

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
June 20 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Worship News

Worship is now in the sanctuary beginning at 9:30 (summer hours).

Procedures and Requirements for In-Door Worship

- Masks and social distancing required at all times while in the building
- Sign in on sign-up sheets that will be on a podium as you enter the Gathering Area
- Pick up your bulletin and communion kit at the table in the Gathering Area
- Place your offering in the offering plate at the table in the Gathering Area
- Sit only in designated seating places (if you are sitting with more than two people, please sit on the sides)
- Greet and visit with people before or after worship outside
- The windows will be open and the large ceiling fan will be on to move the air instead of the air conditioning, so please dress accordingly
- The service will be on-line for those not yet comfortable being inside.
 - In order to not overload the internet, please either power down your phones or put them on Airplane Mode.
 - Also, so that the people who are joining us on-line can hear the congregational responses and announcements, a worship leader/reader will lead the congregational responses and all announcements must be made at the pulpit.

175th Celebration Worship and Picnic – August 15th at 10:00 a.m.

In honor of our ministry together with Good Shepherd UCC, we will be having a joint worship service followed by a picnic with a catered lunch at Jim Dietrich park on August 15th at 10:00 a.m. Hope to see you there.

Social Ministry – We are collecting can and dry goods for the Muhlenberg Churches Food Pantry. Please, put your donations on or next to 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 Fellowship Hall 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 23

23 ¹⁻³ God, my shepherd!

I don't need a thing.

You have bedded me down in lush meadows,

you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word,

you let me catch my breath

and send me in the right direction.

⁴ Even when the way goes through

Death Valley,

I'm not afraid

when you walk at my side.

Your trusty shepherd's crook

makes me feel secure.

⁵ You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.

You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.

⁶ Your beauty and love chase after me

every day of my life.

I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

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

It has been one heck of an exhausting year. Just ask anyone – a year of unknowing, a year of decisions that were turned around, a year of plans that never happened, a year of people wanting what you could not recommend, a year of day after day after day of uncertainty and second guessing.

An exhausting year for everyone – just ask teachers, or store managers, or healthcare workers, or school students, or even pastors.

And although I love each and everyone of you, I am so looking forward to some time off where I will not be making decisions, researching and interpreting the latest guidelines, adjusting and adapting schedules and practices. Sometime where I can

just sit back and relax, play some golf, read some beach books and recharge my batteries.

And this is a perfect text to kick off my vacation. A perfect text for all of you who are weary from this very exhausting year.

As we are reminded, we are loved, we are cared for, and we are lead to beautiful, bucolic places, where we can rest and be renewed. Places where we can just soak up the serenity of God's creation. Places where we can feel the awesomeness of God's majesty. Places where we get to experience that peace that we say passeth all of our understanding.

Where is that place for you – it might be at the beach or in the

mountains or even in your own home or backyard. It might be that place where you are by yourself listening to meditative music, or where you are surrounded by family or where you are with a special loved one just reconnecting. We all have our own version of what this little piece of heaven on Earth looks like.

And this is where the Good Shepherd is leading us when we are weary, when we are overwhelmed, when we are just spent.

And the image that comes to mind is that of an athletic trainer walking a wounded player off the field with his or her arm around the middle of your back so you can in your weakened state lean on them as you struggle to walk off the field. The game goes on, but for now you are finished.

This psalm reminds us, that there is indeed a time when you

need to stop and rest. A time when you need to lean on the Good Shepherd, who will lead you to that place of lush meadows and insist that you cease whatever you are doing, insist that you lie down whatever burdens you are carrying and insist that you rest. As the Good Shepherd leads you to the place where you are to stop and stay in that place that brings you calm, drink that which quenches your thirst, and take whatever time you need to catch your breath.

The psalmist writes:

You have bedded me down
in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools
to drink from.
True to your word,
you let me catch my
breath
and send me in the right
direction.

And then after you have spent some quality time in the lush meadows, after you have had

your thirst quenched and after you have caught your breath and are recharged, only then can the coach put you back in the game.

The Good Shepherd does not leave you in the lush meadows recharging, for after your batteries are restored to 100%, he leads you to the next place that he needs you to be.

To get there, you may travel on roads that are level and well maintained, or you may travel through some treacherous territory.

Either way, the psalmist reminds us that God will always, always, always be by your side. God will always be steadying you with an outstretched hand when you stumble, God will always be pointing you in the right direction and God will always be grabbing you with his shepherd's crook when you take a wrong turn.

And on this challenging journey, the Good Shepherd reminds us time and time again that is it time to stop to refuel our bodies. And when our enemies are near enough to see what we are doing. The Good Shepherd will protect us.

And at the end of the day, the Good Shepherd will always always bring us back home.

For me this psalm is exactly what I needed to hear this week as I prepare to rest and recharge.

For those of you who are also weary and worn from the trials and tribulations of this past year or maybe even just the trials and tribulations of this past week, my prayer for you is that you also find comfort and calm in these words.

Hear God saying to you; rest my child, the next leg of your journey not only can, but must

wait until you are refreshed and restored.

And remember my child, I am with you every step of the way. Sometimes our voyage will be like a walk in the park and sometimes it will be like hiking up the most treacherous trail.

But I am with you, I will keep you from going astray, I will nourish and feed you, I will protect you and be assured, I will always always always bring you home.

These are the promises of our gracious, loving and merciful heavenly Father as spoken

through the words of the psalmist.

For me, they are exactly what I needed to hear; that is: permission to rest, for it is not yet time to begin the next leg of my journey. And that adventure will be there waiting for me once I have been refreshed, renewed and restored.

And for those words of guidance and grace, I say “Thank you, Jesus!”

AMEN

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