

He who raised the Lord Jesus
will raise us also with Jesus and
bring us with you

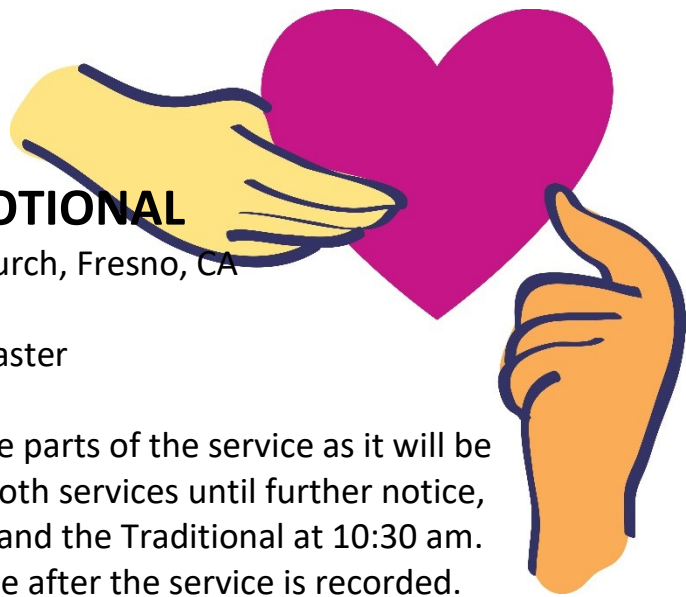


WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

May 9, 2021

Sixth Sunday of Easter



We have expanded the devotional to include the parts of the service as it will be presented on Facebook. We will be streaming both services until further notice, the Praise and Celebration worship at 9:00 am. and the Traditional at 10:30 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.

	Praise Service	Traditional Service
Opening Song	"Hallelujah (Your Love Is Amazing" "Gotta Serve Somebody" Duet; John Montgomery, cello "Let It Rise"	"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" Cheryl Montgomery & Jennifer Neer,

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.

We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.

Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

Make us one, risen Christ.
Cleanse our hearts.
Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Acts 10:44-48

New Revised Standard Version

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.



While Peter
was still speaking,
the Holy Spirit fell upon
all who heard
the word.

Acts 10:44, NRSV

SECOND LESSON

1 John 5:1-6

Faith Conquers the World

⁵ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ^[a] has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For the love of

God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. ⁵Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Testimony concerning the Son of God

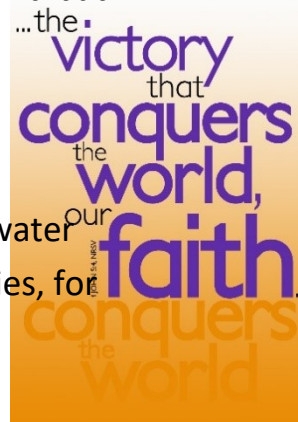
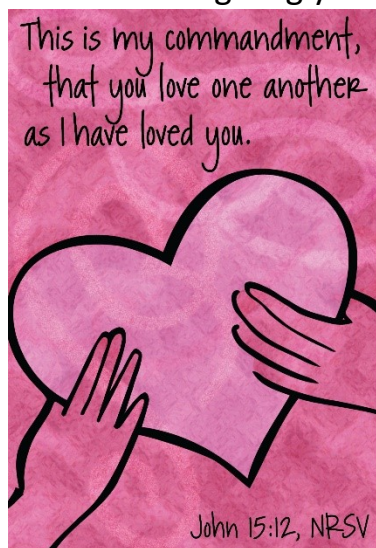
⁶This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

GOSPEL

John 15:9-17

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants^[a] any longer, because the servant^[b] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.



SERMON

The Insistence of Love – 5/9/21

Grace to you and peace from our God who insists on loving each of us and all of us – no matter what. **Amen.**

I know that many of you are animal lovers like me. Though I am unabashedly a “crazy cat lady,” that takes nothing away from my love of dogs and other animals as well. This week’s Gospel lesson made me think about dogs in particular. I think that dogs must have been in the room when Jesus gave his command, “Love one another as I have loved you.”

I mean, think about dogs you have known. Even after you just finish scolding a dog for poor behavior, she’s right there ready to be your best friend. When you’re gone all day, doggies are SO happy to see you and never nurse a grudge over your long absence. One day many moons ago, I realized late in the afternoon that I had forgotten to give the dogs breakfast! Neither of them tried to bite me, and neither ran away from home or gave me the cold shoulder. Their faithfulness remained rock solid and their love stayed true. Honestly, dogs INSIST on loving us.

