

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
September 12, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Worship at 10:30.

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

Home Phone

610-750-6432

Cell/Text Phone

610-858-818

Genesis 1.1-2.4a

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the

waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing

fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so.

¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so.

²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every

living thing that moves upon the earth.”

²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh

day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

⁴These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Sermon

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

Grand designer of all things,
The light and darkness, the
dome in the midst of waters, the
sky and dry land, the vegetation,
the seasons, the swarms of living
creatures, birds and great sea
monsters, creeping things and
wild animals, and us; all these
were brought into being with a
word on your lips. And it was
good. Amen.

That's how our story of our
world, of our existence and our
sustenance here on Earth begins.
It begins with God, it begins
from God's voice and it begins
through the actions of God's
spirit.

It begins with God looking at the
chaotic mess that surrounded
God and seeing in it a brand new
creation that God will organize
and God will fill with light and
life and love.

On the first day God's first
command was let there be light,
but this light was not to be "on"
all the time light. This light and
then this absence of light was
created to organize this chaos
into the rhythm of night and
day. So there was evening and
there was morning for the first
day of creation.

So now that there is this rhythm
from the alternating of light and

darkness to God's creation, God continued the task of organizing more of the debris, some of which was land and some of which was water. And on the second day God separated that which was land and that which was water creating different environments for the vegetation and the living creatures that would on day inhabit God's world.

So we see in this story of the creation of the world that in the beginning, God designed God's creation for the new life that was coming later in God's plan. And this new life, the vegetation and all the living creatures including us would be dependent on the rhythms and the organization of the creation. All the pieces of God's world puzzle would not only fit together, but be sustained and nurtured by the

other puzzle pieces, while at the same time having a role and responsibility in the continuation of creation.

And after the environment was in place, God designed and created new life. Living plants and trees that would not just grow into bigger plants and trees, but plants and trees that would produce seed so that in this world that God had created God would continue to create new life.

Our God carefully designed God's creation so that all of creation would be dependent on the order God had created, the environment that God had created, and the living things that God had created.

God created out of the unrelated debris that was void (not meaning empty but that it was just stuff that had no function it had no usefulness) a system of life where each part was essential to sustaining life for one the other components of creation.

God's world was not just a place that was filled with vegetation and living creatures. But, God's World was a place where the living creatures and the living plants and trees depended on one another for their survival and for the creation of new life.

This is the world that God created: a world created to be interconnected, a world designed for growth and new life, and a world that was dynamic and ever changing.

And as we start this new program year here at Good Shepherd we may be feeling that the pieces of our church world are not really fitting together very well right now, or we may feel that some of the pieces of our church world are missing, or that some of the pieces of our church life are different and maybe even unfulfilling

And all of that may be true, as we begin this program year and we still can't put this dynamic puzzle we call church back together again the way it was before COVID. Because first of all, we are still living in the chaos of the continuing spread of COVID. But more importantly just like the world that God created to be dynamic and ever changing to sustain itself. So, too

God has created our church life not to be stagnant, but to be dynamic and ever changing so that we may respond to the world we live in. So we have all changed individually and therefore our faith community has changed from the changes in the environment that we have experienced over the past 18 months.

And the world around us seems to be a mess, and the chaos and uncertainty is making us all weary and cranky – and then our weariness and crankiness is making us frustrated and anxious – and our frustrations and our fears is stealing our energy and our joy.

Which makes this a good time to go back to the beginning and remember what God does when

there is chaos and the pieces no longer seem to fit together.

God steps into the void and God designs, God organizes, and God creates new life.

Just like the amazing designing, ordering and creating God did to create the world that we live in.

God sees our struggles with being church in this crazy world, God sees our struggles with the uncertainty and the unknowing, and God sees our patience wearing thin and our relationships getting frayed.

And what can we count on for sure is that right here right now, God is busy designing, organizing and creating a new and exciting future for us. And in

God's time and in God's way,
God will act in us, through us,
and among us to create new life
that is full of hope and energy
and inspiration.

God steps into the chaos and out
of the chaos God will create new
sustainable and thriving
resurrected life.

For that is what God did in the
beginning, does for us now and
will always do for us in the
future.

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