

Week five of 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: meeting the needs of our neighbors. In one of Jesus most famous healing stories, we miss the fact that Jesus gives purpose to the other characters in the story. Paul's letter to the church in Phillipi urges followers of Christ to imitate Christ's humility, and care for those around them.

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

“All Are Welcome”

#641

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading from Philippians 2:1-8

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was^[a] in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Holy Gospel according to Saint John 11:32-44

³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

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.

In recent weeks we have heard some of Jesus most recognizable sayings, and today we get one of his most known miracles. The raising of a dead man, his dear friend Lazarus.

And, while this is an incredible miracle, do you notice how little Jesus actually does beyond speaking words?

The story begins with Mary coming to him and kneeling at his feet. “If you had just been here...” This isn’t the first time that she comes to him regarding Lazarus. She had been to him previously when Lazarus was deathly ill and she asked then for a miracle, that Jesus might save him and make him better.

Jesus is sidetracked in that trip and doesn’t get to him. So, Mary comes to Jesus. Notice that he did not seek out this miracle, Mary brought it to him. “Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.”

Jesus is grieved and deeply disturbed by this news. But, he asks her, “where have you laid him?” This might seem like nothing, but Jesus is recognizing and acknowledging that Mary and the others who are mourning Lazarus’ death have done what they needed to do in accordance with their traditions in caring for those who have died. In asking “where have you laid him,” he is really asking where he will find his friend properly cared for and laid to rest.

What we see next is a reaction that I think we often have when faced with situations that we think only God can fix. “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” We’ll return to this.

Mary and Jesus continue to the tomb where again we see Jesus only speak. “Take away the stone.” Jesus could have in this moment summoned all of his divine power and turned that stone to dust. Let’s be honest, if he’s about to raise a dead man, he could have made the stone move on his own, without lifting a finger. But, alas, he asks the gathered community of mourners to move it.

What we hear next is not as small a deal as we might think at first hearing. “Lord, he stinks, it has been four days.” Four days is a significant detail. In the Jewish faith it is believed the soul leaves the body after three days, so the fact that it has been four is telling the reader that Lazarus isn’t just dead, he is really dead.

Jesus tells them they must do it for in their believing they will see the glory of God. So they, the gathered community of mourners, “took away the stone.”

Jesus takes a pause here to give thanks and glory to God in heaven. He then cries with a loud voice. “Lazarus, come out!” Again, Jesus could have gone into the tomb and carried him out. He could have taken some action in this story beyond speaking, but he didn’t. He shouts, “Lazarus, come out!” And Lazarus does.

This is another moment where we can often relate when we see a situation of need arise. And we’ll get there in a moment.

Finally, after Lazarus comes out of the tomb, Jesus again gives the gathered community of mourners a task. “Unbind him, and let him go.”

The fourth value that we have identified as a congregation under the umbrella statement that Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd values deep and meaningful relationships that cross generations for the sake of the Gospel is that we live that out through meeting the needs of our neighbors.

Jesus, throughout this miracle story, through moment after moment where he could have just done it all himself, empowers the community to meet the needs of Lazarus. Mary came to Jesus. Jesus asked to see where THEY had laid him. Jesus told THEM to roll away the stone. Lazarus was told to come out. The Community was told to unbind him and set him free.

Going back to the two moments that I said we’d return to, so often when we think of the needs of our neighbors, we are quick to point out what agencies and ministries are available to them. But are we actually meeting their needs?

We are also quick to say, “God helps those who help themselves.” Which is true, but through the lens of this miracle, who does God, whom does Jesus empower, to help the one who needs the help? The very community that is grieving for their friend! It is them that Jesus commands to do the work that needs to be done.

Paul’s letter to the church in Phillippi, which unlike many of Paul’s letters is actually a cheerful one, he exhorts them to live a life devoted to meeting the needs of their neighbors. “Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interest of others.”

Years ago I was at a conference where one of the speakers was the gentleman who started Ritz Carlton Hotels. His mantra for hospitality he borrowed from Franciscan Monks. “Treat every guest as if they were Christ himself.”

If we were to see Christ in the face of the homeless that the Street Ministry ministers do, or the hungry that Ruby’s Pantry is able to help, or those needing clothes that come to Shepherd’s Closet, if we were to truly see Christ in the faces of those neighbors, would we not ask ourselves if we were doing everything in our power to meet their needs?

It is easy to point to where the assistance is, but God in Jesus Christ empowers us as this Christian Community to meet their needs, not tell them where they might be met. Jesus literally tells Mary, and tells us to do the same, “bring me to where he is.”

And, when he gets there, and the dead man comes out of the tomb, he empowers the community to do the work and unbind him, set him free, and let him go.

Let us do the same.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Apostle's Creed**Prayers of Intercession**

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, your Spirit animates the church throughout the world and binds believers near and far into the body of Christ. Equip us for the work of faith, and enlarge our hearts for the labor of love. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Creating God, the sea roars, the earth rejoices, and the heavens are glad at the wonder of all you have made. Bless the work of ecologists and conservationists and all those who safeguard the riches of creation. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Sovereign God, your rule and authority is over the cosmos. As you once worked through the ruler Cyrus for the good of your people, accomplish your purposes through the work of elected leaders and public servants (*especially*). Guide them with your wisdom and compassion. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Caring God, your arms enfold all who are lonely, oppressed, despairing, sick, and suffering (*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*). Pour out your abundant mercy on all whom this world has neglected, abandoned, and forgotten, that they may know your joy. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Almighty God, all our life belongs to you. When earthly idols threaten to lead your church astray, remind us that you alone are the source of our eternal hope. Direct the work of church treasurers, councils, and all who manage financial matters. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Everlasting God, the saints of every age have sung your praise and shared your word. We give you thanks for their witness and pray that we may join them as citizens of your unending kingdom. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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 & #474 vs. 1,2

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 "Build Us Up Lord" #670

Blessing

The God of glory,
✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names,
and the Spirit who lives in you,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

October Financial Snapshot

Your Generosity in Action:

We aren't just generous with our money.
Someone had an idea. Others thought it was a good one.
Multiple ministries got involved.
Next thing you know...

Goody baskets for college students!



THANK YOU!!

Through October 18

Total Revenue **\$19,544**

2 Sunday Offerings Remain

Total Expenses **\$21,276**

Last October: \$21,632

Difference to date:

-\$1,732

Enclosed you will find the form to order a poinsettia for the sanctuary for Christmas. Cost is \$13 and should accompany the form when you turn it in. Deadline is Nov. 12

Do you like to bake? Would you like to make cupcakes for the monthly birthday party at Good Shepherd Apartments? If so, contact Heather Garber at 715-828-6977 or DeAnne in the office.



Trunk or Treat

Saturday, October 28
2-4 pm
Lutheran Church of the
Good Shepherd
parking lot



If you'd like to decorate
your trunk, email:
lcsfaithform@gmail.com