



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA
June 13, 2021
Pentecost 3

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.

Opening Song

Praise Service
"Come, Now Is The Time To Worship"
"I've Always Loved You"
"Above All"

Traditional Service
"Give to Our God Immortal Praise!"
Gloria Miller, Soloist
John Montgomery, Cello

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,
help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

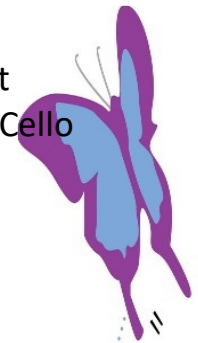
We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live.

We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you.

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?



"Everything has become new!"

2 Corinthians 5:17, NRSV



**Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world.
Amen.**

Beloved people of God:

In Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, +the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy:
you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Ezekiel 17:22-24

New Revised Standard Version

Israel Exalted at Last

²² Thus says the Lord God:

I myself will take a sprig
from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out.

I will break off a tender one
from the topmost of its young twigs;

I myself will plant it
on a high and lofty mountain.

²³ On the mountain height of Israel

I will plant it,
in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live;



in the shade of its branches will nest
winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴ All the trees of the field shall know
that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree,
I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree
and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken;
I will accomplish it.

SECOND LESSON

2 Corinthians 5:6-17

⁶ So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— ⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰ For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.



¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view;^[a] even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view,^[b] we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷ So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

GOSPEL

Mark 4:26-34

The Parable of the Growing Seed

²⁶ He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

The Use of Parables

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.



SERMON

“THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO YOU”

One of Jesus’ favorite teaching tools was telling parables. Parables were little stories with a big point. Jesus would tell these stories. By speaking in parables, each listener could make that story his or her own story through their own experience.

Did you ever wonder why Jesus spoke in parables? Did you ever wonder, why didn’t Jesus just come right out and say what he meant? Why did he have to leave behind all these cryptic sayings, loaded with innuendo, instead of a stack of essays like, “How to Be a Good Disciple”, “A Brief Definition of the Kingdom of God”, or “The Coming Kingdom and You?” But no. Instead, we have this obscure, cryptic, mysterious and at times absurd collection known as Jesus’ parables.

One reason Jesus told parables rather than leaving lists for us to learn from is because the stories were compelling enough where people could relate to them. We bring our own experience when we hear a parable. I might hear it differently than you do because I’m not you.

If you think we would have done better had Jesus just left a list of rules, try remembering the last time you sat down and enjoyed reading Leviticus or the first few chapters of Numbers. Jesus’ telling parables made it easy to relate to and understand.

As we hear a parable and are swept up in it, the good news can become our own story, our own experience. We relate our experience to the story. We ourselves become a part of the parable. When you take your own experience with God and how you have seen God’s love shared in our world you make up your own gospel.

You see, we are mistaken if we think our tradition stems from only the four canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) that are in the Bible. It’s true that not all the gospels made it into the Bible. There is even the Gospel of Judas! But think of all the great saints that have gone before us. As well as “The Gospel according to Saint Matthew,” “The Gospel according to Saint Mark,” “The Gospel

according to Saint Luke,” and “The Gospel according to Saint John,” there are many others. Even though they aren’t written down as gospels there is a lot we know about these people. There is the “Gospel of Saint Augustine,” “The Gospel of Martin Luther,” “The Gospel of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.” Their lives tell stories of the good news. Their lives tell the gospel story in beautiful ways.

Gospel means, “good news.” We see the good news of Jesus Christ reflected in the lives of people we know. Other gospels may not be quite as well-known but just as powerful. How many of you have seen the good news through “The Gospel of Grandma,” or “The Gospel according to Uncle Jim,” or “The Gospel according to that kid at camp whose name I can’t even remember”, or the Gospel according to someone else?

Think back over your life to all the people who in some way or another showed you the love of God. It could have been something they did, however insignificant it may have seemed. Their life spoke the gospel to you.

We are all in the process of writing our own gospel. Writing a gospel through our lives is part of being a follower of Jesus. We all have our own stories of experiencing God. Stories are powerful. Storytelling is one of the most basic practices common to all human communities. Stories connect us to one another, to our ancestors, to the world. And to our God.

In our gospel for today, Mark says that when Jesus spoke to the crowds around him, he “spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he spoke only in parables.” Jesus knew storytelling was a great way to make God’s message real to those who were listening.

What chapter did you add to your gospel this week? How did whatever stories that could be told about you reflect your witness to the good news? If last week wasn’t great you still have this week!

We all have an amazing ability to affect others’ lives, for good or for bad. Jesus is telling us in one of the parables today that the mustard seed, among the smallest seeds, produces the greatest of all shrubs. That means nothing we do in God’s name, however small a gesture it may seem, is inconsequential. God can do wonderful things when we plant the seeds!

