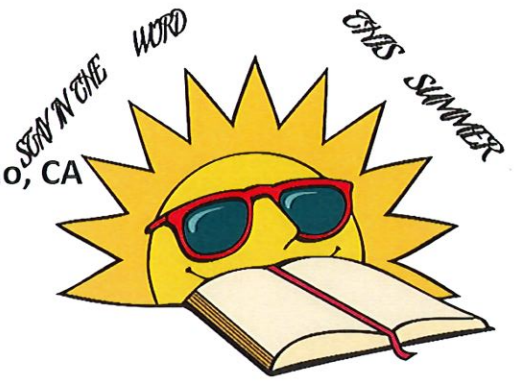


Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

July 16, 2023

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost



Opening Songs "How Great is Our God"
 "We Delight"
 "Everlasting God"

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, who greets us in this and every season,
whose word never fails, whose promise is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors.

Amen.

Merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have hurt our community.

We have squandered your blessings.

We have hoarded your bounty.

In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Righteous God,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have failed to be honest.

We have lacked the courage to speak.

We have spoken falsely.

In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst.

God offers boundless grace when we fail.

Claim the gift of God's mercy:

You are freed and forgiven in the name of +Jesus Christ.

Amen

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 55:10-13

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,

making it bring forth and sprout,

giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;

it shall not return to me empty,

but it shall accomplish that which I purpose

and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

¹² For you shall go out in joy

and be led back in peace;

the mountains and the hills before you

shall burst into song,

and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;

instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle,

and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,

for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

SECOND LESSON

Romans 8:1-11

Life in the Spirit

⁸ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit^[a] of life in Christ Jesus has set you^[b] free from the law of sin



You will go out
IN JOY
and be led forth
IN PEACE.

ISAIAH 55:12, NIV

and of death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin,^[c] he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.^[d] ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit^[e] set their minds on the things of the Spirit.^[f] ⁶ To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit^[g] is life and peace. ⁷ For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit,^[h] since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit^[i] is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus^[j] from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through^[k] his Spirit that dwells in you.

**YOU are in
↓
SPIRIT,
since the
SPIRIT
of GOD dwells
↓
YOU.**
Roman 8:9, NRSV

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew

up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ If you have ears,^[a] hear!"

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸ "Hear, then, the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.^[a] ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this^[b] age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³ But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."



The Parable of the Sower

Sermon **"Sower Power"**

*(Pastor's sermon notes will no longer be provided as part of this devotional. If you would like to hear his sermon you will need to have a Facebook account and access the recordings on the church's Facebook page.)

Sermon Hymn **"Lor, Let My Heart Be Good Soil"**

Special Music **"Come, Jesus, Holy Son of God"**

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55

Where the will of God leads you, the grace of God will keep you. — Anon.

Today's reading from Isaiah features an invitation. In verses 1-3, the prophet Isaiah, speaking for God, utters a dozen imperative verbs, a full one-third of which are the command to "come." "Come to the waters; come, buy and eat; come, buy; come to me," he cries. And then in verse 6, he adds, "Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ... return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on [you] and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (vv. 6-7).

Sounds like an invitation. And if it sounded familiar to the ears of Isaiah's readers, that's only because it was. In those days, a recently crowned king would celebrate his ascension to the throne by announcing that his royal subjects were released from all debts. They were given a fresh start. This was only the beginning. To celebrate the king's new rule, he often called for a banquet. In towns, villages and hamlets, food was copious, and wine flowed freely. It was all designed to signal the dawning of a new day under the beneficent reign of a new king.

Enter Isaiah, acting as a herald for the new king: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!" (v. 1).

What an invitation! "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (v. 1). What a deal! There's more of course, and usually when God is involved, there's always more.

So how will we respond to this invitation?

Regretfully declines? You have "other engagements." You're really a little too busy right now to get serious about faith and the practice of faith. Everyone wants a piece of you, and there's not enough "you" to go around. This sounds like the invitation of a lifetime, but it comes at a really bad time. "I'll have to take a raincheck. Sorry."

Not sure? We say to God, "Let me think about it for a while." Or, we say: "Maybe ... Whether or not I accept your gracious invitation sort of depends on circumstances. I am in the middle of things right now, but I might get clarity soon, and when I do, I will be able to say whether I am all in, or all out. I'm just not sure."

