



## WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA  
September 20, 2020  
Sixteenth Sunday of Pentecost

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God,  
Who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God,

**Have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgement on one another before examining ourselves.**

**We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.**

**We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.**

**Make us humble, cast away our transgressions,  
and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ,  
our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need,  
and through his death and resurrection,  
Christ has made us his own.

Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of +Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness  
to do God's work in the world.

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **FIRST LESSON**

Jonah 3:10-4:11

New Revised Standard Version

<sup>10</sup>When 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.

### **Jonah's Anger**

**4** But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup>He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. <sup>3</sup>And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" <sup>5</sup>Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD God appointed a bush,<sup>[a]</sup> and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. <sup>7</sup>But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When the sun rose, God prepared a

sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

### **Jonah Is Reproved**

<sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” <sup>10</sup> Then the LORD said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup> And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”

### **SECOND LESSON**

Philippians 1:21-30

<sup>21</sup> For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. <sup>23</sup> I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; <sup>24</sup> but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. <sup>25</sup> Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, <sup>26</sup> so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

<sup>27</sup> Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing. <sup>29</sup> For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— <sup>30</sup> since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

## **GOSPEL**

Matthew 20:1-16

### **The Laborers in the Vineyard**

**20** “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage,<sup>[a]</sup> he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. <sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ <sup>7</sup>They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ <sup>8</sup>When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ <sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ <sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”<sup>[f]</sup>

## SERMON

### **“LIFE ISN’T FAIR”**

***Preaching text: Matthew 20:1-16***

Watching the news can often be depressing. That seems to be especially true this year. This week featured the sudden devastation of the Western fires and Hurricane Sally. People in both are left with nothing, their lives suddenly turned upside down. There were people on the news who lost their homes in fires who were just recovering from losing their homes to previous fires. I bet the same is true of some of the Hurricane victims. If you went out and interviewed those who are victims and asked them, “Is life fair?” they’d probably laugh. Or cry. The fact is life is not fair.

It would be great if things always worked out well ... where the good guy gets rewarded and the bad guy gets punished. But that’s not the way life always works. How many times have you felt that life is not fair?

In our Bible reading Jesus tells a parable about a landowner who went into the marketplace early in the morning to hire workers, a common practice in rural communities even today. Those hired agreed to be paid the standard wage for a day’s work. Three hours later the landowner hired more workers. At noon he hired more workers, then again at 3:00, then again at 5:00. Quitting time was 6:00. At 6:00 he had his foreman line up the workers to be paid. He began with those who had worked only one hour. He paid them for a full day.

Those who had been working since six in the morning thought to themselves, “Wow! If he pays them a full day’s wage for working just part of a day, think about how much he’s going to pay us!” But when their time came ... they also received the standard wage for one day’s work. They were furious! They had worked all day and they were getting exactly the same as those who had just worked one hour. It wasn’t fair. The landowner said, “Didn’t I pay you what we had agreed on? Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?”

One way to interpret this parable is to realize that it doesn't really matter when someone comes to believe in Jesus, when they come to faith, we all get the same reward. That is, through Jesus we all go to Heaven. It doesn't matter if you went to Sunday School your whole life or if you had a last-minute conversion.

Is that really fair? What about those of us who have been a part of the church our whole lives, who have labored since six in the morning?

If that's true, why not go ahead and live life full throttle doing whatever we want and wait until the last moment of our life to repent? If we get the same reward, why not party like a rock star and tear it up right to the end? The problem is that question assumes that a life of sin is better than a life of faith.

Let me ask you some questions: What would you change about your life if you knew there were no heaven or hell? Would you be less loving towards your family? Would you start cheating on your wife? Would you become dishonest in your business? I don't think so. There are other reasons to maintain your wedding vows, to run your business in an ethical way, and love our families other than the fear of going to hell.

We live virtuous lives not just out of fear, but because if you take a minute to look around, you'll see that the moral life really is the best way to live in this world. It is hard to imagine living life without morals or ethics. Deep down we know a life lived without a moral compass leads only to destruction and dissolution of everything that is good and lasting and ultimately worthwhile in this world. We do the right thing not just out of a fear of hell but because in the long run it is in our best interest and in the interest of those we love.

The fact is none of us deserves the gift of salvation because of what we've done. If God was fair, we'd get what we deserve. That's why we need a Savior. God accepts us as we are, as if we've never done anything wrong. God cleans us up and makes us into a new creation in Christ.

