

Pastor's Message
October 4, 2020

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hope you are all doing well!!

Sunday, October 4 is a communion Sunday.

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!

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Exodus 12:1-13 and 13:1-8

A reading from the 12th and 13th chapter of Exodus.

12 ¹⁻¹⁰ God said to Moses and Aaron while still in Egypt, “This month is to be the first month of the year for you. Address the whole community of Israel; tell them that on the tenth of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one lamb to a house.

If the family is too small for a lamb, then share it with a close neighbor, depending on the number of persons involved. Be mindful of how much each person will eat. Your lamb must be a healthy male, one year old; you can select it from either the sheep or the goats.

Keep it penned until the fourteenth day of this month and then slaughter it—the entire community of Israel will do this—at dusk. Then take some of the blood and smear it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which you will eat it.

You are to eat the meat, roasted in the fire, that night, along with bread, made without yeast, and bitter herbs. Don’t eat any of it raw or boiled in water; make sure it’s roasted—the whole animal, head, legs, and innards. Don’t leave any of it until morning; if there are leftovers, burn them in the fire.

¹¹ “And here is how you are to eat it: Be fully dressed with your sandals on and your stick in your hand. Eat in a hurry; it’s the Passover to God.

¹²⁻¹³ “I will go through the land of Egypt on this night and strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, whether human or animal, and bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am God. The blood will serve as a sign on the houses where you live. When I see the blood I will pass over you—no disaster will touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.

13 ¹⁻² God spoke to Moses, saying, “Consecrate every firstborn to me—the first one to come from the womb

among the Israelites, whether person or animal, is mine.”

³ Moses said to the people, “Always remember this day. This is the day when you came out of Egypt from a house of slavery. God brought you out of here with a powerful hand. Don’t eat any raised bread.

⁴⁻⁵ “You are leaving in the spring month of Abib. When God brings you into the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, which he promised to your fathers to give you, a land lavish with milk and honey, you are

to observe this service during this month:

⁶ “You are to eat unraised bread for seven days; on the seventh day there is a festival celebration to God.

⁷ “Only unraised bread is to be eaten for seven days. There is not to be a trace of anything fermented—no yeast anywhere.

⁸ “Tell your child on that day: ‘This is because of what God did for me when I came out of Egypt.’

The word of the Lord.

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

Let us pray

Lord God of grace and liberty,

On the night of the Passover the sacrificed lamb became a sign of freedom and you freed the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. In Jesus, you sacrificed your son as a gift, thereby freeing all humanity from sin and death. Help us live into this new life, teaching us to serve you in faithfulness as you have served us. To you we offer our gratefulness in the name of the one who turned slavery into new life, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Amen.

So, last week we heard that Jacob and his sons have moved their families to Egypt, where Jacob's son Joseph had come into a position of authority for interpreting the Pharaoh's dreams. Joseph was given the responsibility of overseeing the resources of the kingdom during their years of

abundance in preparation for their years of hardship and draught. During the years of the draught, Joseph's brothers came from Canaan to buy food. After which Jacob and all of his descendants moved to Egypt to live on the land that Joseph had provided for them.

And all was well as they worked the land and tended their herds and the descendants of Jacob increased rapidly in number.

Generations after Joseph and his brothers died, the stories of how Joseph had interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams, which saved the Egyptians from devastation from the drought were no longer being told. We hear in the first chapter of the book of Exodus that the new Pharaoh of Egypt did not know about Joseph and what he had done to save the Egyptians from disaster. The new Pharaoh looked upon the Israelites who had now grown large in number as a threat. He was afraid that they may one day side with one of their enemies and overthrow them.

The Pharaoh put into place systems and structures to control the Israelites.

Pharaoh had the baby boys killed, he gave them fewer tools and resources to do their work and demanded more output. He no longer left them to work the land and tend their cattle and ration out their own food, but he had men who managed the workforce, and controlled how much of the harvest they could keep to feed their families. And the people were forbidden to gather and worship the God of their ancestor Abraham. Life was hard, the Israelites were suffering and they cried out to God to rescue them.

God heard their cries and called Moses, who had actually grown up in the house of the Pharaoh and his brother Aaron to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

God directed them to go to the Pharaoh and plead with him to let God's people go into the wilderness to worship. The first nine times that Moses and Aaron made their requests, the Pharaoh refused and each time God responded with a plague that ravaged the land of Egypt.

The first of which turned the water in

the Nile to blood and all the fish died. But still Pharaoh would not let the people go.

Next the land was overridden with frogs. The Pharaoh did not let the people go.

Then, lice and gnats came up out of the ground and covered the men and animals. And still Pharaoh did not let the people go.

Wild animals and flies came and attacked Egyptian people and cattle. This time the Pharaoh asked Moses to remove this plague and promised to grant the Israelites their freedom. However, after the plague was gone the Pharaoh refused to keep his promise.

Then there was a plague, which killed the livestock followed by people suffering from boils all over their bodies. Still the Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrew people go.

There were thunderstorms of hail and fire that destroyed the crops and then

locusts that ate what was left of any vegetation, followed by three days of total darkness. Still Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go so that they could worship the God of their ancestors.

The last plague was the slaughtering of the first born, from the first born of the Pharaoh to the first born of the slave girl, and the first born of all the cattle through out the land.

And in this morning's text we hear God preparing the Israelites for this plague so that they could keep their first born safe. God tells them to get a lamb for their household that will be slaughtered and if your household is too small to eat a whole lamb, join together with another household.

On the day that the Lord had designated they are to slaughter the lamb and roast it over the fire. They are to take some of the blood of the lamb and smear it on the two doorposts and the lintel of their houses. The blood will serve as a sign and when God sees the blood God will pass over your household and your first born will not be harmed. And so on the day that God

designated, God brought down this plague that killed all of the first-born throughout the land of Egypt except for the first-born of the Israelites where there was blood on the doorposts and the lintel.

Immediately Pharaoh called in Moses and Aaron and said, "Get out of here, I am finished with you and your Israelites! Go worship your God on your own terms. And yes, take your sheep and cattle as you've insisted, but go.

So, the Israelites gathered their families, their belongings and their livestock along with the unleavened bread that the Lord had directed them to prepare and they set out on their journey to the promised land.

Before the slaughter took place, God told Moses: This will forever be a memorial day for you; you will celebrate it as a festival to God down through the generations, a fixed festival celebration to be observed always. You will eat unraised bread and the meat of a lamb.

Moses then said to the people, always remember this day. This is the day when God acted to bring you out

of Egypt freeing you from a life of slavery and oppression.

This is the story told generation after generation on the eve of Passover, for this is the story of the God of Israel, the one who works in mysterious ways to care for God's children.

This same God is our God, the one who has created us and the one who acts to rescue us; whether we are bond by actual chains or chains that we encounter throughout our lives. Chains that keep us from living the life that God has always intended for us. Chains that keep us from loving and serving our neighbor. Chains that keep us from experiencing God's peace that passeth all understanding.

This is our God, the God who is steadfast and keeps his promises, just as God did with the descendants of Abraham. God promised that Abraham's descendants would be blessed so that they could be a

blessing to others. So that all people would get to know and experience God's amazing grace and God's unconditional love.

And not only does this story serve as a reminder of who God is, it is also a reminder of who we are, God's beloved children who are heard when we cry out to God, and who are rescued in our time of need.

Our God, the one and only God, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses; and the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our God, the one who blesses us every moment of every day so that we may be a blessing to all people.

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