of Christ to "love your enemies" (see Matt. 5:44). *The obstacle is the path* which forms and re-shapes this man to no longer see his neighbor as enemy, but now as loved by Christ.

As we enter a new year, there will be obstacles for each of us. May those obstacles be the path which God uses to deepen our faith and love, forming us into the Christians we ought to be.

In Christ's Service, Pastor Heitshusen