

Pastor's Message
September 27, 2020

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hope you are all doing well!!

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 whom you have not talked to in a while. If you need contact info for people, contact me by email, text or call me.

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.

Harvest Home – Pandemic Style – As you know we continue to distribute food to our neighbors at the Muhlenberg Churches Food Pantry each month. Since the pandemic, the food comes in pre-packaged boxes for the safety of all our volunteers and clients and for the ease of distribution. Therefore, donating actual cans or boxes of dried goods is not being requested this year. Instead, if you would like to contribute to our Harvest Home offering this year, we ask that you make a monetary donation. You can either mail it in to the church or you can drop off your donation at our Harvest Home drive-by collection event at the church on the parking lot on Saturday, October 17th between 10 and 12. Checks are preferred, but cash will be accepted also. Please make your checks out to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with a note at the bottom left – Food Pantry. We will gather all the donations and send one check to the Muhlenberg Churches Food Pantry. If you would like your donation recorded on your giving statement please use a Special Offering envelope. The Social Ministry Committee will have envelopes available on Saturday morning. Masks and social distancing are required at all times.

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.

God's Peace!

Pastor Denise Home Phone 610-750-6432 Cell/Text Phone 610-858-8187

Genesis 50:15-21

A reading from the 50th chapter of Genesis beginning at the 15th verse.

After burying his father, Joseph went back to Egypt. All his brothers who had come with him to bury his father returned with him.

After the funeral, Joseph's brothers talked among themselves: "What if Joseph is carrying a grudge and decides to pay us back for all the wrong we did him?"

So they sent Joseph a message, "Before his death, your father gave this command: Tell Joseph, 'Forgive your brothers' sin—all that wrongdoing. They did treat you very badly.' Will you do it? Will you forgive the sins of the servants of your father's God?"

When Joseph received their message, he wept.

Then the brothers went in person to him, threw themselves on the ground before him and said, "We'll be your slaves."

Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid. Do I act for God? Don't you see, you planned evil against me but God used those same plans for my good, as you see all around you right now—life for many people.

Easy now, you have nothing to fear; I'll take care of you and your children." He reassured them, speaking with them heart-to-heart.

Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father's family. Joseph lived 110 years.

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

Prayer:

God of dreams and hope,

You spoke to Joseph in his dreams, and those dreams led him to great danger. Yet you used the challenges in his life to save the lives of others. In you, no good thing is accidental. You work in us and through us, even when we are not aware of your presence. Help us to know that you are with us, and that only you are capable of turning all evil to good. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

This morning we hear that indeed God has been faithful to God's promise to Abraham about descendants that will be as numerous as the stars and we hear how through Abraham's great grandson Joseph many people were blessed.

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Of Jacob's twelve sons, Joseph

was his favorite and Jacob was quite vocal about his fondness for Joseph.

One of the ways that Jacob expressed his unconditional love for his son was to have a beautiful robe made especially for him, something that he had not done for his other sons and an expense that was way out of the ordinary for their day.

All of which caused Jacob's other sons to be jealous of Jacob's affection for their younger brother Joseph.

Now Joseph was not only blessed with his father's affection, but Joseph was also blessed with visions or dreams, which are believed to have been messages from God.

One day Joseph had a dream that he shared with his brothers as he said: "Listen to this dream I had. We were all out in the field gathering bundles of wheat. All of a sudden, my bundle stood straight up and your bundles

circled around my bundle and bowed down to it.”

His brothers responded to their little brother Joseph saying: “So you think you are going to rule us? You think this means you are going to get to boss us around?” And the elder brothers hated him more even more.

Not long after that, Joseph had another dream that he shared with his brothers as he said: “I dreamed another dream; the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to me!”

When Joseph told this dream to his father, his father reprimanded him saying: “What’s with all this dreaming? Am I and your mother and your brothers all supposed to bow down to you?”

Now his brothers were really furious and decided to take matters into their own hands to get rid of their brother Joseph. At first they plotted to kill him, but changed their minds and they decided to sell their brother to mercenaries who were on their way to Egypt. The brothers told their father Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal.

When Joseph arrived in Egypt, he served in the house of one of Pharaoh’s officials. He was very well

respected for the way that he worked in the official’s household and shortly after he arrived, Joseph was given the honor of being responsible for the entire household.

While serving in this official’s home, Joseph was falsely accused of sexually harassing the official’s wife and as a result was thrown into prison.

Now, not only did Joseph have dreams, he was also gifted with the talent of interpreting dreams. His fellow prisoners would frequently come to him and ask him to interpret their dreams..

