

Pastor's Message
November 1, 2020

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hope you are all doing well!!

We remember on this All Saints Day, the faithful who have entered the church triumphant in this past year: Lois Eckenroth, Leona Hilbert, Arlene Rentschler, Alvira Quinn, Charles Henzie, George Burk, Kenneth Freese. We thank God for the time that we journeyed together with them here on Earth.

Good Shepherd Pre-School – We are planning to open the pre-school in early November. We are in need of a teacher's aide for our Monday, Wednesday and Friday class. We pay \$10 an hour and the workday is 7 hours. If you know anyone who is interested contact Becky Watson at 610-916-2533 for more information.

Boscov's – On the next page, there is a Thank You note that we received from Boscov's. Thank you for all who participated.

Communion Sundays in November 1 (All Saints Day), November 15 (3rd Sunday), November 22 (Christ the King) and November 29 (1st Sunday in Advent)

God's Peace!

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Looking back at this year's event...

We had over 3,900 non-profits participate

We raised over \$500,000 to give back to local communities

We are hard at work gathering reporting and hope to share your total funds raised by mid-November.

All organizations should receive their payment by end of December.

Thank you for your partnership and what you do for our communities.

1 Kings 17:1-16

A reading from the 17th chapter of 1st Kings beginning at the first verse.

17 And then this happened: Elijah the Tishbite, from among the settlers of Gilead, confronted Ahab: “As surely as God lives, the God of Israel before whom I stand in obedient service, the next years are going to see a total drought—not a drop of dew or rain unless I say otherwise.”

2-4 God then told Elijah, “Get out of here, and fast. Head east and hide out at the Kerith Ravine on the other side of the Jordan River. You can drink fresh water from the brook; I’ve ordered the ravens to feed you.”

5-6 Elijah obeyed God’s orders. He went and camped in the Kerith canyon on the other side of the Jordan. And sure enough, ravens brought him his meals, both breakfast and supper, and he drank from the brook.

7-9 Eventually the brook dried up because of the drought.

Then God spoke to him: “Get up and go to Zarephath in Sidon and live there. I’ve instructed a woman who lives there, a widow, to feed you.”

10-11 So he got up and went to Zarephath. As he came to the entrance of the village he met a woman, a widow, gathering firewood. He asked her, “Please, would you bring me a little water in a jug? I need a drink.” As she went to get it, he called out, “And while you’re at it, would you bring me something to eat?”

12 She said, “I swear, as surely as your God lives, I don’t have so much as a biscuit. I have a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a bottle; you found me scratching together just enough firewood to make a last meal for my son and me. After we eat it, we’ll die.”

¹³⁻¹⁴ Elijah said to her, “Don’t worry about a thing. Go ahead and do what you’ve said. But first make a small biscuit for me and bring it back here. Then go ahead and make a meal from what’s left for you and your son. This is the word of the God of Israel: ‘The jar of flour will not run out and the bottle of oil will not become empty before God sends rain on the land and ends this drought.’”

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ And she went right off and did it, did just as Elijah asked. And it turned out as he said—daily food for her and her family. The jar of meal didn’t run out and the bottle of oil didn’t become empty: God’s promise fulfilled to the letter, exactly as Elijah had delivered it!

Sermon

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of compassion,
By the power of God, Elijah provided bread and oil for the widow and her household. By faith in God, the widow provided food and water for Elijah. Give us hearts to love one another, so that in providing and in receiving, we too, might experience the unimaginable power of God, through the one who has provided life itself, your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Last week we listened to the story of King David, it was a time when life was good for the Israelites. But, the peace and the good fortune that they were experiencing did not last.

The Israelites fought among themselves until the kingdom

split in two. In this morning's text we hear of the prophet Elijah, who was a prophet in the northern kingdom lived during the time of the rule of King Ahab.

Now King Ahab was not like King David, who was a devoted and faithful servant of God. King Ahab has not only let his people stray from the God of Israel, but he has actually lead them astray as he pandered to his wife Queen Jezebel, who was a foreigner from the land of Sidon. Jezebel did not worship the God of Israel, she worshiped Baal and when she married King Ahab, she brought with her an entourage of priests and followers of Baal.

