



WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

February 21, 2021

First Sunday of Lent



We have expanded the devotional to include the parts of the service as it will be presented on Facebook. This Sunday will be the Praise and Celebration worship at 9:00 am. You may choose to follow along then or any time after the service is recorded. The videos are saved to the page, so you don't have to watch live if that doesn't work for you.

Opening Song “Beautiful One”

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

You may make the sign of the cross; the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Fountain of living water,

Pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love.

Amen.

Beloved, God’s word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are +forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the

gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 9:8-17

New Revised Standard Version

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.^[a] ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹²God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

SECOND LESSON

1 Peter 3:18-22

¹⁸For Christ also suffered^[a] for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you^[b] to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the

I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.



Genesis 9:13, NRSV

days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹ And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for^[c] a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

GOSPEL

Mark 1:9-15

The Baptism of Jesus

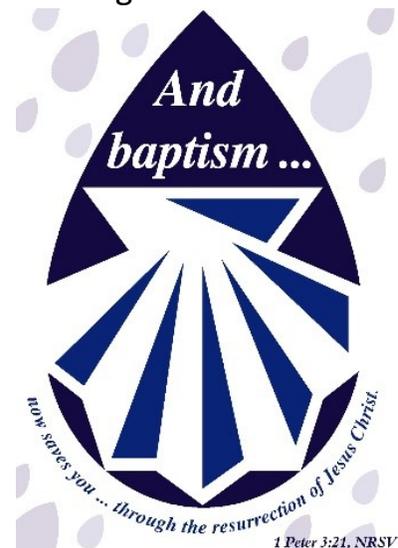
⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved;^[a] with you I am well pleased.”

The Temptation of Jesus

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news^[b] of God,^[c] ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;^[d] repent, and believe in the good news.”^[e]



SERMON

“CHANGES BRING CHOICES”

Preaching text: Mark 1:9-15

This is the first Sunday of the Church season of Lent. Last Wednesday was the official beginning. Our gospel for today deals with another beginning. It is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. As soon as Jesus was baptized, Satan started hounding him. Our gospel says that for 40 days Satan tempted him. It's almost as if Satan was waiting for this moment to start in on Jesus.

I remember as a child someone explained to me that the devil does not waste his time on those who are already doing his work. That makes sense to a logical thinker like me. So, my advice to those of you who are hearing this message is, be ready! Your making worship a priority means Jesus is important to you. That makes you a prime candidate for temptation and other devilish activities! It's because you have made a *choice*. You have chosen to worship Jesus. You will be *changed* because of it. You could have done anything with this hour. But here you are! The devil must be salivating!

Since we are talking about changes and choices as we begin Lent, I thought we could briefly look at some parables Jesus used to teach us about changes and choices. A parable is a little story that makes a big point. Parables were teaching moments that gave great insight.

Once, Jesus told a parable about how the Kingdom of God is like a man who was plowing his field when suddenly, his plow hit something. The man stopped the oxen and dug down in the ditch to discover a buried treasure chest. So, he looks around to see if anyone is watching. Seeing no one, he quickly covered the box with dirt, tied up his oxen and then ran down as fast as he could to buy that field so he could claim that treasure. Jesus observed, “That’s the way life goes.” **The man was doing a routine job when suddenly, and very unexpectedly, his life was changed.**

Often, we are surprised by change. Do you remember what life was like before this pandemic? It was a lot better than it is now! Thankfully, every day, as

more people are immunized and people continue to do smart things like wear their masks, life will continue to get better.

Think of how good life was. You were probably taking it for granted because life has always been pretty good. What were you taking for granted? Who were you taking for granted? When we go through change unexpectedly, we can discover that we have an added appreciation for the gift of life and how precious it is. Jesus is saying some changes are like that. They hit us suddenly, and without warning, and life is different from that point forward.

In another parable Jesus told a story about a man who was a pearl collector. As he walked through the market, he would check out the velvet counters of the gem dealers who sat in their bazaars. One day, he saw the greatest, most luminous pearl that he had ever seen. Without making a scene, he went home to get all the money he could and went back to buy that pearl. Jesus reflected, "That's one way to change your life. Always be looking for the better pearl!"

That is another way change comes into our lives. We initiate it. This of the control you have. Think of the decisions you have made that have determined where you live ... who you live with ... what you do.

In another parable Jesus told how fishermen swing their nets out wide and bring them in bulging with a huge cargo of fish. But along with the fish there would be trash. So, the fishermen would sit on the shore collecting the good fish in baskets and throwing the bad fish and the junk away. **Jesus said that sometimes in life you must select the things you want and throw the rest away.**

Many of you are aware of the "Serenity Prayer." It goes, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

How have you reacted to change in your life? One thing that is certain is that life is going to continue to change. As we begin this season of Lent and hear about how Jesus was tempted it is a reminder that life is going to have its tests. Lent can be a time to strengthen yourself for those times. You are here. That is a great start. Some of you joined us on Facebook for our Ash Wednesday worship.

That's a great start. But are there other ways that you can use this time to strengthen yourself spiritually for the temptations that are sure to come your way? Some of you will use the devotionals we have made available. That can be a way to strengthen yourself for the tough times. Maybe for you it can be added prayer. Or service to someone in need.

