

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA
September 3, 2023
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Opening Hymn “Here I Am to Worship” by Tim Hughes
(c 2001 ThankYou Music; CCLI Song #409181)

1. Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness.

opened my eyes, let me see

Beauty that made this heart adore You,

hope of a life spent with You.

Chorus:

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down,

Here I am to say that You're my God.

You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me.

2. King of all days, oh, so highly exalted,

glorious in heaven above.

Humbly You came to the earth You created,

all for love's sake became poor. (Chorus)

Bridge:

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross. 4x

Chorus

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross.

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, +Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who make our joy complete.

Amen.

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Amen.

Steadfast and faithful God,

Your have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you.

We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering.

We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others.

For the harm we have caused, know and unknown, forgive us.

For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us.

Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ,
God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.
God's compassion is beyond compare.
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.
In +Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

Amen

Prayer of the Day

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Worship Music "The Lord Is in This Holy Temple" by Douglas E. Wagner
(c 2004 Lorenze Publishing Company, a division of The Lorenz Corporation)
Song Leaders and The Good Shepherd Chimes

FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 15:15-21

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

¹⁵ O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.

¹⁶ Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart,

for I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

¹⁷ I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸ Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the LORD:
If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.

It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.

²⁰ And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,
says the LORD.

²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

SECOND LESSON

Romans 12:9-21

Marks of the True Christian

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.



**"FOR I AM WITH YOU
TO RESCUE
AND SAVE YOU,"
DECLARES THE LORD.**

JEREMIAH 15:20, NIV



**Rejoice
in hope,
be patient
in tribulation,
be constant
in prayer.**

Romans 12:12, ESV

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly;^[a] do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God,^[b] for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ Instead, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

GOSPEL

Matthew 16:21-28

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance^[a] to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

The Cross and Self-Denial

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷ "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell



"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Matthew 16:24, NRSV

you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Sermon “Your Cross”

*(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 “Will You Come and Follow Me (The Summons)”

Text by John L. Bell, Music, Scottish Traditional

1. "Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don’t know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"

2. "Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer pray’r in you and you in me?"

3. "Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?

Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?"

4. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I’ll go where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I’ll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Special Music

“We Need Each Other’s Voice to Sing” Text by Thomas
Traeger, Music by John Barnard (Text c Oxford University
Press, Inc. USA. Melody c John Barnard/Jubilate Hymns))
Ken Berg, Paul Bolm, John Montgomery

Sunday, September 3, 2023

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:1-15
God's love never wears out. —Rick Warren

In his book, *Secrets in the Dark*, the late public theologian Frederick Buechner tells a story about a time when someone close to him was dying, and he felt as though he were walking in the wilderness.

The hospital trips were grueling. He watched a woman he once knew fade away.

He compared his life at this time to the Israelites wandering in the desert with Moses. They seemed to have nothing to keep them going because the Promised Land sounded so remote and improbable. The wilderness often feels like a place without God, and to be commanded to love God in the wilderness seems contradictory — as contradictory and insane as a burning bush that doesn't burn up or burn out, as the Moses in today's Bible reading discovered.

But in those moments in the wilderness, Buechner uncovered what it is to truly love God.

In the wilderness, where we feel farthest away from God and when all hope seems lost, sometimes we encounter a burning bush, an epiphanic moment in which we learn about the nature of God and our proper relation to God. We learn what it means to obey God, to trust God and to love God.

Buechner says: "I loved [God] because there was nothing else left. I loved him because he seemed to have made himself as helpless in his might as I was in my helplessness. ... For the first time in my life, there in that wilderness, I caught a glimpse of what it must be like to love God truly ... to love him no matter what."

Moses was in the desert because he had run away. He was a man on the lam. He had killed a man. And now, incognito, he had started a new life complete with wife, kids, house, dog and in-laws.

But he could not run away from God. Soon Moses was standing on holy ground — in front of a bush that would not burn. He was in the presence of God, and in those moments he had a crash course in everything he had forgotten, including the notion that there is one God and one God only, and God wanted Moses for his service, as God wants us for his purposes.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Holy God, help me to recognize holy ground when I am standing smack in the middle of it. I fear I miss the signs of your presence. Today, I shall be alert and ready to serve. 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.

