

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost – October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023

This is week two our five week Worship Series looking at our values. LCGS values deep and meaningful relationships that cross generations for the sake of the Gospel, lived through: A genuine welcome of all. Every church will tell you that they are welcoming. Not one church will say, “we’re actually kind of rude.” Throughout this process we have heard that LCGS is a welcoming congregation, and that welcome is genuine.

**Greeting** – The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be God,  
the one who forms us,  
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,  
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

**Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility,  
confessing our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,  
**you have revealed the ways of justice,  
yet we fail to follow you.**

**We are overwhelmed  
by the world’s violence and suffering.  
We are afraid to risk what we have  
for the sake of others.**

**For the harm we have caused,  
known and unknown, forgive us.  
For the unjust demands we place on others  
and your creation, forgive us.  
For the ways we turn away  
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.  
Lead us back to you  
and set us on the right path;  
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,  
God’s justice stretches beyond all understanding.  
God’s compassion is beyond compare.  
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.  
In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.  
**Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn** “Rise, Shine, You People!”

#665 vs. 1,3,4

**Prayer of the Day**

Ever present and renewing God, open the eyes of our hearts and minds to what is new around us. You call us to embrace the stranger and care for those in our midst. Help us to extend that embrace that we so enjoy that all might know your love.

**Amen.**

**Reading from Romans 12:9-13**

9 Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; 10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Children’s Message**

**Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 25:34-45**

<sup>34</sup> Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, <sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you

something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' <sup>41</sup> Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' <sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?' <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, O Christ**

### **Sermon**

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Genuine is defined as "truly what something is said to be."

Paul's letter to the Romans gives us the true marks of a Christian.

- Love what is genuine
- Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good
- Love one another with mutual affection
- Outdo one another in showing honor
- Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord
- Rejoice in hope, patient in suffering, persevere in prayer
- Contribute to the needs of the saints
- Extend hospitality to strangers

Paul is giving a format for living in Christian community with one another. Have these things and you will have Christian community.

When we pair this text with our Gospel text we find a contrast with what ought to be, and we believe has to be.

True Christian community ought to have all of those things listed in Paul's letter to the Romans. Those things ought to come naturally for Christian community. Because, if you are what you profess to be, they will happen.

So often as Christian communities we get bogged down in what we think we have to be, and we forget our why. Those things that we tell ourselves we have to give attention to could be for any myriad of reasons. The world we live in is constantly yelling at us the things that we have to be focusing on. And, it is when we do those things because we have to do them that we don't do them as best we could.

Think of your home.

When you clean your home because it has to be done, you don't actually care as much about how well you do it, you simply want it to look like you paid attention to the thing that needs paying attention to. Where do you think the junk drawer came from?

I am convinced the junk drawer was invented by someone that cleaned their home because they had to do it, not because it ought to be done. And, if they just had a drawer to throw the stuff they don't actually care about, but care enough not to throw it away on the first pass, having to clean would be a little easier.

But.

When you clean your home because you really ought to take pride in your home as a homeowner because, after all, that is where you live and make a dwelling, you do a better job of it.

Because it is what ought to be done.

The term for this is “genuine.”

Paul, again, calls the church in Rome to genuine love. Not because loving others is what we have to do, though Jesus does command it, it is what we, as Christians OUGHT to do. It should be inherent to our lives of faith. It should come naturally.

The first value under the umbrella statement of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd valuing deep meaningful relationships that cross generations for the sake of the Gospel is that it is lived through a genuine welcome of all.

Through the numerous conversations and listening opportunities we repeatedly heard that LCGS has a genuine welcome of all people. Now, every church will tell you that they are a welcoming church. Because that is what they HAVE to be. But churches that are welcoming because that is what they ought to be, are genuinely welcoming.

That genuine welcome was expressed by one couple that came to Good Shepherd looking for a new church home. Their criteria was that they needed to be greeted by 3 people. They were greeted by six.

We joke that we have an unofficial welcome team that, when they see a new face in worship, they are going to get to know your whole life story. Now, this may seem common, after all new faces = church survival, therefore we HAVE to greet them. However, three months will pass and those new faces may not have been seen for a while, and the question will be raised, “do you know what happened to that couple that was here a few months ago.” Why? Because they genuinely care. Because that is what a Christian community ought to do.

