

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
May 23, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Happy Pentecost!!

Worship News

At the Church Council meeting on May 18th, it was decided that we will continue to worship outside at 10:30 a.m. on May 23rd and May 30th.

On June 6th, we will begin to worship in the sanctuary at 9:30 a.m. (summer hours). At this point in time, we are requiring masks and social distancing for indoor worship to be in solitude with those who are not yet vaccinated and those who are immuno-compromised. However, with things changing so rapidly, the committee will meet again on June 1st to make final decisions with regard to safety requirements. The service will also be on Zoom for those not ready to join us in-person.

In the next two weeks, if Outside worship is canceled due to the weather, we will join for worship on Zoom (the link is below). The cancelation will be made by 7:00 p.m. on Saturday and will be posted on channel 69 News, on our website and in an email blast. If you do not have access to any of those, contact me or someone who you know has one of those internet resources.

The witness committee sold pinwheels to benefit Family Promise in May. This is a partnership with Thrivent Financial. Through your generosity, we have collected \$700 to be donated to Family Promise to provide housing for those who are homeless. Thank you for loving your neighbor through your generosity.

Social Ministry – We will begin collecting can and dry goods for the Muhlenberg Churches Food Pantry in June. Please, put your donations on the white shelves in the Gathering Area.

Property – We have old metal folding chairs that need new homes. If you would like some, see Lynn Shollenberger or just go into the Sunday School Room (aka Teddy Bear Room) and take some.

Redner's slips – If you have Redner's slips, please get them to Harry Walters so that he can include them in our next request for reimbursements. The funds go to programming and service projects coordinated by the Good Shepherd Chapter of WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Church in America)

Worship Leaders – As we move inside, we will be in need of people to help lead worship by reading both the congregational responses and the lessons. Please let Pastor Denise know if you are willing to volunteer.

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

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Denise

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Acts 2:1-4

A reading from the 2nd chapter of Acts and the 4th and 5th chapters of Galatians.

2 ¹⁻⁴ When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force —no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.

Galatians 4:1-7

4 ¹⁻³ Let me show you the implications of this. As long as the heir is a minor, he has no advantage over the slave. Though legally he owns the entire inheritance, he is subject to tutors and administrators until whatever date the father has set for emancipation.

That is the way it is with us: When we were minors, we were just like slaves ordered around by simple instructions (the tutors and administrators of this world), with no say in the conduct of our own lives.

⁴⁻⁷ But when the time arrived that was set by God the Father, God sent his Son, born among us of a woman, born under the conditions of the law so that he might redeem those of us who have been kidnapped by the law.

Thus we have been set free to experience our rightful heritage. You can tell for sure that you are now fully adopted as his own children because God sent the Spirit of his Son into our lives crying out, “Papa! Father!”

Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a

child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the inheritance.

Galatians 5:16-26

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness.

These two ways of life are contrary to each other, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. Why don't you choose to be led by the Spirit and so escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence?

¹⁹⁻²¹ It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied

wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on.

This isn't the first time I have warned you, you know. If you use your freedom this way, you will not inherit God's kingdom.

²²⁻²³ But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity.

We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

²³⁻²⁴ Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way.

Among those who belong to Christ, everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.

²⁵⁻²⁶ Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work

out its implications in every detail of our lives.

That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

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

Let us pray:

Gracious God, set us free to live as disciples of Christ. Fill us with your Spirit, so that we might bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no limit to this fruit. May it be so in all of our lives. Amen.

Happy Birthday Church!!!!!!

Today we celebrate almost 2000 years of being God's children united in Christ. And that is a whole lot of candles to put on a birthday cake.

A whole lot of years and a whole lot of faithful servants in whom God's Holy Spirit has been producing fruit.

A whole lot of disciples, who are fulfilling the words that we heard at our baptism from Matthew 5:16 – let your light so shine before others so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

A whole lot of light that has been brought into this dark and broken world.

A whole lot of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control to do the work of the kingdom that we celebrate of this morning.

