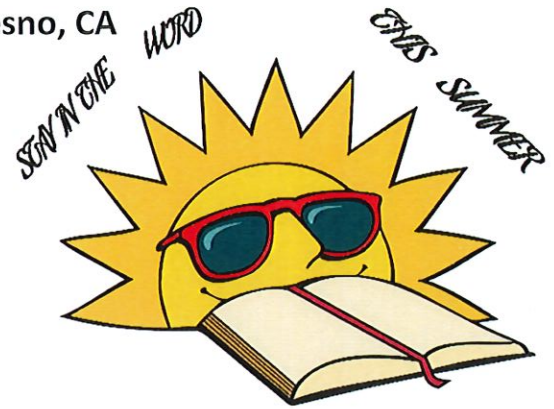


Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

July 23, 2023

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost



Opening Songs "10,000 Reasons"
 "Above All"
 "Blessed Be Your Name"

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

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 44:6-8

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

⁶Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

I am the first, and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.

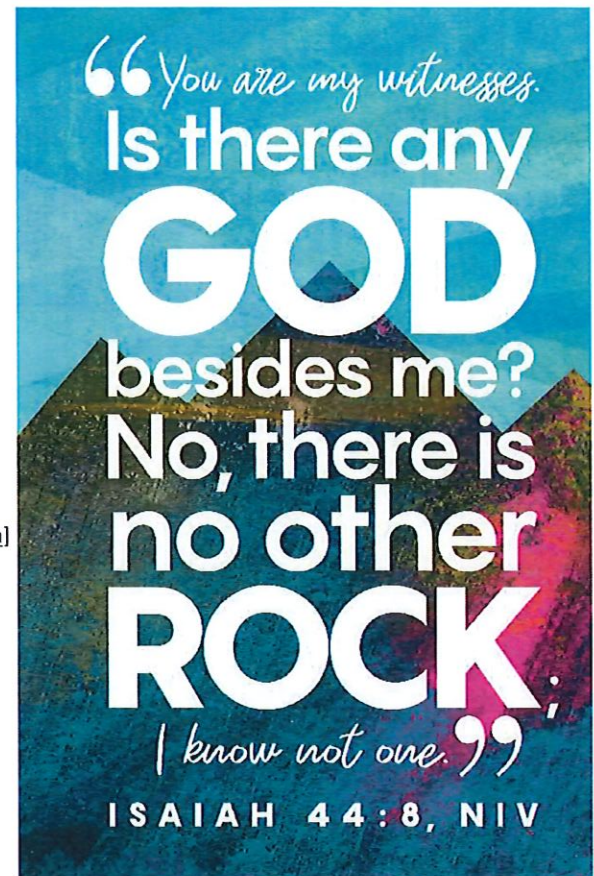
⁷Who is like me? Let them proclaim it;
let them declare and set it forth before me.

Who has announced from of old the things to come?^[a]
Let them tell us^[b] what is yet to be.

⁸Do not fear or be afraid;
have I not told you from of old and declared it?
You are my witnesses!

Is there any god besides me?

There is no other rock; I know not one.



SECOND LESSON

Romans 8:12-25

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are obligated, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— ¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba!^[a] Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness^[b] with our spirit that

we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if we in fact suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Future Glory

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in^[c] hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

CO-HEIRS
WITH
CHRIST
ROMANS 8:17 NIV

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

²⁴ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸ He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