Holy Father, we learn from today's lessons that walking in faith involves pain. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah sought refuge from those who were persecuting him for what he was preaching. Yet, he rejoiced in God's words, saying *"Thy words were found, and I ate them, and the words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart."* Lord, may we find joy in the Word of God. ***Lord in your mercy...***

But God was calling His people to repentance. Through Jeremiah God says, *"If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me."* And God continues with a forever promise: *"I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord."* We have that same reassurance: God will never leave us or forsake us. ***Lord in your mercy...***

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world that all people would work for peace and good will. Jesus understood the road of pain and sacrifice. Today's Gospel explains that Jesus prepared the disciples for his death by explaining what would happen. It says, *"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things... and be killed, and on the third day be raised."* We know that the disciples did not hear or believe that message, or maybe it was too hard for them to understand what Jesus said. But Jesus told them the truth. ***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 your loving presence. 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 Jesus continues with a word to all generations when he says, *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.... whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* But the story does not end there. Jesus also promises, *"For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done."* Jesus is the Redeemer of us all. Thank you, Lord. In Jesus mighty name, we pray.

Amen

CAROLYN T. LINN

PRAYER CONCERNS



Members in Need of Prayer:

Yvonne Smith
Jill Anderson
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:

Karl Ritterbush (Fake)
Janet Sharp (Fake)
Art & Children (Anderson)
Debbie West's Daughter, Christine
Bill, Wife & Sons (Julie)
Dan Fey & Family (Norris-No Relation)
Renee Family on her passing (Norris)
Belinda Zavala (Norris)
Jennifer Wenzel (Wilk)
Bob Knous (Anderson)
Karen (Vonny)
Lori (Anderson)
Melissa (Sandy T.)
Joy Kensinger (Miller)
Jenna Vance (Kossow)
Emily Burton
Jim D. (Norris)
Jade Dixon (Julie)
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)
Hudson Otten (Anderson)
Karen Ohanesian (Hays)
Rosemary (Vonny)
Nathan Robbins (Robbins)



*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

Closing Hymn

"God Bless America"

Words and Music" by Irving Berlin

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Fund

Solo (Dee Wright):

While the storm clouds gather far across the sea,
let us swear allegiance to a land that's free.

Let us all be grateful for a land so fair,
as we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.

Congregation:

God bless America, land that I love.

Stand beside her and guide her
thru the night with a light from above.

From the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam.

God bless America, my home sweet home.

God bless America, my home sweet home.

Sending

P: Go in peace. God is at work in you.

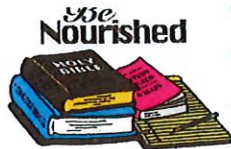
C: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Notes

We
Nourished

Date:

Sermon title:



key verses

Keywords

key people

Notes



Prayers

to study at home:



Sharing the Love of Jesus!

HOME TOUCH® Activity Page

Week of September 3, 2023

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: 1 Thessalonians 1-5

Monday: 2 Chronicles 7-9

Tuesday: 2 Chronicles 10-13

Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 14-16

Thursday: 2 Chronicles 17-19

Friday: 2 Chronicles 20-22

Saturday: Psalms 100-102

Verse to Remember

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

ARE THEY IN THE BIBLE?

Directions: Circle the names of 50 people who appear in the Bible. *Answers below.*

