

WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

January 24, 2021

Third Sunday after Epiphany

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 “Lord Reign in Me”

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose voice is upon the waters, whose mercy is poured out upon all people, whose goodness cascades over all creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
you search us. You are acquainted with all our ways. We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin – our own sins and the broken systems that bind us. We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love. We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider generations to come. Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone. Even before the words are on our tongues, you know them; receive them in your divine mercy.

Amen.

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of +Christ Jesus, our sins are washed away and we are claimed as God's own beloved. Indeed, we are forgiven. In the wake of God's forgiveness, we are called to be the beloved community living out Christ's justice and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

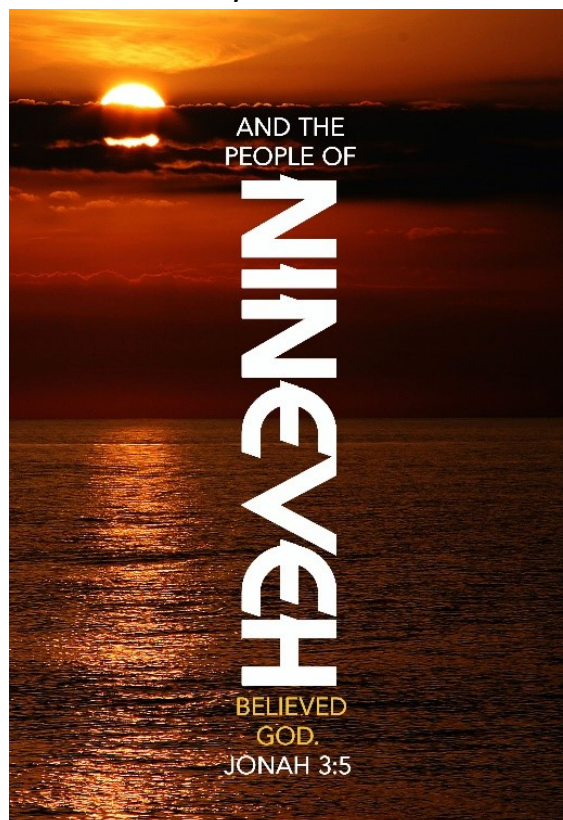
Jonah 3:5

New Revised Standard Version

⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

Jonah 3:10

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.



SECOND LESSON

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

²⁹ I mean, brothers and sisters,^[a] the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none,³⁰ and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions,³¹ and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

For the
present form
of this
world
is passing away

1 Corinthians 7:31, NRSV



GOSPEL

Mark 1:14-20

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

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

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

SERMON

“THE LORD’S CALL TO YOU”

Preaching text: Mark 1:14-20

There are parts of the Bible that are very difficult to understand. Like how did Jesus feed 5,000 people with 2 fish and 5 loaves ... or how could Jesus command the wind and the waves to obey him ... or how was the crucified Jesus raised from the dead?

Our gospel for today falls into that category for me. Jesus calls Peter and Andrew. It says, “Immediately they left their nets and followed him.” And then in the very next verse Jesus calls James and John. Again, scripture says, “They let their father Zebedee in the boat and followed him.” The part that is hard for me to understand is wondering how Peter ... who was married ... just up and leave his

wife like that? And who was going to take care of old Zebedee now that he lost not only his sons, but his crew as well since his sons worked for him?

Unfortunately, the Bible doesn't give us all the details. And if we get caught up in the HOW of everything ... we miss out what is most important.

- The important thing is not HOW Jesus could feed so many with so little ... but the important thing is **Jesus can help us with our fears.**
- The important thing is not HOW Jesus was raised from the dead ... the important thing is that **God gives eternal life.**
- The important thing is not HOW the disciples were able to tie up the loose ends of their lives ... the important truth we get is that **Jesus called them, and they responded.**

So, let's not get hung up on the minor points ... but let's see what truth we have here.

As I look at the gospel the first thing that seems clear is that **Jesus did the calling.** In Jesus' day there were many rabbis, or teachers, and each one had his disciples. But there was one big difference between Jesus and the other rabbis. In the other situations, the disciples would select a teacher. But with Jesus it was turned around. Jesus chose his followers ... and he still does today.

God's call isn't like a lottery where only certain numbers are selected. God's call goes out to everyone. The fact that you are here today is a sign of God calling you. Don't try to dissect it, but instead rejoice in it, savor it.

The second thing that seems clear is **when Jesus called the disciples, he expected some kind of action.** Peter, Andrew, James and John followed Jesus. None of the four stood around in a trance saying, "He spoke to me ... he called me ... oh, I feel so good ... I just want to sit here and sing Kum Ba Yah and make this feeling last as long as I can!"

One of the things I love about our church is that we have people of action. We see it all the time whenever we do a collection to meet one of the many community needs, we reach out to. One of the next times you'll see people in action for Jesus is at the Lutheran Hunger Network food distribution which we are hosting in a couple of weeks. You are invited to help with that if you feel God

calling you to help with that. Or wherever you may feel God calling you to help, to make a difference, do it! Jesus calls us to be people of action.

Some people say, “Oh, if I only knew what God’s will is for my life!” Sorry, but that is not the problem. The real problem is motivating ourselves to do the things we already know God wants us to do.

I can tell you right now if you are a married person ... God wants you to be a better husband or wife. If you have children ... God wants you to be a better parent. I can tell you that God wants you to improve your witness in the community by what you do, not just what you believe. God wants you to share your abundance with others. God wants you to be a vital part of this church! God wants you to take care of yourself and stop doing those things that are not in your best interests and to start doing those things that are good for you. Most of us already know what God’s will is for us. The problem can be our lack of action.

