

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Weekly Update

*Our mission is to be more visible, to become more connected,
and to draw closer, with Christ as our center.*



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.



Wednesday, March 3, 2021



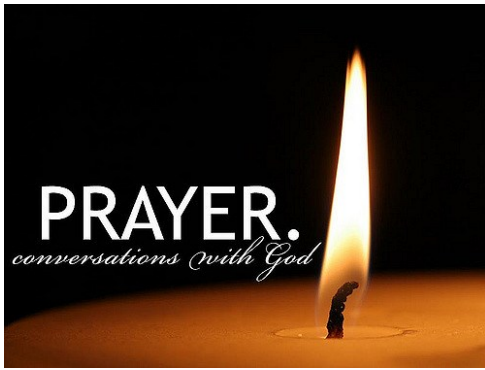
"By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way as they travelled through the wilderness."

Exodus 13:21

The Cloud Appreciation society is a society online and ingatherings for people who love clouds! Their website contains beautiful photos of all kinds of cloud formations. Sometimes skilled painters will display cloud paintings. I was delighted to discover other people who share the appreciation of what we may take for granted, seldom paying attention to yet almost always above and before us.

I wonder if you did as I once did as a child? My neighborhood buddies and I or maybe my sister and I would lay on our backs on the green grass of the backyard. We would stare up at the clouds. "There's a horse!" "That one is a big nose on a guy." I see a German shepherd dog's eye and ear...Oh yeah!" Then this other thing would happen, a kind of pleasant disorientation as suddenly the brain switched upside down. The sky and clouds were really 'down' and the ground was really the 'up'! A kind of natural trance. Dizzying. Mysterious. Fun. Sometimes clouds signal us of impending rain or snow perhaps a storm coming. Those big, dark swollen bellied giants looking ominous through the windshield as we are driving. Perhaps all it takes is cultivating a little awareness. In some parts of the world this awareness can be the difference between life and death. Ancient peoples had no electronic screens to glue their faces to. They took awareness and often delight in the visual forms of nature all around them. A bible concordance reveals the many scripture verses containing clouds. Even Jesus says He will one day return on the clouds of heaven surrounded by the angels. I'm sure it's Hebraic metaphor not a mode of transportation being talked about, but it creates a powerful picture in the mind's eye. And, historically some fine Renaissance paintings. And of course that book my daughters used to love, "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs." This week of Lent, I will spend more attentive mindfulness to the wonder of God's good creation by looking at and enjoying clouds. Maybe even play the childhood game of discovering shapes and that dizzying sensation. Maybe you want to check out the website I mentioned. Whatever you do, it can be a way of simply appreciating life while we have it. And of celebrating simple things that we may take for granted.

LV
PD



Pour out your Spirit on all people living with illness, as well as their loved ones and caregivers. Help them to know that you claim them as your own and deliver them from fear and pain; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen.

A Community of Prayer

For those in need of healing and comfort:

Members and Friends of the Congregation: Vic, Lauren, Ray, Tim, Joan, Marie, Audrey, Elizabeth, Gordon, Sarah, Miriam, Scarlet, Jason, Brian, David, Tricia, Cate, Cecilio, Donna, Anthony, Steve, the Wilk family.

Military (on active duty), Fire fighters, and Police: Ryan, Teddy, Tyler, Ben, Kenny, Brian, Bill, Ken, John, Glen, and Vic.

Front Line workers in the COVID-19 pandemic: Diane, Alicia, Brittany, Loretta, Jay, Alyssa, Monica, Rachel, June.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Psalm 147 vs. 3

Do you wonder how to put a loved one, friend, neighbor, or yourself on the prayer list?

Simply email the church office at office@gscl-ct.org. If you would like a prayer card sent to your loved one, friend or neighbor, please include the full name and address. Prayer requests may also be made by phone (203-268-7596) and will be included by the church office.

For privacy, only the first name of each individual will be listed.

Do you have something you would like to discuss with Pastor Doug?

Should you be in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Doug Ryniewicz by cell phone (860-595-9560—text if you like!) or by his email (dearynos@gmail.com).