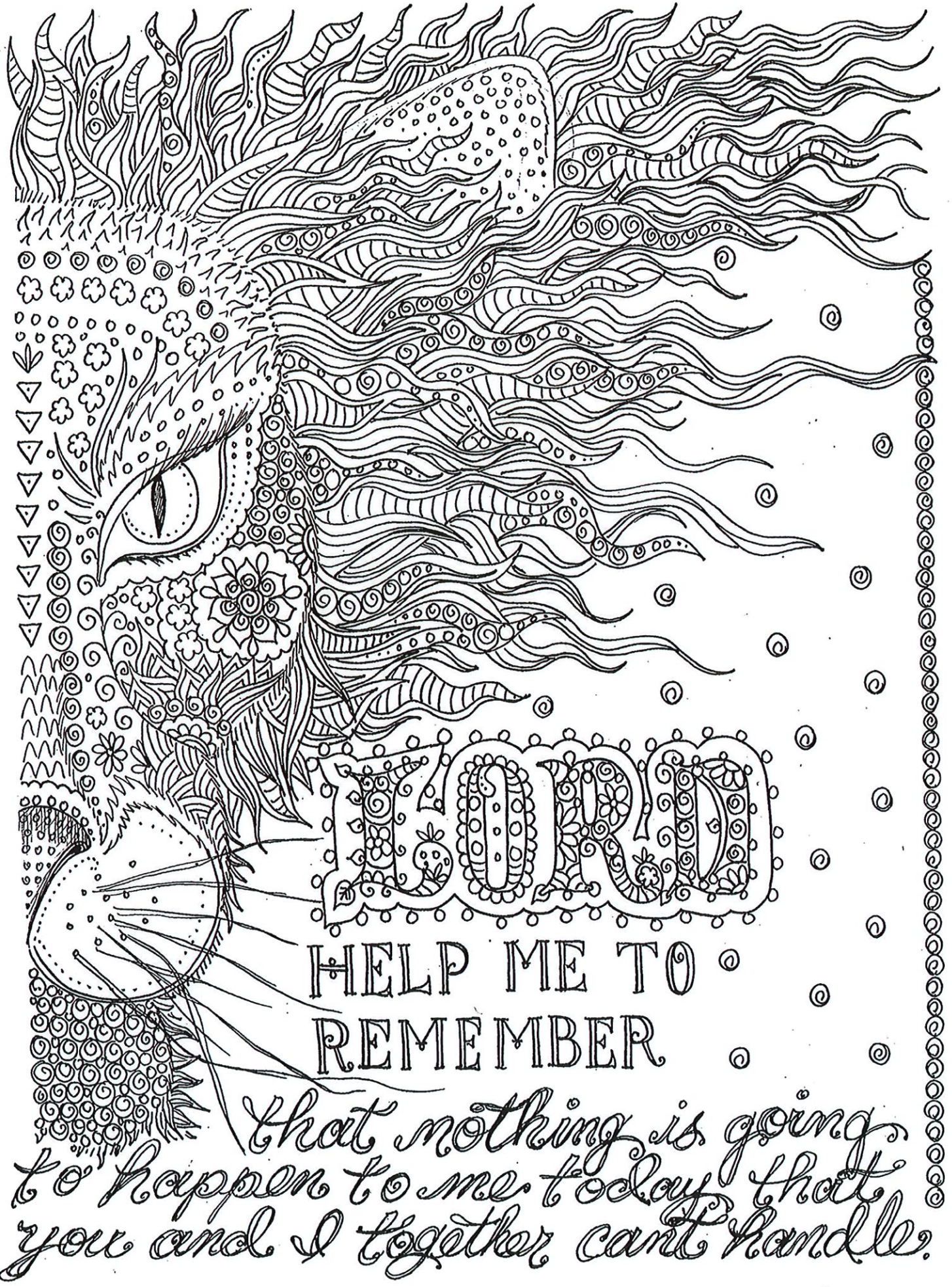
Aaron, Abram, Aesop, Ahab, Ahasuerus, Ambrose, Amenhotep, Antigone, Apollos, Arius, Arminius, Aslan, Ashurbanipal, Athanasius, Anthony, Attila, Augustine, Baal, Bacchus, Bathsheba, Belshazzar, Benjamin, Brutus, Bryon, Buffy, Cain, Caligula, Charlemagne, Constance, Constantine, Copernicus, Coriolanus, Cornelius, Cyrus, Danielle, Darius, Deborah, Delilah, Delia, Dharma, Elvis, Esther, Felix, Ferdinand, Festus, Gabriel, Gauss, Gomer, Gregory, Gutenberg, Hadrian, Hagar, Ham, Hammurabi, Helena, Heracles, Herod, Immanuel, Ishtar, Issachar, Jerome, Jezebel, Joan of Arc, Job, Jonah, Josephus, Joshua, Julius Caesar, Justin Martyr, Kal-El, King James, Lazarus, Leonardo, Levi, Lot, Luke, Luther, Martha, Maximus, Melchior, Melchizedek, Methuselah, Michael, Mohammed, Moroni, Nebuchadnezzar, Nero, Nestorius, Nicodemus, Nostradamus, Odin, Origen, Pan, Pelagius, Pharaoh, Pius, Pontius Pilate, Prometheus, Queen of Sheba, Sapphira, Sennacherib, Seti, Silas, Stephen, Suess, Shulgi, Tarkin, Terabithia, Thalia, Thomas, Tiberius, Titus, Tutankhamun, Uhura, Zeus, Zacchaeus, Zantex.



Answers: Aaron, Abram, Ahasuerus, Apollos, Baal, Bathsheba, Belshazzar, Benjamin, Cain, Cornelius, Cyrus, Darius, Deborah, Delilah, Esther, Felix, Festus, Gabriel, Gomer, Hagar, Ham, Herod, Immanuel, Issachar, Jezebel, Job, Jonah, Josephus, Joshua, Lazarus, Levi, Lot, Luke, Martha, Melchizedek, Methuselah, Michael, Nebuchadnezzar, Nicodemus, Pharaoh, Pontius Pilate, Queen of Sheba, Sapphira, Sennacherib, Silas, Stephen, Thomas, Tiberius, Titus, Zacchaeus.

It's found that coloring stimulates the brain and relieves stress.
Use color pencils to be creative and express your love you God.