A genuine welcome is about more than greeting a new face in worship. It takes on many forms. It might look like (mostly) gentlemen whom for years were the go-to ushers on a Sunday morning. Now, those seasoned vets find themselves accompanying someone who may just need a little help to complete those tasks that make a Sunday morning work.

That is a genuine welcome!

A genuine welcome might look like how we treat the stand in the middle of the aisle that holds the bottle of hand sanitizer. Every single Sunday morning it will be moved to the exact center of the aisle. And, on occasion it will be noticed that there is someone who is going to need a little more space to get up front, whether that be for a wheelchair, walker, cane, or stroller, and low and behold, the sanitizer bottle stand gets moved over just a bit.

That is a genuine welcome.

People of God, being genuine comes down to what we HAVE to do versus what we ought to do. If we do things because we think we have to do them, then we’re doing them for the wrong reasons.

A genuine welcome sees something that needs a hand reaching out to them, and the hands reach out, because as a community of faith that is what we ought to do. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Welcome the stranger. Help the person that wants to be a part of worship. Get to know the face that you don’t recognize in worship.

All of that is what it looks like to live out a genuine welcome of all.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

**Apostle’s Creed****Prayers of Intercession**

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

We put our trust in you as we pray for the church. Give bishops, pastors, deacons, and teachers the gifts of wisdom and discernment. Be with them in bold truth and faithful witness. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Lead us in your truth as we pray for creation. Empower us to look to the interests of others as we make choices that impact the environment. Summon us to be advocates for healthy waterways, habitats, and air. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Lead us in justice as we pray for those in government, the military, and other positions of authority (*local and national leaders may be named*). Give them humble and willing hearts, looking to the needs of others. We pray also for our enemies. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Trusting your goodness, we pray for all caregivers and people who are sick or suffering in any way (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Ada*). Give them encouragement and consolation in your presence. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Teach us your paths as we pray for this congregation. Be at work in us and unite us in your love as we labor together for the sake of the gospel. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for all the saints who died secure in the knowledge of salvation. Keep us fearless in our faith and certain of your resurrection. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Offering****Offertory Prayer**

God of power, God of plenty,  
all things belong to you.  
We bring your gifts to the table,  
that all might be fed.  
Form us into the body of your Beloved,  
Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

**Words of Institution****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, forever and ever. Amen**

## Communion

#471 & #366

### Prayer

Blessed be your name, O God,  
for we have feasted on your Word,  
Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.

Strengthened by this food,  
send us to gather the world to your banquet,  
where none are left out and all are satisfied.

**Amen.**

### Dismissal

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!**

And all of Good Shepherd said...

**AMEN!**

## Sending Song

“What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”

#774 vs. 1,3

### Blessing

The God of glory,

✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names,

and the Spirit who lives in you,

bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

# September Financial Snapshot

## Your Generosity in Action:

This Sunday, if you can believe it, is the final Sunday of the 3rd quarter, which means it is the final Sunday of our Mission Well Offering going to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

Our 4th Quarter Mission Offering will go to Feed My People Food Bank!

**THANK YOU!!**

Through September 27

Total Revenue **\$20,160**

Total Expenses **\$21,677**

Difference to date:

**-\$1,517**

## Lunch at Good Shepherd Senior Apartments

Would you like to join your friends at the apartments for lunch sometime? The cost is \$10 to dine in or \$11 for takeout. You must order by the Wednesday before the week you want to purchase lunch. (See menu on bulletin board.) If you have any questions, please call the GSSA office (715-834-3587).



Lutheran Church of the  
**GOOD SHEPHERD**  
KNOWN · SEEN · LOVED

Deep and meaningful relationships  
for the sake of the Gospel across generations  
Working together to meet the needs of our neighbors  
Ministering to the needs of our neighbors

**WHO ARE WE?  
WE VALUE...**



Lutheran Church of the  
**GOOD SHEPHERD**  
KNOWN · SEEN · LOVED

Our Values

Deep and meaningful relationships  
that cross generations  
for the sake of the Gospel  
Working together to meet the needs of our neighbors