

Pastor's Message
September 20, 2020

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hope you are all doing well!!

Holy Communion is this Sunday.

Thank you for all who donated "Tabs for Cancer." Crystal, who is the woman who collects the "Tabs for Cancer" stopped by the church on Monday, September 14th at 10:00 to pickup our donation. She was excited to see how many we have collected over the past few months.

Several people have asked about dropping off their offering envelopes at the church instead of putting them in the mail. The office is not open on a regular basis, but Dale Nelson, our financial secretary is usually at the church on a Monday morning between 8:45 and 10:00.

The Church Council met on Tuesday night and as things with the pandemic have not changed, with safety for all involved as our top priority, we will continue to worship on-line on Sunday mornings. Please take the time to reach out and connect with those members who you have not talked to in a while. If you need contact info for people, send me a text or email and I will gladly send it to you.

Also, if you would like information about the decisions made or reports shared at Council meetings, please let me know and I will be glad to forward to you the information from our September meeting.

Boscov's Fund Raiser – On October 14th and October 15th, Boscov's is again supporting local non-profit organizations through their "Boscov's Friends Helping Friends" program. This year there is no shopping pass needed as there had been in the past. You will receive 20% off most purchases and when you give our name as your non-profit choice, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will receive 5% from Boscov's based on the total of your purchases. We will be listed as "Good Shepherd Lutheran Church". Spread the word to friends, family and neighbors.

God's Peace!

Pastor Denise Home Phone 610-750-6432

Genesis 15:1-6

A reading from the 15th chapter of Genesis beginning at the 1st verse.

15 After all these things, this word of God came to Abram in a vision: “Don’t be afraid, Abram. I’m your shield. Your reward will be grand!”

⁴ Then God’s Message came: “Don’t worry, he won’t be your heir; a son from your body will be your heir.”

⁵ Then he took him outside and said, “Look at the sky. Count the stars. Can you do it? Count your descendants! You’re going to have a big family, Abram!”

⁶ And he believed! Believed God! God declared him “Set-Right-with-God.”

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

God of the covenant,
As you promised Abraham,
descendants as numerous as the
stars, you have also promised us
that we might live under those
stars as your people, faithful
and loved. Show us how to live as
your people, and how to nurture
all your children with whom we
share the same canopy of sky
night after night.

Amen.

And so God's beloved humans
have left the garden and now carry
with them the knowledge of their
flawed nature, the knowledge of
the corruption and evil that is in
the world, and knowledge of
shame and guilt for their lack of
trust and faithfulness.

And the stories of the Old
Testament that embody this sin
within are told as we hear of
brothers killing brothers, people
taking advantage and enslaving

others, armies being trained to
pillage and loot neighboring
villages, stories of family secrets,
lying, deceit, - you name it – you
can find it in the stories in Genesis.

And at one point in time, God is
so heart broken over the actions
of humanity, that he causes a flood
that destroys all of creation except
Noah's family, but even Noah
disappoints the Lord in the end.

God searches for one through
whom he can work to restore
God's kingdom here on Earth and
God's relationship with all of
humanity.

And God sees in Abram (who will
later change his name to Abraham)
a man who is trustworthy, faithful
and honest. God speaks to Abram
and tells Abram that God has
chosen Abram for greatness and
blessings. As God has promised
Abraham land on which to live,
descendants that are numerous,

and the designation of being the blessed nation through whom God will bless all people.

Abram and his wife Sarai are to leave the land where they are living, which means leaving the security of their families and they are to go to the land that God will give them.

And so Abram at age 75 and Sarai, who was of similar age set out for the land that God has promised them. And even though at this point Abram had no heir, he trusted that God would keep God's promise and find a way to bless them with a child so that God's promise would be fulfilled and Adam's descendants may become this nation through whom God and God's ways will become known and God's relationship with God's people will be restored.

So, Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan,

As they traveled through the lands, Abram continued to hear God restate his promise of the gift of land for his numerous descendants.

And although Abram and Sarai had followed God's call to this new and different future, they encountered and overcame many challenges such as famine and invaders on their way. They seemed at times to grow weary and wondered whether God was really going to bless them with a child, for both of them (even at the beginning of this journey) were beyond their childbearing years.

As we hear in this morning's text God assuring Abram that there will be descendants and these descendants will become a great nation.

As God came to Abram in a vision saying: "Don't be afraid, Abram. I'm your shield. Your reward will be grand!"

But Abram who is weary and frustrated and can no longer envision this future of which God speaks replies to God saying: "God, Master, what good are your gifts – for as long as I am

childless, I have no one to pass these gifts onto and it will be a servant from our household, Eliezer of Damascus, who is going to inherit everything?”

Then God replies: “Don’t worry, Eliezer won’t be your heir; a son from your body will be your heir.”

Although Abram wanted to believe in what God was saying, the reality of his present situation seemed to limit the possibility of God’s promises being fulfilled in the future.

Then God lead Abram outside and said, “Look at the sky. Count the stars. Can you do it? Abram that is how many descendants you will have.

And again Abram so wanted to believe that God would somehow, somehow do the impossible and he would indeed sire a child who would begin a line of descendants that would be so numerous that they could not be counted and his descendants would be blessed with rich land and more descendants and through Abram’s descendants all the world would be blessed.

Through Abram’s descendants all that had gone awry in the garden would be fixed.

Through Abram’s descendants they would get to know God and they would love God and trust God.

And through the descendants of Abraham, God’s relationship with all of humanity would be restored.

Outside, under the glory of the endless night sky, Abraham is able to believe what seemed impossible in the close confines of his tent. That is, that the God who created the heavens and scattered the stars in radiance across the sky is the same God who promises him that he will have a son and, indeed, descendants to rival the number of the stars.

Under the glory of those countless stars, Abram believes the Lord. He considers God trustworthy. He holds onto the promise despite all evidence to the contrary. And it is the kind of faith that God counts as righteousness.

Faith – living in today’s reality with all its complexities and limitations and still believing that God can make what seems to be the impossible become a reality.

We think that we have a good idea of what God has in store for us for tomorrow based on the realities of today. But, just as Abram could not image that the future would truly include Sarai bearing him a child, so we struggle to believe in the impossible.

We pray that God’s will may be done and God’s kingdom may come here on Earth as it is in heaven, but can we even envision life here on Earth according to the ways of the Kingdom, do we even try!

But isn’t that what faith is all about, trusting that God is going to meet us in those times when our reality blinds us from seeing a path to the future God is calling us

to, and in those times of desperation, trusting that God will not only show us the way, but God will take us by the hand and pull us forward coaxing and pulling us into a new reality.

Faith – believing that the God of all creations can give an old woman and old man a child.

Faith - believing that God can work through us to bring an end to oppression and violence and corruption.

Faith - believing that God can in us, through us and among us restore God’s kingdom here on earth just as it is in heaven.

Faith - believing in a future that we have no evidence is possible, but trusting that through God all things are possible and God will make a way where there seems to be no way.

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