God bless you if you are able to say, "*Joyfully accepts!*" This invitation of amazing grace is far-ranging — casting a big, divine net of mercy and forgiveness. We are all sinners, we are all thirsty, we are all in need of divine food, and God is ready and willing to satisfy our need.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Thank you, O God, for inviting me to the party! It sounds wonderful! I can't wait to feast on all that you have prepared for me. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, today we learn the parable of the sower who went out to sow seeds. We know that the seed is God's word, and it is alive and has the potential for great harvest. But the world is full of many different kinds of soil. We are both the soil and the sower. *Lord in your mercy...*

When we first heard the Word of God, what kind of soil were we? Did we hear it with joy, then fall away, with the allure of the world choking out its effect in our lives? Or did we hear the Word of the Lord and respond with delight and an enthusiasm to receive Jesus into our hearts and walk in His ways? *Lord in your mercy...*

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world. The Earth is being shaken, Lord, by the forces of evil and darkness. We see it reflected in our social upheaval, the winds of descension and discord, even in our weather, the forces of nature. Where should we turn as life becomes more strained and difficult. We turn to Jesus. We stay close to Him. He has the answer for all our trials and difficulties. And we become the sower, the sower of Good News to our hurting world. We share the Good News of Jesus and his salvation. *Lord in your mercy...*

Remember this congregation its pastor and people as we share the love of Jesus. Touch those who have asked for prayer with healing, comfort and the power of God. We name those among us who have asked for prayer. And for what else do the people of God pray or praise? *Lord in your mercy...*

Yes, Lord God, we turn to you, the Creator of the Universe, the powerful God of all things, the Lord and Savior of our lives. In God's words through Isaiah, we hear, "*So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*" And what will be the result: Again, Isaiah tells us, "*For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing.*" All the Earth shall rejoice to the glory of God the Father. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. *Amen.* CAROLYN T. LINN

PRAYER CONCERNS



Members in Need of Prayer:

Verna Walden
Mona White
Jackie Miller
Mary Schmidt
Liz Smith
Bill Biggs
Arlene Robbins
Mary Norris & Family
Connie Alvarado
Susan Berg
Irene Pierini
Jocelyn Miller
Kirsten Linder
Jim Thompson

Family and Friends:

Bob Knous (Anderson)
Karen (Vonny)
Lori (Anderson)
Melissa (Sandy T.)
Joy Kensinger (Miller)
Jenna Vance (Kossow)
Emily Burton
LeAnn, daughter of Tonya. Mona White's Care Giver.
Jim D. (Norris)
Jade Dixon (Julie)
Fred Wilson (Sullivan)
Pam (Smith)
Grace Johnson (Fake)
Sierra Ramirez (Norris)
Krystina Ramos (Norris)
Dora Barraza (Norris)
Shauna Espinosa
Carlos & Anne Cortez (Norris)
Sandy Robbins (Robbins)
Pauline Ritterbush
Autumn Dunlop (Anderson)
JJ Werfelmann (Julie)
Gloria Valdez (Norris)
Emily & Sawyer Bogart (Anderson)
Roger Robbins (Robbins)
Michelle B. (Norris)
Bonnie Wolfe (Norris)
Janet Sharp
Hudson Otten (Anderson)
Karen Ohanesian (Hays)
Rosemary (Vonny)
Nathan Robbins (Robbins)
Darlee (Norris)



*Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven,

Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth,

As it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

For ever and ever.

Amen

Matthew 6:9-13

Communion Hymn

"As the Grains of Wheat"

Closing Song

"Praise"

Sending

P: Go in peace. Share the harvest.

C: Thanks be to God!

