

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
March 14, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Holy Week and Easter Services – all will be on-line**

Palm Sunday – March 28 @ 10:30 a.m. ...via Zoom

Maundy Thursday – April 1 @ 7:00 p.m. ... via Zoom

Good Friday – April 2 @ 7:00 p.m. ... via Zoom

Easter Sunday – April 4 @ 10:30 a.m. via Zoom

The In-Person Worship Committee has met on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> and is recommending to Church Council, who will be meeting this week on March 16<sup>th</sup> that we begin in-person worship OUTSIDE on the parking lot on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This proposal will be discussed at the Council meeting and further details will be available in my communication next week.

If you have prayer request, please send them to me so that I can include them in my weekly newsletters.

Yours in Christ,  
Home Phone

Pastor Denise  
610-750-6432

Cell/Text Phone

610-858-8187

## Luke 16:19-31

A reading from the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke beginning at the 19<sup>th</sup> verse.

19-21 “There once was a rich man, expensively dressed in the latest fashions, wasting his days in conspicuous consumption.

A poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, had been dumped on his doorstep. All he lived for was to get a meal from scraps off the rich man’s table. His best friends were the dogs who came and licked his sores.

22-24 “Then he died, this poor man, and was taken up by the angels to the lap of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell and in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham in the distance and Lazarus in his lap.

He called out, ‘Father Abraham, mercy! Have mercy! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool my tongue. I’m in agony in this fire.’

25-26 “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that in your lifetime you got the good things and Lazarus the bad things. It’s not like that here. Here he’s consoled and you’re tormented.

Besides, in all these matters there is a huge chasm set between us so that no one can go from us to you even if he wanted to, nor can anyone cross over from you to us.’

27-28 “The rich man said, ‘Then let me ask you, Father: Send him to the house of my father where I have five brothers, so he can tell them the score and warn them so they won’t end up here in this place of torment.’

29 “Abraham answered, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets to tell them the score. Let them listen to them.’

<sup>30</sup> “I know, Father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but they’re not listening. If someone came back to them from the dead, they would change their ways.’

<sup>31</sup> “Abraham replied, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the Prophets,

they’re not going to be convinced by someone who rises from the dead.”

The gospel of our Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Remembering Those  
Who Have Lost Their Lives  
to the Corona Virus**

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

It was a year ago this Sunday that with the pandemic brewing, we announced that we would not be meeting in-person for worship in the coming weeks. Not knowing what was truly ahead of us, we (at least I) thought we would surely be back together in a few weeks for Easter.

But, as things quickly spun out of control and the eminent danger of this highly contagious virus became a reality, things happened that we never thought possible. Schools closed indefinitely, basketball playoffs

got canceled, Disney World closed, hospitals closed their doors to visitors, doctors' and dentists' offices closed and there was a mad scramble for protective equipment for our frontline workers – an uncertain future described way too often as in these unprecedented times.

And then shortly after everything seemed to come to a screeching halt, all too soon I began to hear from you and from friends and from family of loved ones of people you knew who had died from the virus.

The first person I knew personally was Gene Shoher. Gene was a fellow Food Pantry volunteer, who could be found pushing the clients' shopping carts to their cars and loading up their groceries into their trunks regardless of the weather. And the way I would describe Gene was that he was a gentle giant. He was over 6 feet tall and always had a smile on his face and a kind and encouraging word for everyone.

Gene was hospitalized in late March and died on April 16th. And when I received the news in an email from Brenda Leiby, our food pantry director that Gene had died. I could no longer think about this pandemic as

something that happened to other people in other places.

I had a name and a face of a fellow brother in Christ that I served next to on many occasions, who would never again make me smile, never again load a client's groceries and never again be there for his wife and children, all due to this dangerous virus. Gene was the first of five people I knew personally that I have lost as friends, parishioners, and as family members this year to this deadly virus.

This morning I have decided that we will take a break from our Lenten journey to the cross and remember and commemorate – those 530,000 American lives and those millions more across

the world that have died from this Corona virus. Those millions of souls who now from their labor rest.

And yes, we as Christians believe that death is not the end, the tomb is empty and that just as Jesus was resurrected to new life, so too will all the saints, who are no longer with us, will be resurrected to new life. But the truth is, loss hurts, and in addition to a year of uncertainty about what tomorrow may bring, our hearts are heavy with the grief for all those family and friends and co-workers and helpers and mentors and neighbors who are no longer with us.

And so this morning we are going to do things differently – I

am going to stop talking as you lift up those you have lost up in prayer. And we are all going to break the rules of Zoom and talk at the same time, which will certainly create some chaos for Zoom, but will symbolize the chaos we and the families and friends of those who have lost loved ones have experienced this past year.

(I am going to unmute you in a minute or so) and I would like you to honor the ones that you know that have lost their lives to COVID this year by saying their names out loud and telling us a little bit about them as I did with Gene.

If you have no name of someone to pray for pick a number like 236 to indicate you are praying

for the person who was recorded as the 236<sup>th</sup> death to COVID and pray for them and the loved ones they have left behind.

Take a few minutes to collect your thoughts and then I will ask Dan to unmute you, so that you can share. After a few minutes, I will ask Dan to mute all of us again and I will continue with a prayer.

Dan please unmute everyone.

Dan please mute everyone again.

Let us pray:

We pray for all those saints, who we have lifted in prayer and for the other millions of saints that we have never had the privilege

to meet and to love who have died from the Corona virus.

And we pray for their families and friends and co-workers and patients and students and neighbors and teammates whose hearts are heavy and are grieving their loss.

Merciful God, you heal the broken in heart and bind up the wounds of the afflicted.

Strengthen us in our weakness, calm our troubled spirits, and dispel our doubts and fears.

In Christ's rising from the dead, you conquered death and opened the gates to everlasting life.

Renew our trust in you that by the power of your love we shall

one day be brought together  
again with those who have left  
this life on Earth way too soon  
this year.

Grant this, we pray, through  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

And now let us sing in their  
honor – For all the saints who  
from their labor rest.

***Blessing***

May  
The love of God,  
The light of Christ,  
And the joy of the Holy Spirit  
Abide with you on this day  
and forever more.

**AMEN**