I got to thinking about this as I was reading some commentary this week from Luther Seminary’s Working Preacher. Speaking of this passage from John 15, the author noted that the love Jesus is expressing originates in God, the heavenly Father. Then thinking back to the beginning of John’s Gospel, he wrote this, “It’s a heavenly love but not a love that remains in heaven. It insists on dwelling among us.” (Emphasis mine.)

Just think about this a moment. The Triune God experiences and expresses and actually is this incredible overwhelming otherworldly LOVE. It’s a love that can’t be defined and won’t be contained and insists on overflowing from the heavenly realm into and over and among us. Obviously, it hits the dogs first!

God’s LOVE is so great it insists on dwelling with us here and now. I really believe that with my whole heart. Bad things happen in this world. People hurt one another and damage the Creation. But LOVE abides. I’m not just talking about how we love French fries or our new car. I’m talking about capital L-O-V-E, bigger and crazier and more intense even than falling in love – though that gets us pretty

close to understanding it. Jesus tells us that just as God LOVES him, Jesus LOVES us, and we are to abide in that LOVE.

Now **abide** is a word we don't see used all that often these days, other than in *The Big Lebowski*, of course. As I like to do, I went back to the Greek for some help. The Greek word translated here as *abide* or *remain* is **meno** and can also be translated in a number of other ways. I want you to sit back and savor the fullness of this word while I read the following list, thinking about Jesus and his LOVE for the world, a love so great that He would lay down his life for it/us. We are called to abide in this amazing LOVE:

to stay, to continue, to dwell, lodge, sojourn, to remain, to rest, settle, to last, endure, to survive, to be existent, to continue unchanged, to be permanent, to persevere, be constant, be steadfast, to abide, to be in close and settled union, to indwell, to wait for.

The next time that you feel like the world is crumbling in on you or that there's nothing but bad news to be found, please pull out this list and know that Jesus' love does all of this and more. And we are invited into it. We are commanded even. Jesus insists that this love is **for us**. We are to abide in it. Like I said before, I think dogs get this better than we do. They understand. You can see them rolling around in it and wagging their tails and just emanating the joy of it all. We are to share this LOVE with everyone, including our enemies.

This invitation and command not only gives us Jesus, but it gives us community. We have each other to encourage and to encourage us. We have each other to lift up and to lift us up. We have people to love and to love us. We have also been given this Creation to bring us additional cheer and solace in times of trouble and to share our joy. Sea and sky, trees and pets and plants.

In reading the lessons for today, I noticed themes of unity and interrelatedness. Our lesson from Acts speaks directly to the inclusiveness of those once considered outsiders. The Jewish people are shocked to find that the Holy Spirit comes to the Gentiles while Peter is speaking, yet they do not try to deny, excuse, or cover it up. In fact, Peter invites them right into the family, as he says, "Let's baptize them all in the name of Jesus." Peter rightly sees that ALL people are desired by God. God's love is THAT big. Our own love can be that big as well if only we are brave enough to abide in it.

It's scary because this Love insists that we notice the plight of other people, that we see where others are being excluded or overlooked or mistreated. This Love insists that we are bothered and troubled when anyone struggles against injustice. Love demands that we get involved. This Love is a gift that opens our eyes and a command that expands our horizons. It is the strongest thing there is.

Today is the 6th Sunday of Easter. We are still celebrating the resurrection of our Lord. We don't typically read the Psalm assigned for the day, but it's so awesome and celebratory that I wanted to include it here. It reflects the unity and interrelatedness of all Creation as we are invited to join a chorus of joyous praise from "all the ends of the earth." Psalm 98:

Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.
The LORD has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.
He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.
Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.
Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;
let them sing before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

The mountains are singing and the rivers clapping as the LORD comes. We can rest assured that God will set all aright, but we are not cleared to step aside and wait for God to handle everything. God works through our hands and feet. God gives love and joy to work together within the world to bring about righteousness and equity for all. It compels us to reach out.

Today is also Mother's Day. This is the day we celebrate motherhood and all those who have mothered us along our journeys. Thank you to all the moms, aunties, and grandmas who have put their children's needs ahead of their own and taught them love and kindness. Don't forget to bring God along into your celebrations as well! Peace to all who are suffering this day – with the loss of their mothers or through a difficult relationship with mother or child. In times of failing as a mom or feeling as though your mom has failed you, remember that God's love is big enough for that, too. After all, God can also be viewed as Mother. You can find any number of Bible passages in both the Old Testament and the New that mention the mothering qualities of our God – whom we typically call Father. Hosea, Deuteronomy, Matthew, and many more refer to mothering attributes of God – just Google if you want to read some of them later.

