

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
August 29, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Although the weather was iffy for this weekend, the rain stayed away long enough for the vendors to set up their tables at Riverfest at Jim Dietrick park. If you have a chance and are up for a cacophony of great smells, some lively music, and an opportunity to connect with some neighbors, go on over to the park on Sunday. Good Shepherd has a stand selling hotdogs with a variety of fixins. Thank you to Joe and Heather Garl for organizing and coordinating this event and for all who helped throughout the weekend. They could always use a few extra hands for packing up on Sunday evening.

As the summer is quickly coming to an end, we are gearing up for fall. However, with the rise in COVID transmission in Berks County there are still some activities that are put on hold. One of which is our monthly community breakfast. Worship will continue in the sanctuary and as long as we are at a Substantial or higher transmission rate, masks are required at all times when you are in the building.

On September 12th, worship will return to its 10:30 a.m. time slot. Also beginning on September 12th will be Sunday School. Adult Sunday School will be held in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 9:00 a.m. Sunday School for Children will start at 9:30 and be held outside or in the one of the rooms in the Education Wing.

Procedures and Requirements for In-Door Worship

- Masks and social distancing are **REQUIRED** at all times when inside of the building.
- Three hymns will be sung. Masks are required when singing.
- Sign in on sign-up sheets that will be on the table as you enter the church.
- 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 air conditioning will be on.
- 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.

Worship Leaders – We are in need of people to help lead worship by reading both the congregational responses and the lessons. Please let Kathy Bobeck 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.

God's Work, Our Hands – October 12th.

We are assembling packages for our military families for God's Work-Our Hands Sunday, on Oct. 10th. Deadline to bring in items is Oct. 3rd.

Hygiene Items: dental floss, chap stick, small bottles of Tylenol or Advil, tooth paste in small tubes, Band-Aids, vitamin C tablets in small bottles, sunscreen in small tubes, cold meds in small bottles, blister packs, other medical items in small packets. No toothbrushes, hand sanitizer, or liquids.

Candy items: (all individually wrapped) hard candy, mints, chocolates, small candy bars, tootsie rolls, Hershey kisses.

Cotton socks-white or black, calf high, all sizes for adults.

These items have to be small enough to fit into a sandwich bag. They will then be packed into Christmas stockings. Boxes are available in the

gathering area to receive your gifts. A grant of \$250. from Thrivent Financial will help us purchase items to "round out" what is needed to make up the contents for 100 stockings. The Witness Committee thanks you for your support of this project.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Denise

Home Phone

610-750-6432

Cell/Text Phone

610-858-818

Romans 6:1-11

1 What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?

3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with

him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

7 For whoever has died is freed from sin. 8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Sermon

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

Last week, we heard Peter tell his fellow Jews, who had not yet come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, to change their lives. To not look back or worse yet to not try to recreate the past so that they could do things the way they always did things.

One of my favorite quotes is from Maya Angelou, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” For me that quote really captures what Peter was telling the Jews. Now that they heard the good news they were to change their ways and do better.

This morning we hear Paul’s response to what the faith community in Rome was up to. Yes, they confessed that they

believed in what God had done for them through the faithfulness of Jesus, yes they have embraced that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus their sins will always and forever be forgiven, and yes they were sharing the God news of the gospel with all whom they encountered. They believed that they are living the good life freed from their sins, where they could never be separated from God.

But, something has gone awry as many in the faith community in Rome have concluded and begun to profess that since God was going to forgive them anyway, they could use this new found freedom from sin to do as they darn well please.

Their logic seemed to go like this – if indeed they were saved by the faithfulness of Christ – and if indeed there is nothing they could do that would separate them from the love of God – then why not just enjoy life, even if it means making choices and acting in ways that put themselves or others in harm’s way.

After all, won’t God just forgive them again and again and they will be back to a clean slate in the morning.

After all the Father forgave and graciously welcomed home the wayward son who had carelessly spent his inheritance.

The Shepherd searched and searched for the lost sheep even at the expense of the others he left behind until he found them and brought them back into the fold.

And the generous manager paid the laborer who went looking for work later in the afternoon the same amount of money as the worker who started at dawn.

Our God is so amazing. This is our God, who lavishes us with amazing grace, unrelentless mercy, and unconditional love.

And to the people of Rome who are professing and acting out their version of the good life, Paul responds with an emphatic. By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?

It seems that the Romans have forgotten about the dying to sin part of this gift of baptism they received.

As Paul reminds them in his letter -

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as

Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Hear those words and reflect on them for a moment. But if we have died with Christ, we believed we will also live with Christ.

Do you hear in Paul's words both the promise of living of living with Christ's presence along with the responsibility of what it means to live with Christ within us.

To get a better handle of what this new life we are called to live – imagine this

morning that Christ were physically present with you every minute of every day. Christ sitting next to you, eating and chatting with you at breakfast, Christ sitting next to you or walking down the hall ways with you at work, Christ in the lazy boy watching TV with you in the evening, Christ is the passenger seat as you are running errands.

And then ask yourself the question if Christ were physically living with you every minute of every day, would you be making different choices?

If Christ were physically present with you every minute of every day, how would you interact with the co-worker, the friend, the fellow student, the client, the customer, the boss, the waitress, the clerk or the neighbor, who constantly pushes your buttons?

If Christ were right there by your side every minute of every day, how would you deal with the gossip, the

sensationalism, the off-color jokes that you just heard?

If Christ were right here by our side every minute of every day, how would you respond to the needs of the least, the last, the lost, the sick, the homeless, the hungry, the addicted, the mentally challenged and the disrespected members of our society?

If Christ were here with you every minute of everyday would you be making different choices, would you be acting differently? If the answer is yes, than your knowing better should lead you to do better.

As Paul tells the Romans that living with Christ means that this new freedom from sin, this new relationship with God, and this new life we have been promised is not just fir after our death; but for life here on Earth and it comes with responsibilities.

And our energy and our priorities need to shift from the old focus of working toward our own righteousness by close adherence to the law to a focus of using our energies to take care of all that God has created and entrusted to our care.

And the good life becomes the life that we “get to” live as we respond to God’s grace, God’s mercy and God’s love by loving another as God has first loved us.

That is being the best disciple that we know how to be today, and when God reveals us to us how to be a better disciple, we will do better.

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