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Acts 10-12

Monday: Micah 5-7

Tuesday: Nahum 1-3

Wednesday: 2 Kings 20-21

Thursday: Zephaniah 1-3

Friday: Habakkuk 1-3

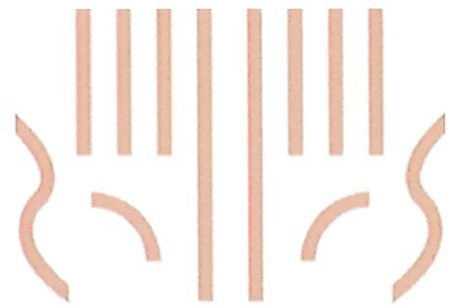
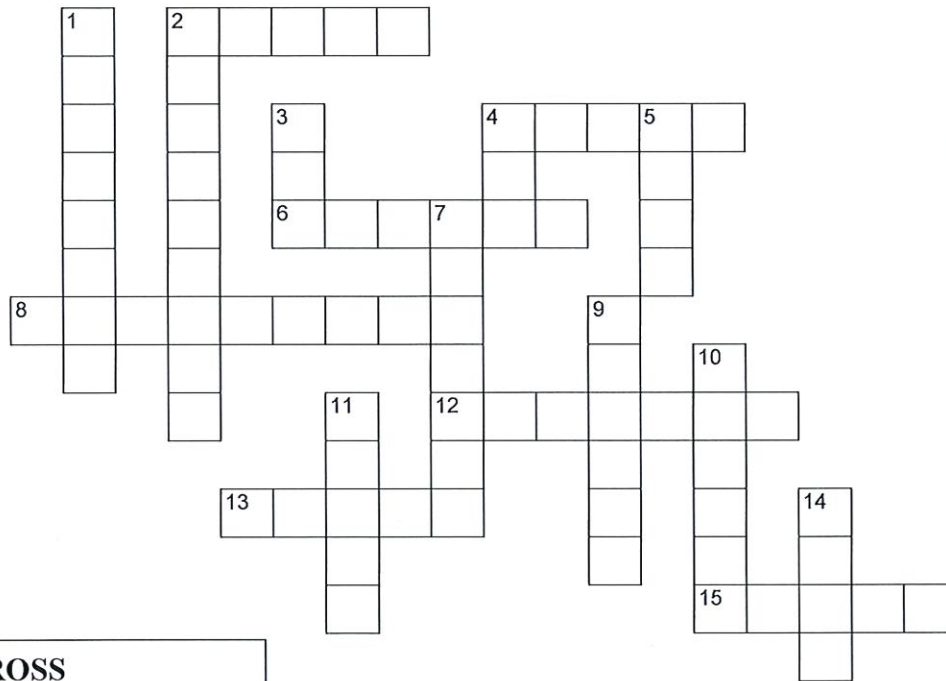
Saturday: Psalms 79-81

VERSE TO REMEMBER

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

—Micah 6:8

CROSSWORD: All of the clues and answers are taken from the story of Job, the book in the Bible that comes right before Psalms.



**Nevertheless, the righteous
will hold to their ways, and
those with clean hands will
grow stronger.**

J o b 1 7 : 9

ACROSS

- 2. Cause of Job's trouble
- 4. Twinkling, heavenly lights
- 6. The Shuhite, a friend (2:11)
- 8. Creature of the deep (41:1)
- 12. The Temanite, a friend (2:11)
- 13. Sores
- 15. Job had 7,000

DOWN

- 1. The One who ever lives (19:25)
- 2. Affliction
- 3. Had seven sons
- 4. Ocean
- 5. Precipitation
- 7. Job had 500
- 9. The Naamathite, a friend (2:11)
- 10. Job had 3,000
- 11. Job's 4th friend (32:2)
- 14. Job had 500 yoke

Solution:

- Across
- 2. Satan
- 4. stars
- 6. Bildad
- 8. Leviathan
- 12. Eliphaz
- 13. boils
- 15. sheep

Solution:

- Down
- 1. Redeemer
- 2. suffering
- 3. Job
- 4. sea
- 5. rain
- 7. donkeys
- 9. Zophar
- 10. camels
- 11. Elihu
- 14. oxen