To join us for Worship online:

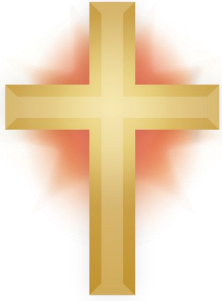
There are several options for you to join us for online worship:

- 1) go to the Good Shepherd website www.gslc-ct.org. Click on youtube on the menu under News & Events to be directed to our church's YouTube page.
- 2) go to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Good-Shepherd-Lutheran-Church-220717937953573/> Scroll down until you see the post with the current "Church Service (date)" click on this to be directed to our church's YouTube page.
- 3) To find us directly on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/> enter Good Shepherd Monroe CT in the search field and you will be directed to our page, then select the worship video you would like to see. Subscribe to our channel to make it even easier.

To join us for Worship in person: This Sunday, March 7th at 10:00 am. We will have Drive In Church, weather permitting (If it is extremely cold, snowy, or a steady rain, the service is cancelled).

This is how it works:

- Pastor Doug will be on a platform at the rear (east edge) of the large, main parking area.
- Cars should park facing that direction (east – towards the wooded area) with taller vehicles closer to the main road. This will allow shorter vehicles visibility by parking in front of the taller ones.
- The radio frequency of the broadcast is **FM 94.9**. Please tune your car radio to that station to hear the worship service.
- You should stay in your vehicle and keep your windows closed.
- Bring your own bread (as you did for Outdoor Worship) for communion.
- You must wear a mask if you exit your vehicle.
- Other recommendations of social distancing apply when you are outside your vehicle.



COUNCIL INSTALLATION

Due to the nature of Drive In Worship, the winter cold, pandemic etc. The following members are hereby officially Installed as Council at Good Shepherd: Barbara Abraham, Tricia Bobowick, Tim Carlson, Thelma Cleland, Donna Duessel, Brian Immel, Riley Immel, Jeff Jackson, Karen Merrick, Roy Remlin, Renee Shoop.

I ask all members of the congregation to please pray for these servant-leaders who give of time, treasure and talent to serve us! We are grateful.

PD

Lenten Pretzels

The Thom family has baked their pretzels for Lent using the supplies from the Lent in a Bag. They look great! Donna Duessel and Vicki Creutz baked pretzels and shared them at the Drive In Worship Service last Sunday. Have you had a chance to bake yours? The recipe and some ingredients are in your Lent bag. If you have any baking questions, just let us know and we'll do our best to help.



Upcoming Events



EMILY DICKINSON and the POETRY OF LENT

A LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL

This year we're trying something different and invite you to join us on Wednesday evenings during Lent at 7:00 pm for a 45 minute Zoom get together to discover "Emily Dickinson and the Poetry of Lent".

Please join us tonight - **Wednesday, March 3rd at 7:00 p.m.**

Topic: EMILY DICKINSON AND THE POETRY OF LENT:
A LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBsy9MNnFMM05mZz09)

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Meeting ID: 863 9875 9484

Passcode: 195625

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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

READ

Scripture:

Mark 8:27-38

Poem:

"I'm Nobody! Who are you?"

by Emily Dickinson

MEDITATE

This passage in Mark is full of paradox, including Jesus' idea that salvation somehow involves letting go of "wanting to save one's life," and instead, being willing to "lose" it. Dickinson's playful poem suggests one way to understand this mystery: the attempt to save ourselves, to be "Somebody" in the world's eyes (and, we may add, in God's eyes) ends up looking as foolish as a frog incessantly announcing his name. And on the other hand, Dickinson herself models the antidote to this self-absorption: gladly and boldly declaring – and embracing, with a wink – her identity as "Nobody"!

MORE LIGHT

For another picture of what "losing one's life" might look like, see Dickinson's "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain." It's a challenging poem, typically read as some kind of mental crisis, depression, or panic attack, but it can also be understood as a more positive "breaking through," moving beyond stifling forms of self-absorption, a "funeral" for the poet's former, mistaken sense of self – just the kind of insight that Jesus' paradoxical teachings may be meant to provoke.