There was a young boy years ago who was a great fan of both Captain Kangaroo and Mister Rogers. The boy faithfully watched both of their television shows. One day it was announced that Mister Rogers would be paying a visit to

the Captain Kangaroo show. The boy was ecstatic. Both of his heroes, together on the same show!

Every morning of the week leading up to the show the boy would ask, "Is it today that Mister Rogers will be on Captain Kangaroo?" Finally, the day arrived. The whole family gathered around the television. There they were, Mister Rogers and Captain Kangaroo, together! The boy watched for a minute, but then, surprisingly, got up and wandered out of the room. Puzzled, his father followed him and asked, "What is it son? Is anything wrong?"

The boy responded, "It's too good. It's just too good."

That's how we should feel about God's grace. It might not be fair, but it is so incomprehensibly good. Life isn't fair. That's tough. God isn't fair. That's grace. It doesn't matter when you come to Jesus. Just come!

**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, your ways are much different from those of humans. In today's lessons, both Jonah and the laborers in the vineyard were angry at the generosity and goodness of their master. Lord, we sometimes grumble; we become angry as we view our place in the world. We say, "It isn't fair or why is this happening?" We do not understand the ways of God's kingdom. ***Lord in your mercy...***

Saint Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, chafes over that difference also. He has been given a glimpse of God's kingdom, and he would prefer to be with Christ. But he tells the church, "*If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor....*" Lord, prosper the church on earth in its purpose to bring people into your kingdom. ***Lord in your mercy...***

We pray for our nation, state and city, our president, governor, mayor, and the leaders of the world. We pray for peace where there is strife and wisdom where decisions must be made. We pray for those who hunger and suffer from pain and loss. Remember those who are afflicted with the coronavirus and those who work to create a vaccine. Strengthen fire fighters and first responders who lead the battle against devastating fires and natural disasters. Keep our faith steady in a world shaking around us. ...Paul continues in his message to Philippi, "*Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind.*" Lord, give us courage to persevere. ***Lord in your mercy...***

Remember this congregation, its pastor, and people, as we find new ways to share the love of Jesus. Touch those who have asked for prayer with healing, comfort, renewal, and peace. We pray for those in our congregation who suffer from illness or pain, naming them before you... ***Lord in your mercy...***

Lord may your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Thank you for your mercy and steadfast love to all people. In Jesus' mighty name, we pray.

***Amen.***

CAROLYN LINN



## PRAYER CONCERNS

### Members in Need of Prayer:

Karla Sutton  
 Paul Werfelmann  
 David Adamcik  
 Mary & Patrick Norris and  
 Children Alex, Isaac, and Michelle  
 Margie Kinler  
 Juana & Anthony On &  
 Extended Family  
 Richard & Kay Schumacher  
 Karen Kubar  
 Irene Pierini  
 Jocelyn Miller  
 Arlene Robbins  
 Kirsten Linder  
 Stacy Lairson  
 Jim Thompson  
 Addie Dornbusch  
 Neil & Verna Walden  
 Karl & Pauline Ritterbush  
 Chris Dueker  
 Connie Alvarado  
 Susan Berg  
 Dee Wright  
 Steve McQuillan  
 George Weber  
 Jen & Matt (The Wilk's Daughter & husband)

### Family and Friends:

Phil Chavez  
 Linda Franklin  
 Candice Frost (Margie Kinler's Grand-  
 daughter) & her friend Sharon Ferris  
 Mickey Paulo  
 Janet Sharp  
 Barbara Lester  
 Kelley Kim  
 Jade Dixon  
 Karen (Sharon Rowley's Cousin)  
 Anthony Cholicho  
 Jim & Margie (Liz's Grandpa and his wife)  
 Kim Carlson  
 Denise Maxwell (The Wilk's sister-in-law)  
 John Sharpe  
 Melissa Melton  
 Kim Boren & Family  
 Kathy Edison  
 Judie Meadows  
 Joan Rollin  
 Margie Poole  
 Sandy Robbins  
 Kathy Christiansen  
 Arlynne Turnquist  
 Amy Conley  
 Mike D  
 Michael Horne  
 Dee Dee Mello  
 Betty Synder  
 Alexi Arstein  
 Roger Robbins  
 Trey Hofmann (Grandson of Alan)  
 Eladio, Celia & Family (Roeding Family)  
 Jaylyssa (Roeding Student)  
 Betty Gowens (Debbie West's Best Friend)  
 Julian's Brother & Wife  
 Kelley (Diane Fake's Nephew's Wife)  
 Lori & Jeff Tuttle (Autumn Hay's Friend)



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*

LIVE YOUR  
LIFE

IN A MANNER  
WORTHY OF THE  
GOSPEL OF  
CHRIST.