You have the choice to make these 40 days a time of spiritual growth. Or not. Change is going to come our way. Sometimes we initiate it, sometimes it takes us by surprise. Sometimes in your life you must select the things you want and throw the rest away. Now is the time to make some choices. Will you be ready the next time temptation comes for you?

AMEN.

Second Song "How Great Is Our God"





PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

God of All Creation, in today's Gospel lesson, we hear Jesus at the beginning of His ministry. He declared, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."* God was about to make a new covenant with the people on earth. In the text from Genesis, another covenant was described. This was a *"covenant...between [God] and every living creature ...[and] future generations."* God would never again destroy the earth with water. Lord, teach us more about your covenants. **Lord in your mercy...**

And yet water was the covenant instrument used when Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan. At that time, God declared from heaven, *"You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."* The Church today baptizes as *"an appeal to God for a clean conscience."* We are cleansed from sin through Jesus Christ's death, and we acknowledge it through the waters of baptism. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world that all might work together for peace. Lord, our world is full of hate and destruction almost beyond our understanding. We need new life in Jesus Christ to be elevated into the realm of God where we can receive wisdom and guidance. Jesus has showed us the way; Saint Paul says in Corinthians, *"He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."* After baptism, Jesus was sent into the wilderness armed with God's spirit, tempted by Satan. Jesus prevailed by the power of God. Lord, show us how to do likewise. **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 peace. We name those from our congregation who have needs. **Lord in your mercy...**

God said to Noah, *"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you."* Yes, Lord, we claim that covenant for ourselves and for our descendants. In Jesus mighty name, we pray. **Amen. CAROLYN LINN**

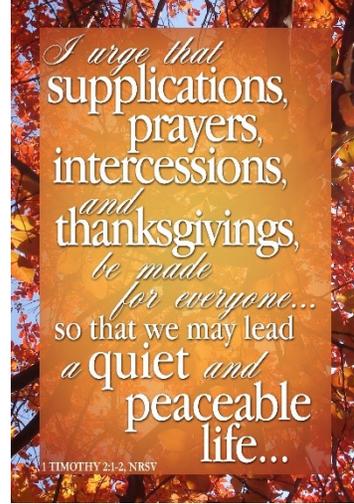
PRAYER CONCERNS

Members in Need of Prayer:

Pr. Jack Niemi
Neil & Verna Walden
Karla Sutton
Susan Berg
Connie Alvarado
Margie Kinler
George Weber
William & Liz Smith
Richard & Kay Schumacher
Paul Werfelmann
Irene Pierini
Jocelyn Miller
Arlene Robbins
Kirsten Linder
Stacy Lairson
Jim Thompson
Addie Dornbusch
Anthony On & Family
David Adamcik & Dee Dee Mello
Cheryl Montgomery
Mary & Patrick Norris and Children
Juana On & Family

Family and Friends:

Janet Sharp (Diane's Sister)
Taylor Waltrip & Family
Sean Walker & Family
Margie Poole
Janet Mobley-Hayes (William Hayes Mother)
Peggy Mitchem & Children (Gordon's Sister)
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush & Pauline's Sister
Kelley Kim
Jade Dixon
Mike D
Anthony Cholicho
Jim & Margie (Liz's Grandpa and his wife)
Kim Carlson
Arlynn Turnquist
Wendy Saffery
Melissa Melton
Kim Boren & Family
Linda (Sandy's Neighbor)
Betty Snyder
Joan Rollin
Rosemary (Caroline's Daughter's Friend)
Sandy Robbins
Eladio, Celia & Family (Roeding Family)
Mickey Cecil & Vergie G. (Friends of Patrick Norris)



Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer



Keep
These Friends
in Your
Heart

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



**FOR CHRIST
ALSO SUFFERED
FOR SINS
ONCE FOR ALL.**

1 PETER 3:18, NRSV

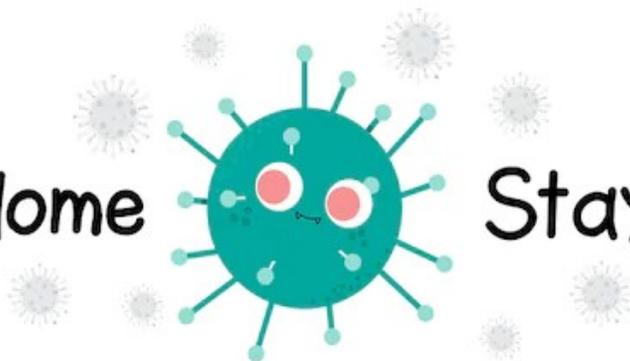
Kathy has included a page for taking notes while you go through the Worship Devotional and a page to color. It has been found that coloring reduces stress and calms a person.

DID YOU KNOW THAT SAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER TAKES EXACTLY AS LONG AS THE CDC RECOMMENDS YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?



*Love your neighbor. Love your God.
Wash and Pray.*

Stay Home



Stay Safe



STAY IN PEACE! SERVE THE LORD! WASH YOUR HANDS! THANKS BE TO GOD!

Our mission statement:

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

Let Your



Bigger
than your

Fear