For those who
want to save their
life will lose it, and
those who lose their
life for my sake, and
for the sake of the
gospel, will save it.
+ Mark 8:35





PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of letting go, praying, "God of grace, help me let go of what I need to let go of, trust you to do the saving, and trust myself to live boldly and humbly, gratefully and compassionately, as your beloved child. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Experiment with an "I'm Nobody!" fast this week, creating little sanctuaries of serenity. Try fasting from technology (or social media) for an hour, a day, or the whole week; or create a "Sabbath box" for cell phones or other devices, so you can better experience a respite from "Being Somebody," including the temptation to work, work, work. Being Nobody for a while can be a blessing!
- + Do you know someone (or know someone who knows someone) who is living an "all-in" life of service, devoting their time and energy to acts of love and justice? Make a special effort to thank them for their commitment and inspiration. Write them a handwritten note, and be sure to ask how you can help.
- + Send (or drop off) flowers to someone this week – anonymously. If you're feeling especially Dickinsonian, include the poem, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?"
- + In this passage, Jesus warns that our attempts to "gain the whole world" can in the process result in "forfeiting life." Make a list of the things that make you truly come alive. Discuss this topic with family or friends over a meal or online. What small, practical steps can you take to do these things more often?

9

MARK 8:27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

READ

Scripture:

John 2:13-25

Poem:

"Some keep the Sabbath going to church," by Emily Dickinson

Making a whip
of cords, he drove
all of them out of
the temple...

+ John 2:15

MEDITATE

Here Jesus is filled with fierce and righteous anger. Why? Because the temple – "my Father's house" – has lost its way, becoming a crass sacrificial system (money for buying animals to sacrifice). Jesus' love for the temple runs deep, and he doesn't want access to God's presence to be limited by finances or profiteering.

And at the same time, his actions provoke the question of where "the temple" really is. Does the sacred ground end at the sanctuary door? Or does it include the woods, the birds, and the sky, as both Genesis 1 and Dickinson's sly poem would suggest? Does the temple include Christ's own body, and so all of our bodies as well, since we are "the Body of Christ" (John 2:21)? And if it does: how shall we fiercely love and defend and participate in "the temple" today?

MORE LIGHT

For another exploration of both the world's sacred status, see Dickinson's "We should not mind so small a flower" – a poem likely about the gentian, a little, late-blooming flower in New England.



JOHN 2:13-25

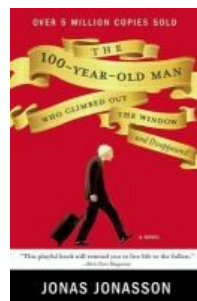
The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.



PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of creation, praying, "God of love, help me live today in ways that consecrate the world, defend the vulnerable, protect what is good, and honor creation. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Take a flower walk this week, intentionally looking for blossoms and buds, or the places they soon will be. As you go, reflect on Dickinson's line, "So instead of getting to Heaven, at last — / I'm going, all along." A variation on this way of walking is the Japanese practice of "forest bathing": mindfully exploring a forest, immersing our senses in the refreshing power of creation.
- + Try some "guerilla gardening" this week (or schedule some for later in the season), planting sunflower seeds — or other seeds or bulbs — in neglected or unexpected public spaces, sometimes called "orphaned land." Check out guerillagardening.org for tips and best practices.
- + In the spirit of "creation care," try eating more vegetarian or vegan meals this week than you normally would. Or consider fasting from accumulating any more "stuff" for the rest of Lent, not least because the amount of stuff humans have created now outweighs all life on earth (incredible but true - search for the online story from National Geographic)!
- + What does "righteous anger" look like in the world and in your own life? What should we be angry about? Where is your temple, the place or time or way you sense God's presence? Explore these questions with family or friends over a meal or online.



The Good Shepherd Book Club is meeting on April 6th at **1:00 p.m.** when we will discuss "The 100 Year Old Man Who Jumped Out the Window and Disappeared" by Jonas Jonasson. We will either meet via Zoom or indoors using the new handler system if the infection rates are low. We welcome new members!

Reaching Out, Serving Others:



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Covenant to Care Easter Donations

With the ongoing impact of COVID-19, this year for Easter, Covenant to Care is asking for donations of pre-made Easter baskets that are already shrink-wrapped instead of those assembled by hand as many of us have done in the past. Alternatively, they suggest donating health-related items such as hand sanitizer and Kleenex or other tissues, along with springy type items such as colorful pinwheels, chalk, etc. These can be placed in an open, plain paper bag like the ones we received for our Lenten activities so that the items can be redistributed according to the community needs on their watch.