One last thing that stands out is that **Jesus’ call to us is to include others.** When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John he said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” What does that mean to you?

It has to do with our being an inviting and welcoming congregation. It means inviting your unchurched family, friends, neighbors, whoever to worship.

Now if you don’t feel up to that, if you feel inadequate ... don’t make it more complicated than it needs to be. You don’t need to understand how food is cooked to recommend a restaurant to someone. I don’t need to study botany to know that flowers are beautiful. And you don’t need a lot of theological training to commend Jesus and your church and invite others here.

I hope God’s word to you is clear. Jesus is calling YOU ... to a life of ACTION ... and he is expecting you to INCLUDE OTHERS.

AMEN.

Song “Bring the Rain”

Follow Me,
and I
will make you
become
fishers
of men.





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, in today's texts there is an immediacy about spreading the gospel. God's message to Jonah in the Old Testament lessons begins with "Get up, go...proclaim...the message that I tell you." And Saint Paul's message to the church at Corinth has the same urgency. He says, "The appointed time has grown short...the present form of this world is passing away." And in the Gospel text, Jesus picks up the mantle of John the Baptist, proclaiming, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." Lord, we hear you. **Lord in your mercy...**

Two thousand years have passed since those declarations, and the Church today needs to respond with the same urgency. There are signs of the times emerging from many places. We hear your call to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Our hearts are open to your leading. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our nation, state and city, our new president, governor, mayor and government leaders on the earth. Our world is in chaos, Lord. The pot of humanity is being stirred by forces beyond our control. We sense our need for an omniscient God more than ever before. May we, like Nineveh, turn from our wicked ways. We need the cleansing power of repentance and forgiveness that only our God can provide through Jesus Christ. Lord, heal our hearts. **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 renewal in faith. We name before you those in our fellowship with special needs... **Lord in your mercy...**

Lord Jesus, teach our hearts to walk in obedience, feeding the hungry, ministering to the broken, sharing the Good News of your Kingdom to a hurting world. Strengthen our hands and hearts. In your mighty name, we pray.
Amen.

CAROLYN LINN

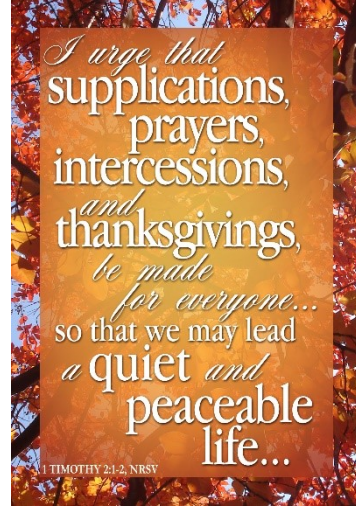
PRAYER CONCERNS

Members in Need of Prayer:

Debbie Wilk & Family on the loss of her Mother
Prayers of Thanksgiving for the life of Karen Kubar
who has entered the Church Triumphant.
Please pray for Mike, Family and Friends for peace
and comfort as they gather to say their goodbyes.
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
Neil & Verna Walden
David Adamcik & Dee Dee Mello
Cheryl Montgomery
Connie Alvarado
Susan Berg
Juana On & Family
Anthony On & Family
Karla Sutton
Mary & Patrick Norris and Children Alex, Isaac,
and Michelle

Family and Friends:

Janet Sharp (Diane's Sister)
Taylor Waltrip & Family
Sean Walker & Family
Margie Poole
Janet Mobley-Hayes (William Hayes Mother)
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush's Brother-in-law
Barbara Lester
Kelley Kim
Jade Dixon
Mike D
Anthony Cholicho
Jim & Margie (Liz's Grandpa and his wife)
Kim Carlson
Denise Maxwell (The Wilk's sister-in-law)
Wendy Saffery
Melissa Melton
Kim Boren & Family
Linda (Sandy's Neighbor)
Betty Snyder
Joan Rollin
Rosemary (Caroline's Daughter's Friend)
Sandy Robbins
Arlynn Turnquist
Mary Holland
Eladio, Celia & Family (Roeding Family)
Jen & Matt (The Wilk's Daughter & husband)
Mickey Cecil & Vergie G. (Friends of Patrick Norris)
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush & Pauline's Sister &
Brother-in-Law




*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

Closing Song

"Chain Breaker"





**THE KINGDOM
OF GOD
HAS COME NEAR;
REPENT,
AND BELIEVE IN
THE GOOD NEWS.**

MARK 1:15, 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.

{ sermon notes }

sermon title: _____

{ date: _____ }

{ notes }

{ key verses }

{ worship songs }



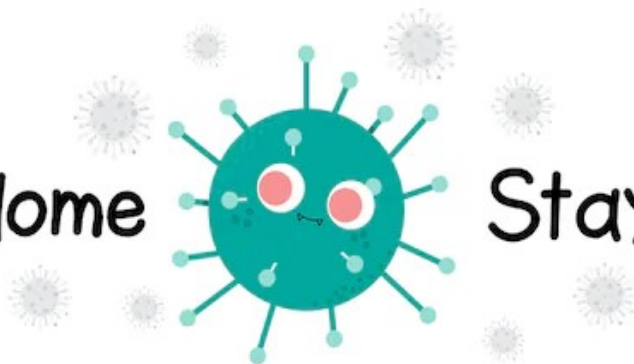
{ prayers }

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

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
Mark 1:17

