

Pastor's Message
September 6, 2020

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hope you are all doing well!!

As the school year has begun in new and different formats, the Children's programs at Good Shepherd are also in flux. Our KidsKorner, before and after school program, is not in session for at least until the end of the first quarter in early November. The start of the pre-school program has also been delayed until the beginning of November. To support the pre-school children, our pre-school teachers are designing hands-on learning packets to be distributed to the families in early October. It continues to be a challenge as information and direction from different resources continues to change.

The Food Pantry Distribution will be held on our parking lot on September 15th from 1 until 3. With the start of the school year, we are also losing some of volunteers who have been invaluable with the distribution this spring and summer. If you would be able to help to load shopping bags full of food and cartons of canned goods into cars, please let me know and I will pass your name on to our Food Pantry Coordinator.

This Sunday, September 6th is a communion service. Our next communion service will be on September 20th.

I am always looking for people to participate in our Sunday morning Zoom worship service. If you would be willing to be a reader of the lessons or the congregational responses, please let me know. Also, if you have any other ideas on ways we can get more people to actively participate, I would love to hear your ideas.

God's Peace!

Pastor Denise
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Luke 11:1-13

A reading from Luke the 11th chapter beginning at the 1st verse:

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”

² He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

⁵ And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’

⁷ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in

bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’

⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?

¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Grace and Peace to you from God
our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord
and Savior. AMEN

I have a few questions for you this
morning?

What do you think God is like?

Is God nice?

Is God patient?

Is God gracious?

Is God funny?

Does God hold a grudge?

Does God get mad at us?

Does God laugh?

Does God cry?

Does God play?

Really – who is this God we worship
and what is he like?

In today's Gospel – we hear one of the
stories that Jesus tells us that gives us
some insight into the true nature of
God.

It is a story about the friend in need
who comes knocking at the door of
his friend's house at midnight. Jesus is
telling us to think of God as the friend
who is inside with his family. Now this
is not just any friend but a very special
friend that you could reach out to at
midnight after all the lights are out and
everyone has been tucked into bed.

Think about it - if you needed help in
the middle of the night there are only
a few people you would call on that
you would be comfortable waking up
in the middle of the night. And there
are only those special friends that
would respond to your call.

This is who God is! – God is one who
is always there for you, even after
midnight. God is your ever patient,
ever present and ever gracious friend.

Jesus tells his disciples that:

God is the one who
responds to their requests
and gives them what they
need

(SO ASK) –

God is the one who
shows them the way
when they are searching

(SO SEEK)–

God is the one who
opens the door when
they seem to be at the
end of the road.

(SO KNOCK)

And not only does this story tell us something about the true nature of God, but it also tells us about who we are in relationship to God. We are the ones in need, we are the ones who are looking for answers, we are the ones who have lost our way, we are the ones who get stuck, and most importantly

we are ones God has claimed as his very own children.

So that makes God our parent, but not just any parent but our heavenly parent, who graciously provides for us, who mercifully forgives us and who loves us unconditionally.

And as our divine parent, God is so much more than even the best of parents. As we know that God has sacrificed all that he had, his one and only beloved Son so that our sins may be forgiven and we may always be in a loving and intimate relationship with him.

And as we all know, relationships require connection and communication, lots of honest communications.

Which may be why Jesus is telling us when we are in need, reach out and ASK, when we are confused and lost SEEK and when we are stuck and frustrated KNOCK

Who is our God – Our God is the one who listens, who answers, who shows us the way and who opens the door.

So - how do we ask, how do we seek, how do we knock.

We start by communicating with God.

And how do we communicate with God.

We pray.

Just as Jesus taught us, beginning with words of praise that honor who God is and acknowledge our relationship to God - Our Father – holy is your name.

Our Father – not **my** Father, but **our** Father, acknowledging that we always pray not only with regard to our relationship to God, but also in community with our brothers and sisters.

Next, we acknowledge God's work and God's reign– the coming of the kingdom. In Jesus' time here on Earth, he talked a lot about the coming of

God's kingdom and Jesus even sent 70 followers out to other villages to share the good news that the reign of God's kingdom is near.

Jesus tells the disciples that as children of the kingdom, we pray that God will give us the insight, the strength, and the courage to do our part to bring about God's kingdom here on earth just as it is in heaven.

And then only after we have praised God and acknowledged God's work and mission, do we ask God to provide for us all of our daily needs; asking God to take care of us, to feed us, to keep us warm and to protect us from those who want to do us harm.

We then ask for forgiveness. For as sinful ones that we are, we are never able to live up to ways of the kingdom.

We are never able to keep the commandments that God has given.

We have done wrong against God by doing wrong against our neighbor.

And just as we ask for God's

forgiveness for the sins that we have committed, we acknowledge that we need to humble ourselves and make amends by forgiving those who have wronged us.

And lastly, we ask God to help us to make choices that do not get us into trouble. Help us to live each day in a way that keeps us out of harm's way. Help us make good decisions. Help us choose actions that are good for us and good for our neighbor.

Pray, because that is how we communicate and stay connected to God.

Pray, because that is how we do what Jesus has taught us to do.

Pray, because that is: how we ask, how we seek and how we knock.

And because of who God is in relationship to us.

We can pray with confidence; confident that God will hear and answer our prayers, confident that

God will rescue us when we are lost or in trouble, and confident that God will be there to open the door and invite us in

Because of who God is we can pray with boldness and honesty without shame or guilt; for God knows who we are and God loves us for who we are and God has already forgiven us for our sinful thoughts and deeds.

Because of who God is and because we are his!

We pray to communicate and be in relationship with the one who has loved us from the moment we were conceived. We pray to connect to our heavenly Father, like we would with any of our loved ones: to share with our Father our joys, our fears, our sorrows and our gratitude, to ask God for answers, directions and advice, and to spend time with that BEST FRIEND FOREVER who loved us first, who laughs with us, who cries

with us, who advises us and who will
always love us for who we really are.

AMEN

Blessing

May

God the Father prepare your journey,
Jesus the Son guide your footsteps,
The Spirit of Life strengthen your body,
and

The Three in One watch over you,
on every road you choose to walk.

In the name of the Father,
and the Son and God's Holy Spirit

Amen