Please drop all donations in the plastic bin outside the church Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon, and Sunday morning during drive-in worship. Donations are due **before Wednesday, March 24**, when they will be picked up.

Thank you for your generosity in continuing these outreach efforts, especially under the current circumstances. Easter blessings and gratitude to all.

Jane Fieberts



Food for Summerfield

There is an ongoing need for nutritious food for the kids at Summerfield. Protein is especially needed. GSLC Council has challenged the congregation to provide funds for the purchase of nutritious food. GSLC will match donations from members for up to \$250 per month. Pastor Gaston has told us that \$500 per month would meet their nutritious food needs. If you wish to donate please write a check to GSLC with the notation "Food For Summerfield" or place cash in the Summerfield box.

Shepherd's Pantry



The need is great!

The Monroe Food Pantry provides emergency food assistance for needy individuals and families in Monroe. Their clients receive one week's worth of food per month and they serve more than 100 households per month.

The Social Ministry and Community Outreach Committee invites you to contribute items to the Shepherd's Pantry located in the narthex. You may drop them off during the Drive In Worship Service or in the blue bin outside the front door of the church Monday - Thursday mornings. The items are delivered to the Monroe Food Pantry once a month.

Items Needed:

- canned fruit - mandarin oranges, mixed fruit, peaches, pears, sliced/diced pineapple
- canned vegetables (regular and low sodium) - sliced/whole beets, creamed corn, French cut green beans, sliced/whole potatoes, olives, Sauerkraut, spinach
- canned beans (regular and low sodium/fat free) - cannellini, pinto, refried, vegetarian refried
- baked beans - regular, pork, vegetarian
- chili - with beans, vegetarian
- stock (regular and low sodium) - beef, chicken, vegetable
- canned tomatoes (regular and low sodium) - crushed, whole, sauce, puree, paste
- regular and low sodium jarred pasta sauce
- regular and whole wheat egg noodles
- Ramen - beef, shrimp
- cold cereal - corn flakes, raisin bran, Rice Krispies
- oatmeal
- packaged foods - Hamburger Helper, instant potatoes
- salad dressing - balsamic, blue cheese, Italian, ranch, Thousand Island
- condiments - mayo, ketchup, yellow mustard, pancake syrup, hot sauce, taco sauce
- crunchy peanut butter
- strawberry preserves
- beverages - black tea (regular and decaf), ground coffee (regular and decaf), hot chocolate, low sodium V8, Ensure, shelf stable milk
- household items - toilet paper, paper towels, household cleaners
- personal hygiene items - menstrual pads, face wash, deodorant, bar soap, shampoo, conditioner

THANK
YOU.

Dear Good Shepherd,

I just wanted to say thank you for the Valentine's Day card and gift card. It truly warmed my heart that you took the time to think of me. It meant a lot!

Sincerely,
Karolina Pleva



A Love That Lets Go

Devotional for the week of February 28th, 2021

Sometimes we are just not to be trusted with the task of loving. When we really, really love someone or something, our fingers can grasp too tightly, and our fists clench a little too firmly. For fear of losing what we love, we can squeeze the life out of what we were trying to protect.

Today, Jesus announces the trajectory of his mission: he is going to be put to death after great suffering and rejection, and he is going to be raised from the dead on the third day. This announcement sends Peter's hands reaching out to hold onto Jesus with fierce firmness. Peter doesn't want to lose the one he loves, and he goes so far as to shame and criticize Jesus for his words.

Have you ever acted like Peter, letting fear of losing someone you love thwart your ability to actually love them?

When Jesus says that those who try to save their lives are going to lose their lives, he is talking about our instinct to hold on too tightly to the things that we love. Somewhere in this move, our love actually becomes control. In the moment when the instinct to control takes hold, love and life are lost.

Jesus' words invite us to back up. We acknowledge our tight grip on God, on each other, on our own hearts. We let a little air in to those places where our tight grip has been suffocating life. We gather to worship a God who loves this world so deeply that God would rather die at our hands than coerce us into reciprocating that love. Today, we come to know God's love, which never seeks to control or pin us down, but which breathes life into the world.

Devotional message and art based on the readings for February 28th, reprinted from sundaysandseasons.com.

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Sunday, March 7, 2021 — Third Sunday in Lent

Prayer of the Day: Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Gospel: John 2:13-22



The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.