In your bulletins this morning is a poem called, "The Gospel According to You." I encourage you to read it later today. It recognizes that while we may be familiar with stories like, "The Gospel according to my Sunday School Teacher," "The Gospel of Mom", or "The Gospel of a friend", you too, are writing a gospel in how you live out your faith.

The last verse of that poem goes:

"You are writing each day a letter to others,
Take care that the writing is true.
It's the only gospel some people may read,
The gospel according to you."

We have the good news, the gospel, that God loves us so much that Jesus was sent so we can have eternal life, now and later. My hope and prayer are that others see the love of God radiating through the gospels of our lives. May the love of God and Jesus Christ always shine through the Gospel According to You!

AMEN.

The Gospel According to You

The most beautiful story was given to all,
Written down many long years ago
By Matthew and Mark, by Luke and by John,
Of Christ and His mission below.

And you write a gospel, a chapter a day,
By your deeds, whether faithless or true;
So as others read it, what do they think
Of the Gospel according to you?

It's a wonderful story, the Gospel of love,
As it shines with the Christlight divine.
Oh, that its truth might be told once again
In the story of your life and mine.

You're writing each moment a letter to all:
Take care that the writing is true.
It's the only Gospel some people may read -
The Gospel according to you.

Special Music	Praise Service "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"	Traditional Service "This We Pray" Gloria Miller, Soloist
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Gracious Father, when Jesus taught the people about God's kingdom, He used parables. He knew the difference between God's omniscience and our limited understanding. In fact, in our second lesson, Saint Paul says, "*we ourselves are well known to God.*" Therefore, Jesus told simple stories. In today's Gospel, He spoke of things that grow: seeds that produce trees. For example, in our Old Testament lesson, Ezekiel speaks of God as the planter of a sprig that became a noble cedar. It is God's work to promote growth; He says, "*I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.*" **Lord in your mercy...**

That's true of God's kingdom all over the earth. We plant seeds by sharing the love of Jesus, but it is God who touches the hungry heart by the power of the Holy Spirit and creates growth in faith. Lord, move as the wind among us to cause small things to yield mighty miracles of God within your Church today. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our nation, state and city; our president, governor, mayor and the leaders of the world. May the seeds planted within people be nourished by reading your Word and seeking you in prayer that believers might create strong branches to sustain others in your kingdom. Paul continues in 2 Corinthians, "*We walk by faith and not by sight...[but] we make it our aim to please you.*" Thank you, Lord, for your love of humankind, shown in your grace and mercy. **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 abundant love. We name before you those in our congregation who have asked for prayer. **Lord in your mercy...**

"So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" Yes Lord, out of that planted seed comes New Life through Christ Jesus. We thank and praise you. In Jesus' mighty name, we pray. **Amen.**

CAROLYN T. 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
Dee Dee Mello
Mary & Patrick Norris and Children
Please pray for Angela Adamcik and Family for
strength and comfort on their loss.
Francis Sullivan



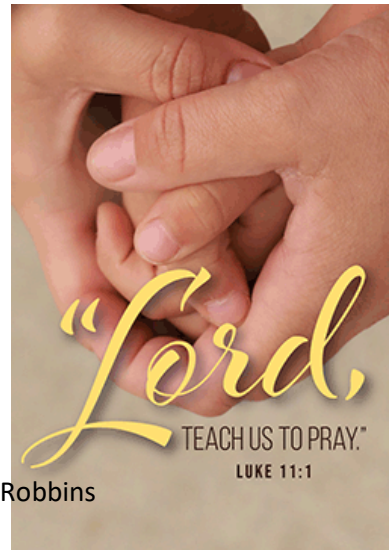
Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer

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 Chollichio
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)
Rosemary (Vonny's Friend)
Denise (Deb Wilk's Sister)
Craig Barton (Lisa Kossow's Friend)
Paul Cantu (Arlene's Grandson's Father-in-
Law)
Karen Ohanesian (Sue's Friend)
Grace Johnson (Diane's Grandniece)
Grandma Dori (Julie's Daughter-in-law's
Grandma)



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.