FORN

HELP ME TO
REMEMBER

*that nothing is going
to happen to me today that
you and I together cant handle.*

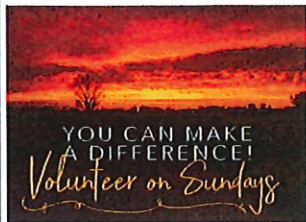
ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coffee Hostess Leftovers Sunday

Starting September 24th, we'll be doing a Leftover Sunday every last Sunday of the month. There always seems to be leftover cookies, chips or crackers - what better way to use up those leftovers than by having one Sunday where we have some of the treats we've previously enjoyed? Steve will freeze those cookies or cakes, so they they'll still be fresh. Also, if you have any leftover snacks you'd like to contribute, bring them in any other Sunday - Steve will freeze those too!

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. Thank you!!

Sanctuary Air Conditioner

As many of you noticed, our AC in the sanctuary was on the fritz. They are replacing the motor for the condenser. The cost is over \$2,000. Any financial help you can provide is greatly appreciated!!!



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 with a Free Food Distribution from 9am-11am. We will assemble flatware packets and center pieces for Westside Rescue's breakfast for dinner event and bag pet food for their homeless clients' pets. You are also invited to bake or buy treats for the Roeding Staff—either in your home or you can arrange to gather at church to do it together. If you have any other group ideas, please see Janet Mc or me. Be sure to wear your gold GWOH shirts and take some pictures!! 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

GSLC Rally Day—Mark your calendars ☒ 9/10.



The Count Down has begun ...

Stay after the service to celebrate and plan to bring a friend to share in the food and fun.



Rally Day Taco Truck!

We are so excited to have the El Encanto Taco Truck coming to our church to help us celebrate Rally Sunday! They will be offering beef, pork, fish, and shrimp tacos as well as sopes at a minimal cost of \$2.50 - \$3 each after worship. The congregation is invited (but not required!) to bring sides/salads to share to complement the tacos as well as your own place settings. We will have a regular fiesta! We will provide drinks and ice cream sundaes for dessert, and we will have paper place settings for anyone who forgot to bring their own.

Bounce Water Slide

There will be a bounce water slide for the children and any adults that would like to participate. Remember to bring something to change into and bring a towel.

OWLS SEPTEMBER STARTUP

Hooties will swarm to Sandy's at noon on Monday, September 18. Ice Cream Sundaes are on the menu. Sandy will contact EACH person on what to tote. Table service furnished. Guest Liz Smith will lead us through a surprise craft project. Materials have been graciously donated. A funny or two plus a challenging mind game are always in store. Hmmm . . . will we beat Diane's attendance record???



Kingsmen/Kingskids will restart on Wed., Sept. 20th

We will meet at **6:30PM** in Jacobson Hall. There will be a potluck dinner. Everyone is asked to bring a dish to share and plan on having a short bible time.



Westside Rescue Breakfast for Dinner on 9/30 in Jacobson



Our friends at Westside Rescue are planning to restart their annual Breakfast for Dinner event again later this month. There will be a silent auction, door prizes, and dessert table, in addition to all kinds of breakfast! Please see me if you'd like to contribute any silent auction items or even an entire basket or if you'd like to help with set-up Friday night or cleanup after the event. Our congregation has also been asked to provide baked goods for the dessert table if any are so inclined. I will have tickets available for purchase soon, but they will also be available at the door. Mark your calendars and come support our Westside friends who are helping unhoused people with pets in Fresno.

2023 WELCA Conference 9 Fall Event

Saturday morning, September 9, 9:00 am – Lunch

(That's 9 on 9/9 at 9!)

Bethel Lutheran Church, 187 N. Broadway, Fresno
(1 mile south of the Tower District)



Faith, fellowship, food, and fun! That's what you can expect when we join together at our yearly WELCA Conference 9 event on September 9, 2023:

- ✚ Always-inspiring Pastor Sharon Amundson of Mariposa Lutheran Church will speak on the topic of *Rebuilding...*
- ✚ We'll highlight some special ministries in the Fresno area and the terrific work they do
- ✚ We'll have our annual (*short*) business meeting
- ✚ We'll worship together, led by Pastor Dorothy Lindstrom, guest pastor at Bethel
- ✚ We'll finish up with a delicious lunch and time to visit with other Lutheran women from Fresno to Porterville

Registration: \$15, due August 28; please send your check (made out to WELCA) to Tamara Thompson, 1677 W. Alluvial, Fresno, CA 93711

Questions? Please contact Conf. President Sheila Lynch, sdlynchwalk@gmail.com (preferred) or 559-392-3948

See you there!