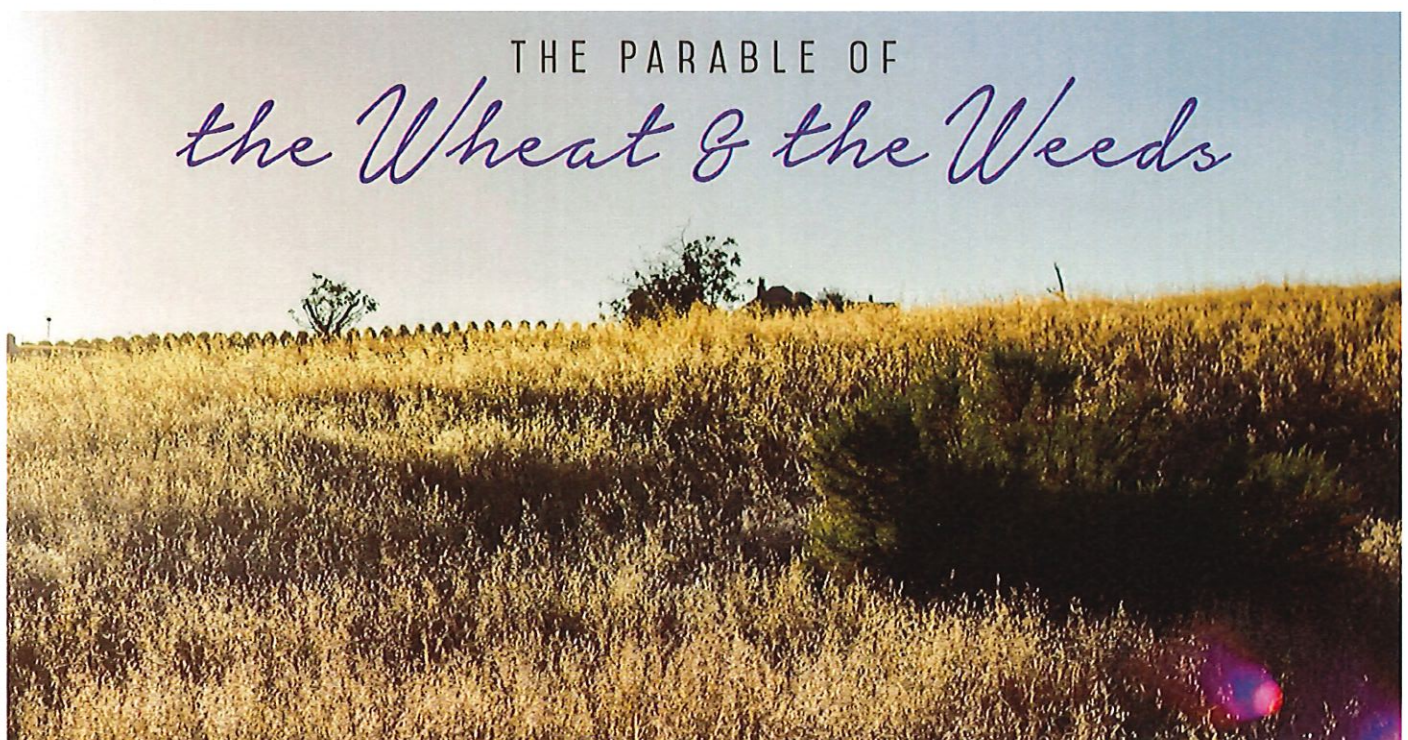
³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷ He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin^[a] and all evildoers, ⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears^[b] listen!

Sermon "Thank God We're Wheat!"

*(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 "For the Fruit of All Creation"

Special Music "(That Is Why I Pray) In Jesus' Name"



Scripture Reading: Romans 8:12-25

*Any concern that is too small to be turned into a prayer,
is too small to be made into a burden. —Corrie ten Boom*

We know that when God answers prayer, sometimes the answer is “Wait.” And, although it is true that many in the Bible died not “having received the promise,” we still cling to the expectation that an answer will someday arrive in our “spiritual” mailbox. We certainly hope it will not take as long as some mail we’ve heard about. Here’s an example:

A postcard mailed in 1940 and delivered one week in 2013 gives new meaning to the phrase “snail mail,” but also to the post office promise that the mail — come wind, rain or snow — must get through — eventually.

The card, addressed to Florence Marion, was finally delivered to her great-grandson, Alan Marion, 74 years late. Records show the postcard was mailed with a one cent stamp from Portland, Oregon, on February 20, 1940. The card arrived at the Butte Falls, Oregon, post office July 2013, and was uncovered by Sunny Bryant, a new USPS employee.

“I was overwhelmed with the job at that point, so to come across the postcard was just a shock,” said Bryant. “My first response was, ‘What am I supposed to do with this?’”

Bryant held onto the letter until later that summer when she overheard a member of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society, Charleen Brown, discussing her work at the post office. Sunny Bryant decided to approach Brown, and showed her the relic.

While it is true that sometimes we must wait for answers to prayer, this applies only to certain types of prayers, like intercessory prayers, which are time and content specific.

The miracle is that God answers our prayers before we ask and even as we are asking. Think of all the good things that happen to us and our loved ones that we take for granted. Think of all the positive blessings we receive in life. Why, we can scarcely keep track.

I call these prayer blessings. God knows what we need and saves us the trouble of asking!— Timothy Merrill. For more on this story, go to: Sabrina Elfarra, “New meaning to snail mail as 1940 postcard finally arrives,” abcnews.go.com. April 17, 2014.