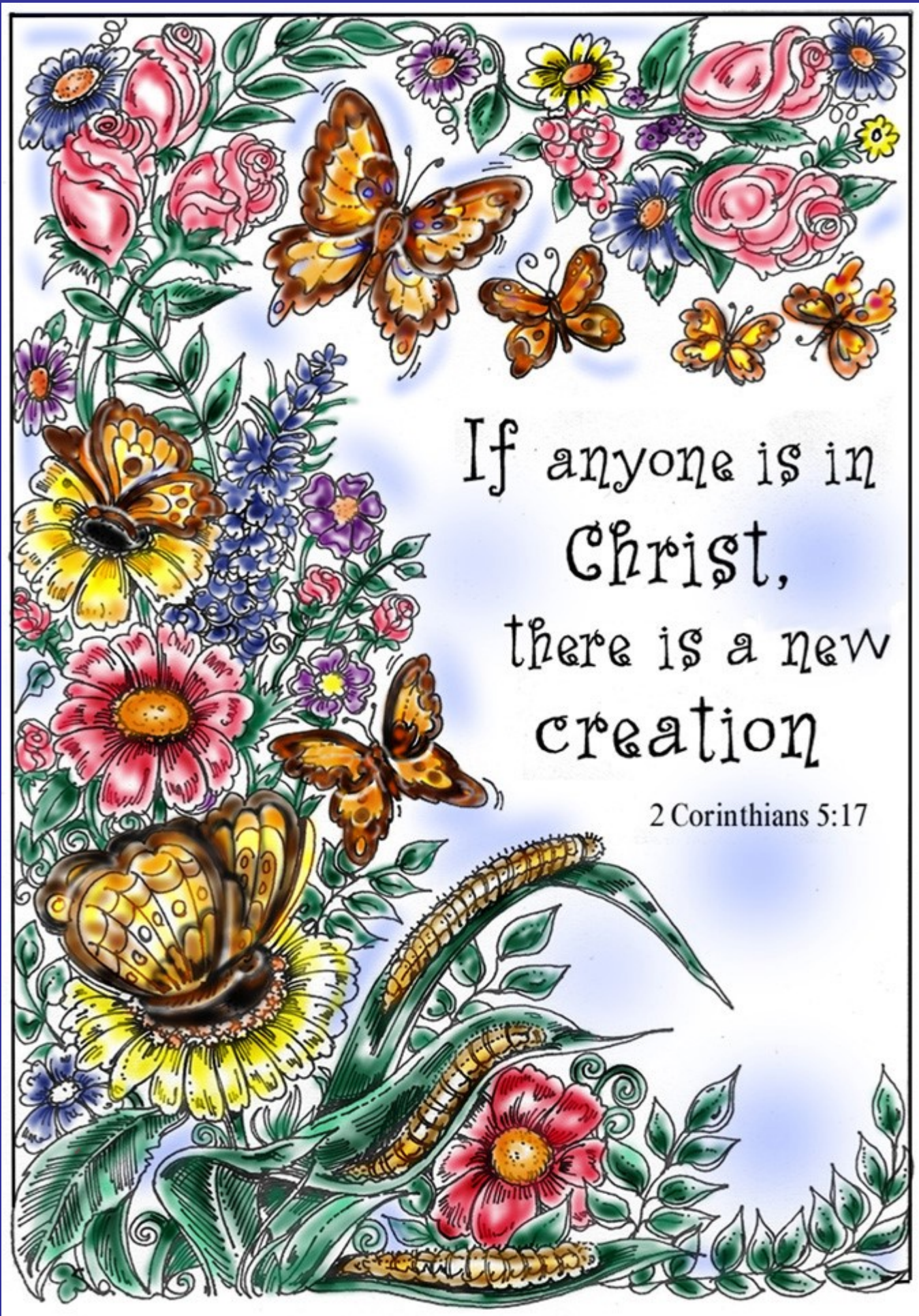
Amen

Matthew 6:9-13

Closing Song

Praise Service
"Forever"

Traditional Service
"Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us"
Gloria Miller, Soloist
John Montgomery, Cello



If anyone is in
CHRIST,
there is a new
creation

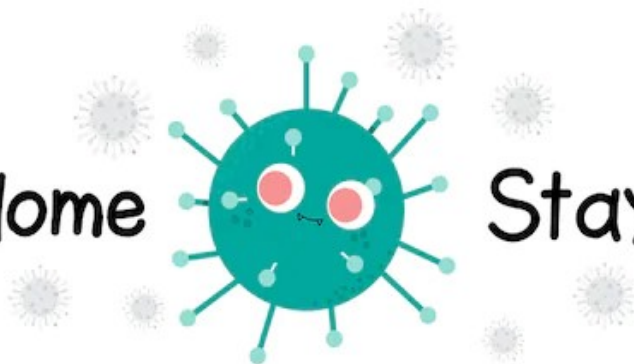
2 Corinthians 5:17

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

THEREFORE

if anyone is in Christ

HE IS A

New Creation

OLD THINGS have passed away

BEHOLD

all things have

BECOME

So New

2
CORINTHIANS
5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,



©2019

2 Corinthians 5:17

*the new creation has come: The old
has gone, the new is here!*