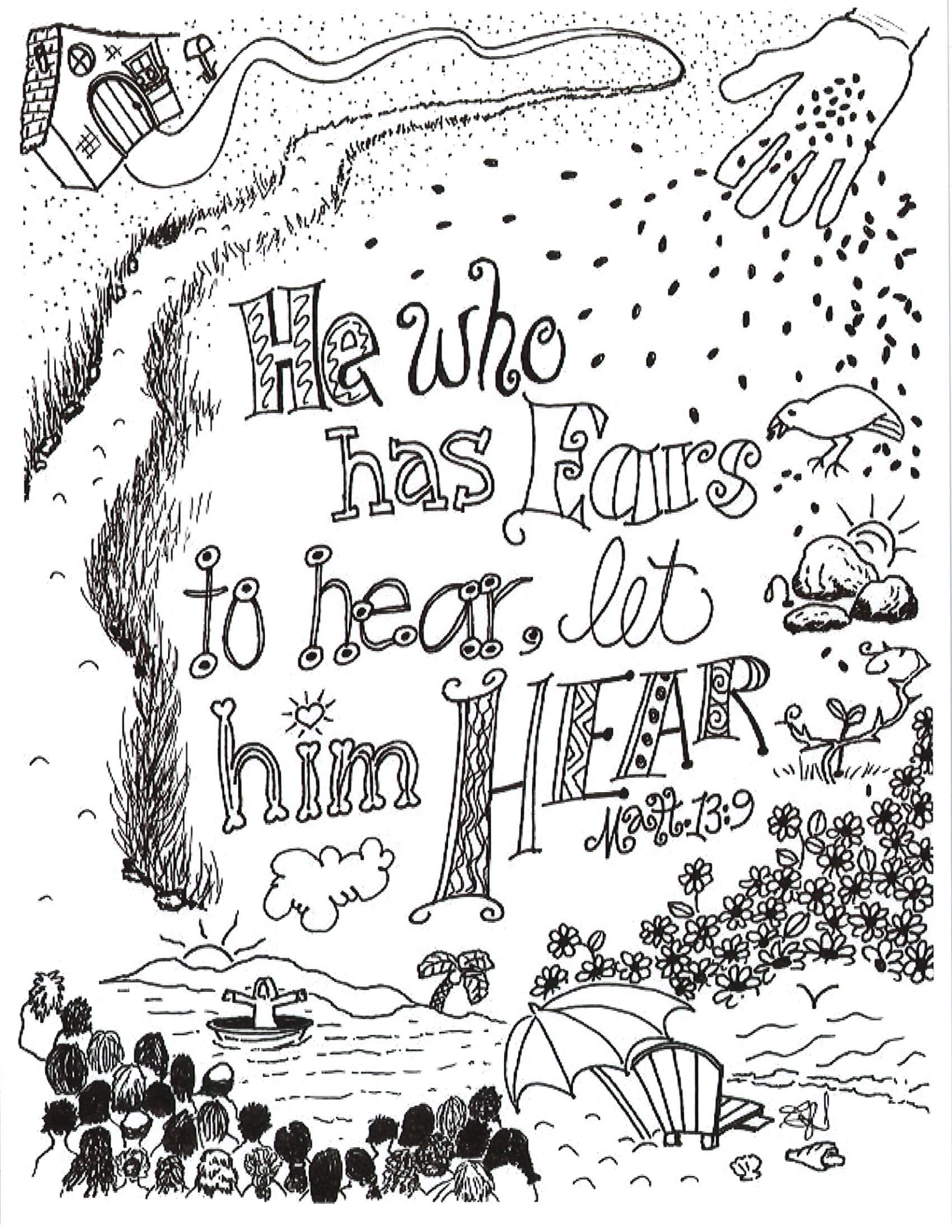
It's found that coloring stimulates the brain and relieves stress. Use color pencils for the following images.

The Parable of the Sower



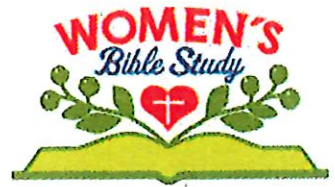
"A sower went out to sow...[some] seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Matthew 13:3, 8



He who
has ears
to hear, let
him HEAR
Matt. 13:9

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Women's Bible Study @ Hope Lutheran Church

We would like to invite the women of your congregation to join us for a Women's Bible Study at Hope Lutheran Church. Candy Paulsen and Donna Lippmann will lead the discussion of the book "The Heart of Jesus : Women in the Gospel of Luke". We will meet nearly weekly from June 7 until July 19 (skipping July 5) from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Hope Lutheran church adult education room. The study will also be available via Zoom.

Candy Paulsen cap27@sbcglobal.net

Donna Lippmann donna_chandler@sbcglobal.net

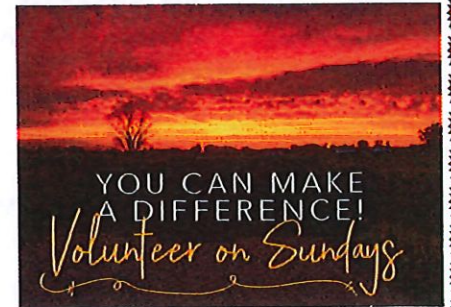
SUMMER BOOK CLUB



Are you interested in a LITTLE LIGHT SUMMER READING? Stories that might involve a road trip and a 5-star resort? With a little twist on what you might be expecting, plan to join us on Aug. 12th @ 9:30AM in the Community Center to discuss, "**The Most-ly True Story of Tanner & Louise**" by Colleen Oakley.