The light that dwells within us is God's Holy Spirit that made her presence known at the Jewish

festival of Pentecost that followed the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus the Christ.

The Jews, many of whom had become followers of Christ had made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate this festival of Pentecost, which was one of the three Jewish festivals in which the Jews traveled to Jerusalem to commemorate what God had done for them as they wandered homeless in the dessert after God rescued them from being slaves in Egypt and then given them the law to support the building of healthy and viable communities of faith.

And so, this festival of Pentecost that we celebrate today from the Christian perspective as the birth of God's church is both the continuation of God's covenant with the descendants of Abraham and at the same time God's kick off for what it means to live life under the new covenant that God made with all

people through the faithfulness and obedience of God's very own son, Jesus.

Which is what we have heard the last few weeks from the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians. And in the 4th and 5th chapters of Galatians we hear Paul ask the people of the faith community in Galatia: what does it mean to live out the love of the Christ?

Paul reminds the Galatians that there are two very foundations upon which to make your life choices. And these two ways are incompatible with one another, so much so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day. So Paul advises the Galatians, to choose to be led by the Spirit, so that they can escape the erratic compulsions of a law-dominated existence.

Living a law-dominated existence puts you at risk of being centered on your own

righteous, doing what think will work to your advantage even at the expense of your neighbor or God's creation or even future generations, building walls instead of bridges, and creating labels and rules that exclude and condemn.

Paul then asks the Galatians to consider: What happens when we live God's way? And then Paul (as he often does) answers his own question as he says: what happens is that God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity.

As Lutherans we refer to these attributes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as the fruit that God's Holy Spirit has produced within us.

And when you think of actions or responses that are displayed by these attributes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

None of them can be legislated in a person's life. You can legislate safety measures for driving, or rules for orderly conduct, or even rules for educating our children to create healthy and vital communities, but you can't legislate caring and the love of your neighbor. That comes from God's Holy Spirit that dwells within you.

You can't legislate joy. You can provide entertainment, but true joy comes from experiencing the love of Christ and living out the love of Christ. True joy comes from within and cannot be taken away.

You can make people wait, but you can't legislate patience. Patience (as we have heard so often) is a virtue, not something we can be made to do. But if we have chosen a life centered in the life and love of Christ, God's Holy Spirit allows us to trust in

God and in God's timing which produces the fruit of patience.

And generosity, you can try to legislate generosity but making people feel guilty about how they use their resources, but that only makes them discontent or angry. True generosity comes from the heart and manifests itself in a passion for doing for others.

And faithfulness, the faith we have is not something we create through our own spiritual disciplines, but faith is that fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in us which allows to believe the unbelievable story of a God who loved us so much that God sent God's Son to take on flesh and live among us and then die and be raised again. It's that fruit of faith that reveals to us God's steadfast presence in our lives and in the world.

Paul asked the Galatians which foundation will you choose; the one where it is all about who you are and what you do **OR** will you choose the one where it is all

about whose you are and what God is doing in you, though you and among you.

On this day we celebrate not just the birth of God's church, but the gift of God's Holy Spirit that dwells within us to make all things that are truly important in life possible.

And so let us pray one more time.

Gracious God, set us free to live as disciples of Christ. Fill us with your Spirit, so that we light up the world with the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that your Holy Spirit produces in us. May it be so today on this day of celebration and forever more.

AMEN

HYMN
We Walk by Faith

We walk by faith, and not by sight:
No gracious words we hear
Of him who spoke as none e'er
spoke,
But we believe him near.

That when our life of faith is done
In realms of clearer light
We may behold you as you are
In full and endless sight.

We may not touch his hands and
side,
Nor follow where he trod;
Yet in his promise we rejoice,
And cry "My Lord and God!"

We walk by faith, and not by sight:
No gracious words we hear
Of him who spoke as none e'er
spoke,
But we believe him near.

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief,
And may our faith abound;
To call on you when you are near,
And seek where you are found:

Henry Alford

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