Elijah spoke words of warning to the Israelites about the dangers

of abandoning the God of their forefathers, which of course was not well received by Queen Jezebel.

And when Elijah predicted a severe drought as a consequence for the Israelites lack of faithfulness, this prophecy was found to be very offensive to the followers of Baal. Especially because, it was their God Baal who was considered to be the God of thunder and lightning that provided the rain.

God directed Elijah to flee from the country for his own safety and ironically God told Elijah to flee to the foreign land of Sidon, the native land of Jezebel.

While in Sidon, Elijah was in dire straits because first of all he was a foreigner with no family or support and second he was starving as he traveled through the drought stricken land. God lead Elijah to an unlikely ally – a poor widow,

whom God had instructed to feed him when he arrived.

The widow had given up hope for the future. As Elijah meets her, she is gathering firewood to prepare what she perceives will be the last meal that she and her son will be able to share together.

Elijah first asks the widow for a drink of water, which she goes to get for him. While she was retrieving the water, Elijah asked her for something to eat.

She said to Elijah, “I swear, as surely as your God lives, I don’t have so much as a biscuit I can give to you. I have only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a bottle. I have just enough to make one last meal for my son and me. After we eat it, we will die.

Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid. You can continue what you were about to do after you first make a small biscuit for me. Elijah told her that the God of

Israel: will not let her jar of flour run out and will not let the bottle of oil become empty before the God of Israel sends rain on the land and ends this drought.”

And so the widow did just as Elijah asked. And on that day and the days that followed the jar of flour did not run out and the bottle of oil did not become empty. And the widow and her son were provided with daily bread until the rains returned.

These were hard times.

These were devastating hard times.

Hard times when even God’s prophet Elijah would have perished without the kindness of an unlikely ally – the poor widow.

Hard times, when it took both the gifts of Elijah and the gifts of the widow coming together to survive.

Hard times. These are hard times for us right now. For some of God’s children really do not know if the flour and the oil in their cupboards will run out – will this meal that they are

eating together today be the last one that they can provide for themselves and their families.

Will this be the last night that their families will have a roof over their heads and a bed to sleep on.

God has created us to live together in community with one another, and it is especially in these hard times that God is calling us to bring our gifts together as Nathan and the widow did to get through the storm.

Elijah, who is considered to be one of the greatest prophets of all times could not have survived without the help that he received from the widow.

Elijah’s gift was prophecy and his gift provided the widow with hope and reassurance that God would provide and the widow’s gift of hospitality provided Elijah with sustenance even though she thought she had little to nothing to offer.

In these hard times we are living in, it is more important than

ever that we don't try to go it alone. For God has given us one another to both share our gifts and receive the gifts that others have to share.

And granted that is really hard to do right now when we are not physically together and everything seems to take more phone calls, more emails, more texts to connect with and to support one another.

But more than ever right now we need to come together to share our God given gifts, because there is someone out there that needs to hear your caring voice, there is someone there that needs to be encouraged to try something new, there is someone out there that needs you to connect them to resources, there is someone out there that needs you to volunteer to help out those in need, there is someone out there that needs the gifts that God has given you to get them through these hard and uncertain times.

Elijah alone and starving in a foreign land needed the kindness

of a stranger to get him through the hard and uncertain times he was living in. And the widow needed hope that God would provide food to sustain she and her son.

And God brought these two very different people together to support one another as they rode out the hard times they were facing.

So, as God's beloved children who have been commanded by our Lord and Savior to love one another; let us love keep our eyes, our ears and our hearts open as we make our way through these challenging and uncertain times.

For God may be about to connect you with someone who is desperately in need of your God given gifts; while at the same you just may find that like the prophet and the widow, the one who you have been called to serve may offer you exactly what God knows that you need at this very moment in time.

AMEN

Blessing

May
God, our Guardian, protect you,
Christ, our Healer, restore you,
and the Holy Spirit, sustain you,
this day and forever more.

Amen