*Philippians 1:27, NRSV*



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



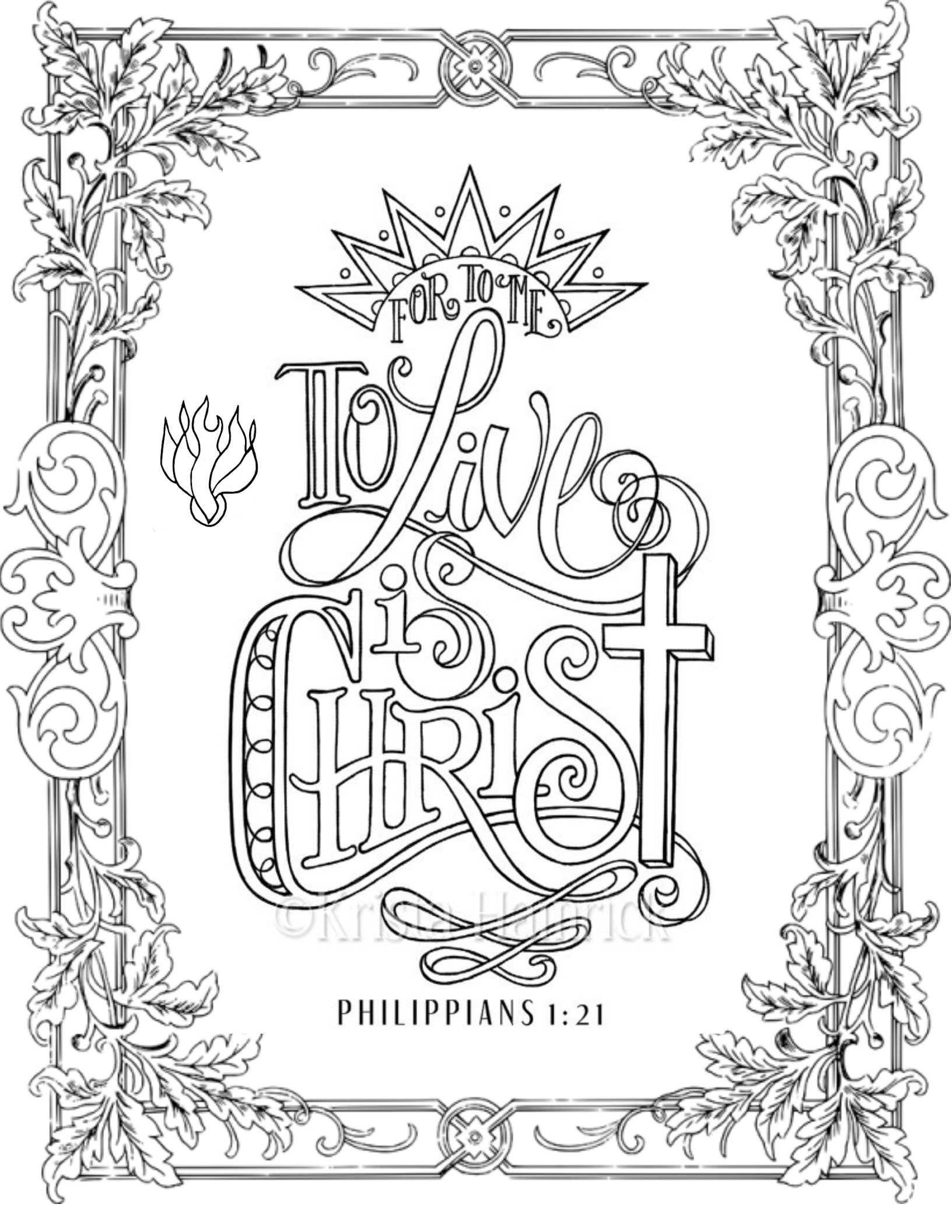
*Love your neighbor. Love your God.  
Wash and Pray.*



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

Our mission statement:

**SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS**



To Live  
in  
CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

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## *Thanksgiving Basket Fund*

Please consider giving generously to Good Shepherd's Thanksgiving Basket Fund in this Covid 19 time of need. Gift cards will be given to

Roeding School families for food during the Thanksgiving break.

Thank you so much to our Good Shepherd family 's past and present generosity. Checks may be written to Good Shepherd with a memo of Thanksgiving Baskets.



Yours in Christ,  
Pam Gerster  
Stewardship  
(559-999-5443)

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