Prayer: O God, thank you for listening to me in our conversations together, and for speaking to me as well. After all, this is what prayer really is — a good conversation. 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. Why is there evil in this world? God made a good and beautiful place on which His creatures could dwell, and He has given each one a purpose. The animals and plants have an order established by God for their good and His glory. That was God's plan. What has happened that God's purposes cannot be accomplished in peace? *Lord in your mercy...*

Of course, we know the answer. It is told to us in the parable of the grain and the weeds. Jesus explained: "*A man... sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds.*" Rather than totally destroy the weeds, God allowed them to grow together. In God's plan of love for humankind, some of the "weeds" might be able to be salvaged. *Lord in your mercy....*

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world that humankind would be brought in alignment with God's will: that all people would receive God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. And in the midst of evil, there is the promise of a glorious future. Even though evil causes distress, God's people are heirs with a promise. Saint Paul in Romans says, "*the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*" We do not see it now, but we have hope. And Paul continues, "*If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*"

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 mercy 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...*

And the story is not finished. Jesus ends his tale with God's final victory. He says, "*The Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. [But] the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*" That is our glorious hope: to be with God the Father and Jesus, His Son, forever. Thank you, Lord, for the hope of the future when we will see you face to face and praise you for eternity. In Jesus' mighty name, we pray.
Amen.

CAROLYN T. LINN

PRAYER CONCERNS



Members in Need of Prayer:

Neil and 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)



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
Closing Song

"Come to the Table"
"Rock of Ages"

Sending

P: Go in peace. Share the harvest.

C: Thanks be to God!

Week of July 23, 2023

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Acts 13-14

Monday: 2 Kings 22-25

Tuesday: Obadiah 1

Wednesday: Jeremiah 1-2

Thursday: Jeremiah 3-5

Friday: Jeremiah 6-8

Saturday: Psalms 82-84

Verse to Remember

*No good thing does the LORD withhold
from those who walk uprightly.*

—Psalm 84:11

BOGGLE

DIRECTIONS: Write as many words as you can using the following rules. 1: The letters in the words must be connected in the grid. 2: The letters can be connected by an edge or a corner. 3: The words don't have to appear in straight lines. 4: Each letter in the word must uniquely appear in the grid. For example, if the word is ERASE, the letter E must appear twice in the grid. The word can't just loop back and reuse the same E.

5: Words must be at least three letters long. 6: Words cannot be proper nouns, such as names or places. Write your words in the spaces provided. Write as many words as you can and then give yourself a score. See if you can beat a score of 50!