Two years later the Pharaoh of Egypt had a dream: He was standing by the Nile River. Seven cows came up out of the Nile, all shimmering with health, and grazed on the marsh grass. Then seven other cows, all skin and bones, came up out of the river after them and stood by them on the bank of the Nile. The skinny cows ate the seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. The Pharaoh went back to sleep and dreamed a second dream: Seven ears of grain, full-bodied and lush, grew out of a single stalk. Then seven more ears grew up, but these were thin and

dried out by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the full, healthy ears. When morning came, the Pharaoh was upset. He sought out someone to interpret his dreams. One of his servants, who had spent some time in prison with Joseph told the Pharaoh of the dream that Joseph had interpreted for him and the Pharaoh summoned Joseph to come meet with him

The Pharaoh said to Joseph: “I dreamed a dream and nobody can interpret it. But I’ve heard that you have been blessed with that gift.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile. Seven cows, shimmering with health, came up out of the river and grazed on the marsh grass. On their heels seven more cows, all skin and bones, came up. I’ve never seen uglier cows anywhere in Egypt. Then the seven skinny ugly cows ate up the first seven healthy cows. But you couldn’t tell by looking, because after eating them up they were just as skinny and ugly as before. Then I woke up.”

“In my second dream I saw seven ears of grain, full-bodied and lush, growing out of a single stalk, and right behind them, seven other ears, shriveled, thin,

and dried out by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the full ears. I’ve told all this to the magicians and the sages, but they can’t figure it out.”

Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Your two dreams mean the same thing. God is warning you about what is about to happen. The seven healthy cows and the seven healthy ears of grain are seven years of abundance and prosperity. The seven sick and ugly cows and the seven scrawny ears are seven years of hardship and famine.

Joseph went on to tell the Pharaoh that God wants the Pharaoh to plan now to put aside some of the food from the time of plenty, so that they may survive through the time of famine. And the Pharaoh believing that Joseph was truly a man blessed by God, not only believed Joseph, but put him in charge of managing all of Egypt’s resources for the coming years.

Now years later as the famine hit, not only in Egypt, but also back in Canaan. Jacob and his eleven sons and their families were desperate for food. Jacob heard that there was food that could be purchased in Egypt. Jacob sent 10 of the remaining 11 sons to Egypt to buy food.

Now the brothers had no idea what had happened to their brother Joseph, who they had sold into slavery.

When the brothers got to Egypt, they were brought before Joseph who made all the decisions with regard to selling food. The brothers did not recognize Joseph, but Joseph did recognize them.

For a very long time, Joseph does not tell them who he was and he does not let on that he knows who they are.

And after a series of events, Joseph made himself known to his brothers after which Jacob and his sons moved their entire families to Egypt, where Joseph had provided them with land and promised to take care of them.

Even though Joseph had been taking care of his family for years.

Following their father's death, Joseph's brothers were worried that after all those years Joseph might still be carrying a grudge and might decide to pay them back for all the wrong that they had done to him.

So they sent Joseph a message telling him that before their father's death, their father told them to tell Joseph, to forgive your brothers for all their wrongdoing. They did treat you very badly, but now is the time to forgive

them. Shortly after the brothers sent this message they went to Joseph and said to him, we will willingly be your slaves.

Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid. Don't you see, you planned evil against me, but God used those same plans for my good and for the good of many people. Look around, because of your actions, all the people of Egypt have survived seven years of famine. God has indeed taken the evil of your ways that has brought me to the land of Egypt, and used me and my gifts to save not only the Egyptians, but so many people who came here to buy food. Including the descendants of Abraham who were in danger of desolation and destruction from the famine in Canaan.

And this is how, the descendants of Abraham, who were lead to and settled in the promise land of Canaan ended up living in the land of Egypt where they indeed grew to be a great nation.

And all was well until long after Joseph's death when (as we hear in Exodus 8): A new king came to power in Egypt who did not know Joseph. The king spoke to his people expressing his fear and concern that

there were way too many of those Israelites for the Egyptians to handle. So the Egyptians devised a plan to contain and control them, so that if there was rebellion or if there was a, the Israelites would not side with their enemies and overtake the Egyptians.

And now Abraham's descendants, although living together in community as God's chosen people, although worshipping the God of Abraham, and faithfully continuing their religious practices and traditions, now find themselves oppressed, enslaved and abused in

the land that Joseph had provided for them.

God had rescued his beloved people before and this time God had rescued them from the famine in Canaan by bringing them to Egypt.

And now the time has come for another rescue, that will lead God's chosen people back to promised land.

And so the journey to restoration and reconciliation continues!!!

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