Altar Guild Call to Serve

We are looking for someone to serve God by setting the communion table on Sunday mornings. It will be 4 Sunday mornings on (one month) and 8 Sundays off (two months) on a rotating basis. If you feel called to serve in this important function of worship, please contact Pastor Ted or Gloria Miller (Worship Chair). Thank you.



From Carolyn Linn:



This month, July 27th, my sister, Pastor Arlynne Turnquist, will be celebrating her 88th birthday. She is not mobile and not up for a lot of excitement, but she enjoys being remembered by friends who love her. She would deeply appreciate cards and messages from the Good Shepherd family of faith.

If you feel so inclined, please send her a card to my address. I will bring them to her and make her special day one of joy and good cheer. Send cards to:

Arlynne Turnquist

6336 N. Bergeron Ave.

Fresno, CA 93704

Help Celebrate MEF's 26th Anniversary—July 23rd

Sunday, July 23rd join the board of the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) in celebrating 26 years of promoting Christian stewardship and the mission and ministry of Good Shepherd. There will be a short temple talk and refreshments provided after service to highlight the difference your donations have made here at Good Shepherd, in our community and around the world. Thank you for all of your support over the years!"



VBS TONIGHT 7/16, Adults to Preschool

Sunday evenings from 5:30-8PM. We hope everyone will find the time to join together on these summer Sundays to be nourished and encouraged through God's Word to us. Pastor Ted will lead an adult class in the community center and activities will be offered for children of all ages in Jacobson Hall. Closing music and snacks will be from 7:30-8 in Jacobson, and the adults are invited to join the children once again for this time of fun and praise. **Mark your calendars for 7/23, 8/6, and 8/27.** Please contact Julie @ 559-287-3457 or 13jdixon13@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to help. Come be transformed and see how we are agents of God's C.H.A.N.G.E. Bring your friends and family, too!



**Bring a
Friend
to VBS**

WELCA September 9—Save The Date

Bethel Lutheran will be holding an event 9/9 from 9:00 - 1:00ish, and would love to invite the women from Good Shepherd. Registration information will go out in a few weeks. Thanks! Sheila Lynch



FYI—Check Before You Leave

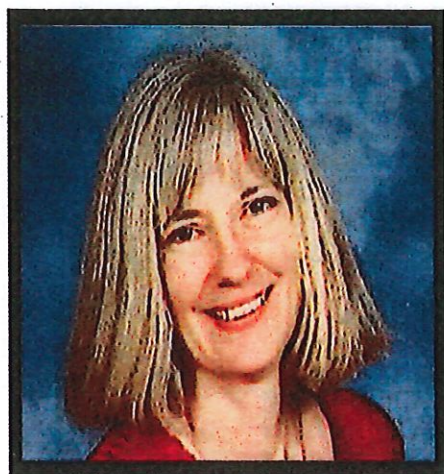


Kathy has gone in the kitchen, in Jacobson Hall, to find the frig., pantry, and ice machine Doors standing open. Please check all doors after using the facilities. Also, don't forget to set the alarm. Thanks, GSLC Staff

SUMMER BIBLE STUDY - TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Tues., July 18th - For women and men.
9:30 a.m. to noon - Leader will be Julie Werfelman
We hope you will attend!

Every summer - on the third Tuesday of July - we enjoy a morning of what we call our **Summer Bible Study**. We have been doing this for many years, and anyone interested is invited to attend. That means men, women, and youth - members and friends - are welcome.



Our teacher will be **Julie Werfelman**, Director of Youth & Children's Ministries at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. She holds a Master of Divinity Degree, and runs engaging, educational, and fun programs for youth of all ages.

Our tentative schedule:
Beginning at 9:30 a.m., concluding with a "plant-based" sack lunch.
Cost for the lunch will be \$3,
and we'll need reservations to know that you will be staying.
Email margieback@icloud.com
No reservation needed for the study only.

The study will cover three topics, divided by a brief "coffee break."
Author is Dr. Anna Madsen.

- #1: Promised Salvation Now - Jesus Brings Wellness
- #2: Tangible Salvation Now - Christians Bringing Wellness
- #3: Needed Salvation Now - A World Wanting Wellness