

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
May 30, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Worship via Zoom tomorrow May 30.

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.

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.

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

Home Phone 610-750-6432

Cell/Text Phone 610-858-8187

Psalm 1

A reading of the 1st Psalm

1 How well God must like you—
you don't walk in the ruts of
those blind-as-bats,
you don't stand with the good-for-
nothings,
you don't take your seat among
the know-it-alls.

²⁻³ Instead you thrill to God's Word,
you chew on Scripture day and
night.
You're a tree replanted in Eden,
bearing fresh fruit every month,
Never dropping a leaf,
always in blossom.

⁴⁻⁵ You're not at all like the wicked,
who are mere windblown dust—
Without defense in court,
unfit company for innocent
people.

⁶ God charts the road you take.
The road *they* take leads to
nowhere.

.

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,

Dear Lord,

Thank you that this road we are traveling that has been clearly marked by those who have gone before us.

Thank you for their journeys, for what they have learned along the way.

Most of all, thank you for Jesus who is the Way.

Help us to realize that with each step of our pilgrimage, we get a little closer to him.

Fix our eyes on him, Lord, so that we won't grow weary or lose heart when the road grows steep and the night grows dark.

In Jesus name we pray.

AMEN

Out of God's unconditional love for us, God has given us the freedom to choose how we will live our lives. For the past few weeks we have heard the Apostle Paul encourage the people of Galatia to choose a life grounded in the love of Christ.

In the next few weeks, we will explore some of the Psalms that were written centuries before the birth of Christ, but that present us with the same theme of two ways of living. One which is God centered where we invite God into our everyday lives, where we seek to get to know more about God and God's desires for our lives, and where we take time to connect to God through worship and prayer versus the other way of living which is self-centered, where we are looking

at everything we do from the perspective of what is in it for us, what does it take to make myself look good to those in power and what do I need to do to please those in power.

The Psalms were written to be prayed or sung communally, much like the hymns and liturgy that we sing or respond to together. The words of the Psalms are written as poetry to elicit images and uncover emotions with regard to our relationship to God and what a God-centered life looks like and feels like.

Although many of these Psalms in the King James or the New Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible are so familiar we can recite them by heart, I have chosen for this sermon series to use the Eugene Peterson's translation of these Psalms that have been translated from the original Hebrew and published in the Message version of the Bible.

My intent for using these contemporary translations of the Psalms is to invite you to hear God's words in new ways and reflect on these words with familiar images.

The first Psalm in the Book of Psalms is the Psalm that you heard Kristen read for us this morning, it reminds us of whose we are and the life that God desires for us in contrast to the life that the world reveres.

The writer of the first Psalm, presumably King David begins by expressing God's delight when we choose to live a life of hearing God's voice and responding to God's call by standing firm in our faith that we have been named and claimed as a beloved child of God. A God who is ever present and who longs to be in a loving and intimate relationship with us.

And although our friends and family members are near and dear to us, if they themselves have not chosen a God-centered life, they may be influencing us to make choices that are unbecoming of God's beloved children.

The Psalmist tells us that it delights God, when you choose not to blindly follow the crowd, when you reject those who are up to no good and when you call out the injustices that put those who are vulnerable in harm's way.

It delights God when you choose to take time to communicate with God as you listen to God talking to you through the scriptures. For it is through the words of scripture that God will speak specifically to you to inspire you, to nourish you, to challenge you and to help you grow into the person that God has created you to be.

And just as Paul talked about the fruits of the Spirit that you

will produce from living a Christ centered life, the Psalmist paints the picture of your God-centered life as a tree that God has planted in his special garden of Eden, that is always in blossom, never lies dormant and continually produces fruit.

God created you, God sees you, God hears you and God knows not only your mind, but God knows your heart.

And in this Psalm God reminds you that you are loved so much for who you are and that God is delighted that:

You have chosen to accept God's invitation to be named and claimed as God's beloved child.

You have chosen to love God and to love others as you love yourself.

You have chosen to live into the promises of your baptism as you care for others and the world God

made, as you work for justice and peace and as you make Christ known through your words and your deed.

You have chosen to be God's faithful servant and to walk on the path that God has laid out and God continues to lay out for you.

The God-centered path that keeps you connected to the one who has created you and loved you before you were ever born and who now delights in the life of love and service that you choose to live out each and every day.

AMEN

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