S	M	S	E
M	U	G	M
R	E	N	A
F	U	F	L

SCORING

3 letters = 1 pt

4 letters = 2 pts

5 letters = 3 pts

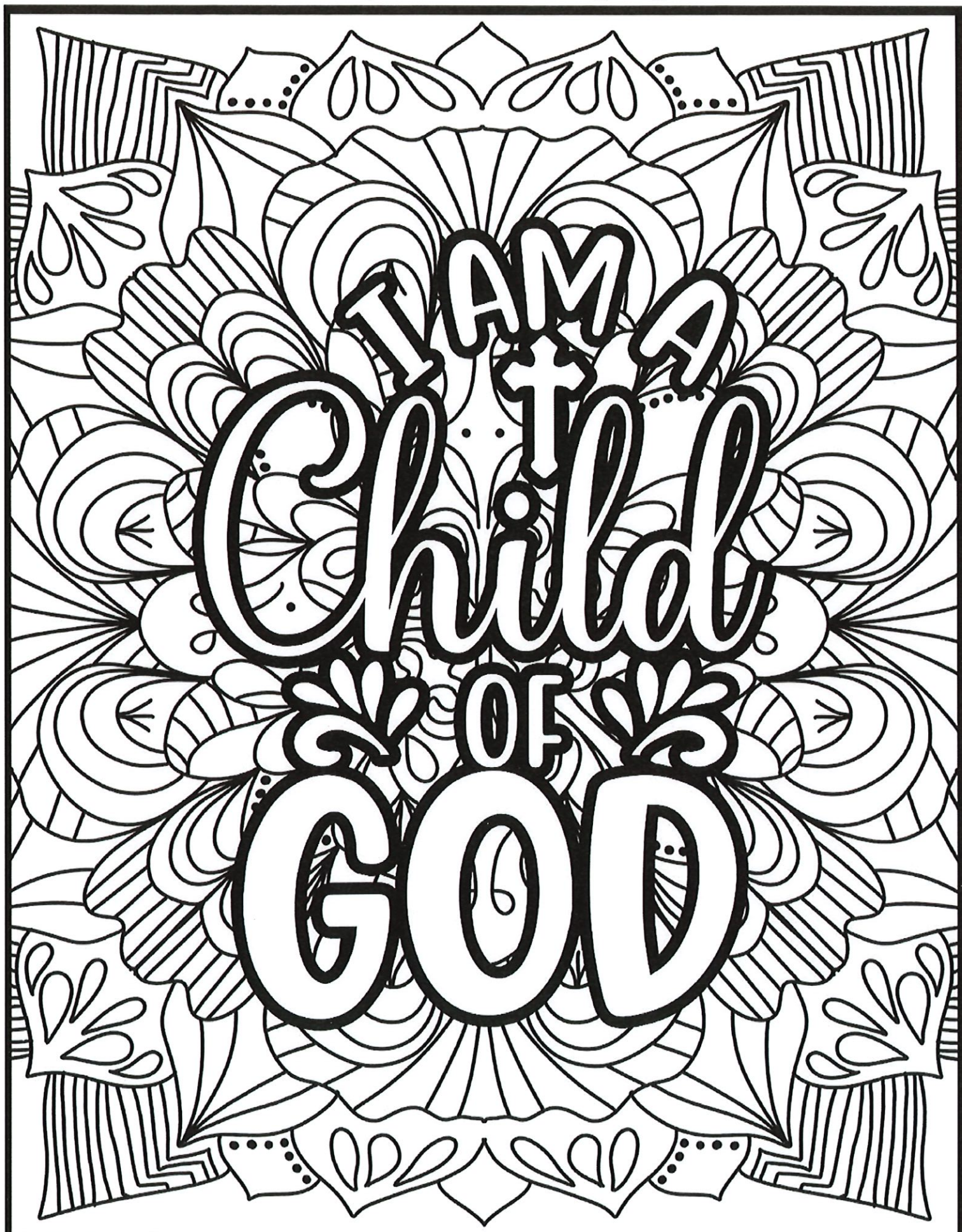
6 letters = 4 pts

7 letters = 5 pts

WORDS (some of the possibilities)

age emu fun fur gum gun man mug nag rug sue sum sun use ages fame fang flag flan game gems germ gums lame mane mugs muse name nags rugs ruse smug surf

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help Celebrate MEF's 26th Anniversary TODAY

Join the board of the Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) after service in Jacobson Hall to celebrate 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 7/23, Adults to Preschool



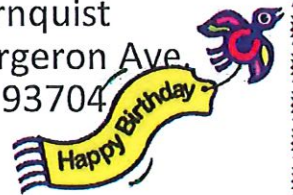
**Bring a
Friend
to VBS**

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. 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 8/6 and 8/27.** Come be transformed and see how we are agents of God's C.H.A.N.G.E. Bring your friends and family, too!

From Carolyn Linn:

This month, July 27th, my sister, Pastor Arlynn 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: Arlynn Turnquist

6336 N. Bergeron Ave
Fresno, CA 93704



Summer Book Club—There's a Party Going On!!



Join us as we conclude our Summer Book Club with a PARTY!! There will be prizes! Plan to join us on Aug. 12th @ 9:30AM in the Community Center to discuss, "**The Mostly True Story of Tanner & Louise**" by Colleen Oakley.

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

of the **Women ELCA**

SAVE THE DATE 9/9/23—God's Work, Our Hands

Our congregation will be participating again this year in the ELCA's countrywide service project. Lutheran congregations throughout the U.S. will be serving our communities on this particular weekend in all kinds of different ways, and Good Shepherd is no exception. The Lutheran Hunger Network will take place here, and the Sewing Saints will be working on a project. We will put together "Blessing Bags" for our Westside Rescue friends to distribute to their human clients. If you have any ideas, please see Janet Mc, Sharon, or me. Start making your plans now as to how you'd like to participate. We hope to see everyone involved in some way. Thank you!

Shalom, Julie

***Rally Day Barbeque—Mark your calendars ☒ 9/10. Plan to bring a friend to celebrate! More info to follow...**



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.

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



Quest for the Flag Key



You might have noticed the American Flag in front was looking really sad. You probably wondered why it wasn't being replaced ... well ...the key to the flagpole got misplaced and we were on a quest to find someone who had a copy of the key. We finally located a copy. The scouts had a flag ceremony at their Monday meeting to dedicate the new flag. Watch for pictures in the newsletter!