

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
September 5, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Worship at 9:30.

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

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Corinthians 11:17-34

¹⁷⁻¹⁹ Regarding this next item, I'm not at all pleased. I am getting the picture that when you meet together it brings out your worst side instead of your best! First, I get this report on your divisiveness, competing with and criticizing each other. I'm reluctant to believe it, but there it is. The best that can be said for it is that the testing process will bring truth into the open and confirm it.

²⁰⁻²² And then I find that you bring your divisions to worship—you come together, and instead of eating the Lord's Supper, you bring in a lot of food from the outside and make pigs of yourselves. Some are left out, and go home hungry. Others have to be carried out, too drunk to walk. I can't believe it! Don't you have your own homes to

eat and drink in? Why would you stoop to desecrating God's church? Why would you actually shame God's poor? I never would have believed you would stoop to this. And I'm not going to stand by and say nothing.

²³⁻²⁶ Let me go over with you again exactly what goes on in the Lord's Supper and why it is so centrally important. I received my instructions from the Master himself and passed them on to you. The Master, Jesus, on the night of his betrayal, took bread. Having given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, broken for you. Do this to remember me.

After supper, he did the same thing with the cup:

This cup is my blood, my new covenant with you.

Each time you drink this cup, remember me.

What you must solemnly realize is that every time you eat this bread and every time you drink this cup, you reenact in your words and actions the death of the Master.

You will be drawn back to this meal again and again until the Master returns. You must never let familiarity breed contempt.

²⁷⁻²⁸ Anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Master irreverently is like part of the crowd that jeered and spit on him at his death. Is that the kind of “remembrance” you want to be part of? Examine your motives, test your heart, come to this meal in holy awe.

²⁹⁻³² If you give no thought (or worse, don’t care) about the broken

body of the Master when you eat and drink, you’re running the risk of serious consequences. That’s why so many of you even now are listless and sick, and others have gone to an early grave. If we get this straight now, we won’t have to be straightened out later on. Better to be confronted by the Master now than to face a fiery confrontation later.

³³⁻³⁴ So, my friends, when you come together to the Lord’s Table, be reverent and courteous with one another. If you’re so hungry that you can’t wait to be served, go home and get a sandwich. But by no means risk turning this Meal into an eating and drinking binge or a family squabble. It is a spiritual meal—a love feast.

The other things you asked about, I’ll respond to in person when I make my next visit.

Sermon

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

From the words of this morning's text, it is really clear that Paul is not happy with what is happening with the faith community in Corinth.

And although we do not have detailed descriptions of these early gatherings, historians who have studied this period have concluded that these gatherings for worship took place in the homes of the wealthy.

And people who came to these gatherings brought their own food which according to this text was not shared with all the people mainly because all of the people did not arrive at the same time.

Those who were wealthy came early in the day with plenty food and drink that had been prepared by their household slaves. The laborers of the fields, the caretakers of the households, and other common workers arrived later after their daily chores had been completed.

The laborers and the poor brought the food and drink that they had available which was minimal and sometimes were "treated" to the left-overs that the wealthy had discarded

So, when the workers and the laborers arrived at the gathering of the faith community at the end of their workday; the wealthy had already been feasting and drinking for hours.

Giving the two groups two very different experiences of this faith community's gathering. Which in many ways shamed the less fortunate and caused a division among the members of the community.

In Paul's rebuke of this practice, he reminds the Corinthians that this kind of behavior is not only unbecoming of disciples of Christ as the less fortunate are not being cared for by those who have been blessed with many resources, but also that those who had arrived hungry and thirsty after a long hard day at work, had not been fed.

But it also brings to light that as followers of Christ they are not "walking the kingdom walk" that is living and taking care of others as Jesus had taught them and therefore not making the ways of God's kingdom known to the rest of the world.

And then Paul reminds them that the true purpose of their

gatherings is not to party; but to worship God, which was to be centered in the Eucharistic Meal. Paul goes on to state that in their case, their partying and the resulting divisions were overshadowing the heavenly meal that Jesus has commanded them to share with their beloved brothers and sisters in Christ in remembrance of him.

These beloved brothers and sisters in Christ of the Corinthian community, who have responded to Jesus' command to love one another, who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and who "do this" that is eat bread and drink the wine to remember what Jesus has done, is doing and will continue to do for us, have lost their way.

In our Lutheran theology, we believe that there are two sacred acts, which we call sacraments because they are the two rites

that Jesus himself has commanded us to do.

First to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, where God acts to name and claim us as beloved children of God, and second is to do this – that is take and eat of the bread and drink of the wine of the holy meal, which we sometimes refer to as the Lord's Supper, we sometimes refer to as Holy Communion and we sometimes refer to as the Eucharistic Meal from the Greek meal of thanksgiving.

As we receive these gifts of God, it is in the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine, where we are present with Christ, where we are to remember the sacrifice that Christ has made for us and where we are to remember God's grace in the gift of forgiveness that we received because Christ's body was broken and his blood was spilled to seal the new covenant for all people.

We hear the words that Jesus himself spoke on that night he was betrayed, and we partake in this meal that has been prepared for us. For this bread and wine are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that this divine meal is not just to be a ritual that concludes the partying they have been engaging in all day, but this meal is a sacred act and it should be engaged in reverently and with our hearts, our minds and our bodies open and eagerly awaiting the presence of Christ in the elements that we receive.

And through these gifts of bread and wine not only are we reminded of the new covenant of the forgiveness of sins that was sealed with Jesus blood, but it through the sharing of this meal we are united not only with our fellow disciples in this place, but with Christ disciples all over the world.

And that is what I heard Paul saying in his message to the Corinthians, come to this table, that is the Lord's table with reverence open and ready for the presence of Christ to bless you, to feed you and to heal you.

Come to this table seeking union and unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Come to this table in awe of what Jesus has, does and will do for you through his faithfulness to the will of the Father.

Come to this table humbled by the grace and mercy, unconditional love and steadfastness of our awesome triune God.

Come to the table, where all are welcomed, where all are fed and where all filled with hope as we all receive the delicious foretaste of the feast to come.

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