Mothers have insisted that we sit up straight, not talk with our mouths full, pick up our feet when we walk, and so on. Moms insist on these things because they love us. If you can, be like the best mom you know. If you can't, be like your dog. Either way, God insists on LOVING you. And me. **Amen.**

	Praise Service	Traditional Service
Special Music	"Lord I Need You"	"The Gift of Love" Cheryl Montgomery & Jennifer Neer, Duet



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, today's lessons revolve around LOVE: the love of God the Father, the love of Jesus, His son, and the Holy Spirit, who enables that love to be made alive in God's people. 1 John says, *"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child."* Lord, thank you for pouring out your Holy Spirit upon your people. ***Lord in your mercy...***

In our Gospel lesson from John, Jesus says, *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you... I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete... I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."* Thank you, Jesus, for making us your friends by your death on the cross and for revealing to us the Father. Prosper your Church on earth. ***Lord in your mercy...***

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world. The early believers *"were astounded that... the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles."* Lord, we are all Gentiles, estranged from God by sin. 1 John continues, *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments."* This is God's commandment to us: To love him with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves. Lord, show us how. ***Lord in your mercy...***

Remember this congregation, its pastor and people as we share the love of Jesus. We thank you for the Mothers and the mother-figures among us today; may they be blessed for their faithful expressions of love. Touch those who have asked for prayers with healing, comfort, and new life. We name before you those from our congregation who have asked for prayer. ***Lord in your mercy...***

Jesus said, *"I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last"* This is our task: to bear the fruit of God's love through our lives today that all the world will know that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. ***Amen.*** CAROLYN LINN

PRAYER CONCERNS

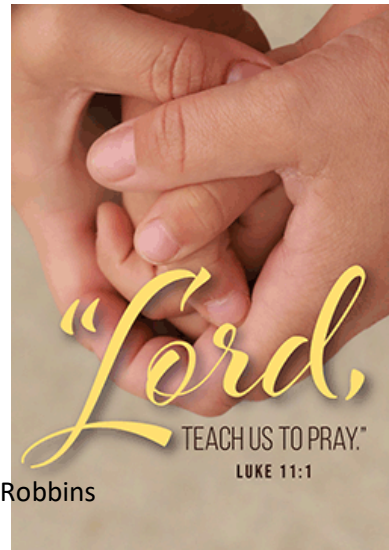
Members in Need of Prayer:

John Bender
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
Juana On & Family
Kirsten Linder
Stacy Lairson
Jim Thompson
Addie Dornbusch
Anthony On & Family
David Adamcik & Dee Dee Mello
Mary & Patrick Norris and Children



Family and Friends:

Janet Sharp (Diane's Sister)
Taylor Waltrip & Family
Sean Walker & Family
Marshal, Christopher & Nathan Robbins
(Arlene's Grandsons)
Peggy Mitchem & Family (Gordon's Sister)
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush & Pauline's Sister
Darlee (Mary & Patrick's Grandma)
Jade Dixon
Mike D
Anthony Cholicho
Jim & Margie (Liz's Grandpa and his wife)
Kim Carlson
Eladio, Celia & Family (Roeding Family)
Rev. Arlynne Turnquist
Melissa Melton
Kim Boren & Family
Linda (Sandy's Neighbor)
Betty Snyder
Molly (Mary & Patrick's Aunt)
Mickey Cecil & Vergie G. (Friends of Patrick Norris)
Randy and Carol Rowe (Neil & Verna Walden's
Daughter and Son-in-Law)
Eric and Cathy Bose (Cecile Bachar's Daughter
And Son-in-Law)
Hilory Martin (Sue's Friend)
Rosemary (Vonny's Friend)
Denise (Deb Wilk's Sister)
Craig Barton (Lisa Kossow's Friend)





AND FREE

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

Praise Service
"Days Of Elijah"

Traditional Service
"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"
Cheryl Montgomery & Jennifer Neer,
Duet; John Montgomery, Cello

**So he ordered them
to be baptized
in the name of
Jesus Christ.**

Acts 10:48, 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:

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{ date:
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{ notes }

{ key verses }

{worship songs }

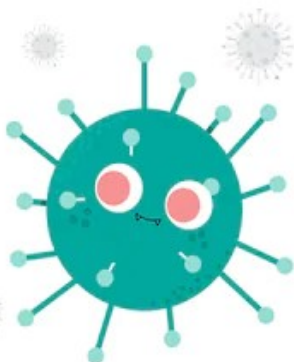


{prayers}

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



*"This is my commandment, that
you love one another as I have
loved you." John 15:12*



*"This is my commandment, that
you love one another as I have
loved you." John 15:12*