

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 24, 2021



"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all."

Emily Dickinson

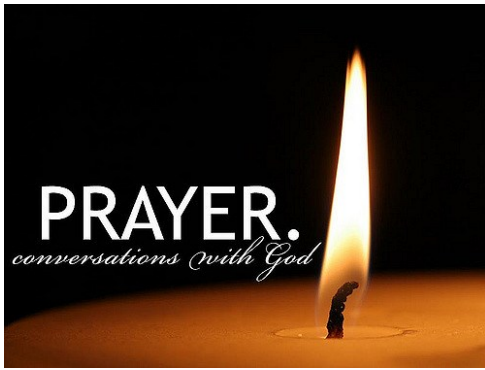
Since Donna has been leading a Lenten Study every Wednesday on the poetry of Emily Dickinson, I've been looking at some of her poems again. The above is a family favorite. Hope, as you know, is one of the three great gifts of the Holy Spirit. You got them as gifts in your baptismal knapsack and you use them, I'm sure. Hope is the intuition that life and love are stronger than death, that happiness and contentment are stronger than hardship and suffering, that life has meaning. One theologian puts it; "God has the very best of intentions for you. for all of time and beyond."

I don't know about you but I find more hope when Springtime comes. The earth laughs in flowers.

Soon we will celebrate Resurrection Sunday, the ultimate bringer of hope. I wonder, these days, when and where do you experience hope? What does It feel like? Where on your body do you experience It? With whom do you experience It? What is it that you do that puts you in touch with It?

Like all things, hope is shared. We are the guardians of each other's hope. Dickinson portrays hope as a wren, a small bird. Hope has saving (salvific) power. Saving one backyard at a time.

LV
PD



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, Linda, Donald.

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.

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.

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 28th at 10:00 am. We will have Drive In Church, weather permitting (If it is extremely windy 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.

Holy Week and Easter 2021 - March 28 to April 4, 2021



In preparation for Palm Sunday, March 28th, we invite everyone to stop by church and decorate the parking lot with palms using sidewalk chalk (either bring your own or use the ones we will have available).



On Palm Sunday, there are two choices for Worship. We will have an online Worship Service and a Drive In Worship Service. Whichever works best for you, we are delighted to have you worship with us.

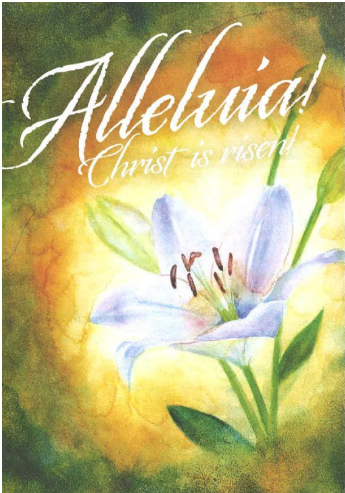
At the Drive In Worship Service, we will have a long table with palms spread wide on it. You are invited to come up before the start of the Service to take a palm, touching only the palm you select, then returning to your car. We will begin Worship with a driving procession (the ancient practice of this Day) around the block taking this route: leave from the church parking lot going out to Lovers Lane, take a right onto Church Street, take a right onto Elm Street, take a right back into the church parking lot. After parking our cars, we will continue with the Worship Service.



Maundy Thursday will be online Worship. We will not have an in person Worship Service.



Good Friday will be online Worship. We will not have an in person Worship Service.



On Easter Sunday, there are three choices for worship. Whichever works best for you, we are delighted to worship with you!

We will have an Online Easter Sunday Worship Service at a time of your choice.

We will have an Indoor Worship Service at 8:30 a.m. The HALO Air Purification system is installed and working in the sanctuary. You will see that all the hymnals will be gone. Masked, we can hum softly to the familiar Easter carols. Seating will be physically distanced. The Sign of Peace will be a friendly nod to one another. I will be masked throughout much of the Service and I will preach from way back behind the altar.

There will be one plate at the Entrance to deposit Easter Offerings. You may bring a small bottle of handwash if you'd like. Of course, you will want to greet and chat with friends after such a long time away. However, we ask you to do so outside and not in the church or Narthex. Com-

munion will be served in one kind only, small hosts of bread. We will stand in single file, 6 feet behind the next person in line. Please hold your hands open so that I do not touch your fingers. I will not say the words but you may pray them quietly as you receive the host. We are attempting to have singers but they will need to stand outside Vic's side door while singing.

Although these things constrain us let us focus on thankfulness that after a year, we can do inside Worship together.

Please feel free to contact me with thoughts or questions.

Remember that *the 8:30 is by sign up only*. Sign up takes place the Monday after Palm Sunday. We will cap sign ups when we hit the maximum number.

As the time approaches, we will have a better sense of the weather so we will announce close to the day whether Outdoor Worship at 10 AM will be in the backyard or Drive - In. It's like learning to swim all over again but we can do this and do it with grateful hearts.

PD

AUGSBURG FORTRESS



Life Not Thwarted by Death

Devotional for the week of March 21st, 2021

On Ash Wednesday we put ashes on our heads, allowing our truth to be exposed: we are mortal; we are dust. We spoke a confession, and more and more truth bubbled up, truth that so often is suppressed: we are broken; we have fallen short; we are implicated in the muck of systemic sin. On Ash Wednesday we agreed: we are done putting on airs.

Jesus has never been one for putting on airs, and so today we find him living the consequence of a truthful, authentic life. He has raised Lazarus from the dead, he has attracted a following, and the religious authorities are afraid for themselves and their people living under Roman occupation that Jesus is about to bring Rome down upon their heads. They are actively seeking to silence Jesus for the sake of the nation.

We meet Jesus today facing down the choice either to bury his truth in order to stay safe or to let the truth of his life be known and therefore risk being buried. Jesus chooses to let his truth and his light shine, knowing he will be buried for it. Despite the way it troubles his soul, he is clear that this is what he has come to do. Like the wheat seed that dies to create life in a new stalk of grain, Jesus' life will not be thwarted by the threat of death.

When you were baptized, you were baptized into Christ's life; the seed of your life was buried in Christ. When you dine at Christ's table, you take his life into your own. His fearless, free, unearthed, burgeoning life is yours. You are free, O church, from the work of appeasing others, of contorting yourself to stay safe, of quieting your unique and therefore potent voice, of finding creative ways to hide the light that is in you. Your life will not be thwarted by death. So, live.

Devotional message and art based on the readings for March 21st, reprinted from sundaysandseasons.com.
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Reaching Out to those in Need during Lent

A faith-based medical mission serving the people of Haiti.



GOOD SHEPHERD FOUNDATION

Once again this year, the Church Council has selected The Good Shepherd Foundation as a Lenten giving project and asks you to designate the money you may have used to eat out or buy take out coffee for this medical mission in Haiti. We will collect the money on April 11th.

Here is the latest update from Linda McGurn, Vice President of The Good Shepherd Foundation.

This pandemic is something most of us have never experienced in our lifetime. Even though we are unable to report how many of the people in our communities in Haiti, have contracted the infection, we do know that they have been affected. The borders to the Dominican Republic have been closed due to the pandemic. This has resulted in the inability to get supplies, including medications. We have seen an increase in medications costs for our clinic.

In Haiti at the Good Shepherd Foundation clinic, our medical staff have continued to make their way out to the community to serve our patients despite the pandemic. We can't even imagine the challenges they face during this time of political unrest, riots and other challenges that would have kept most of us from even attempting to drive to a clinic site to serve a remote community with medical care. Despite everything going on, our doctors, nurses and support staff have continued to visit the community to hold our monthly clinic.

We need your help to provide more frequent care.

While cases of COVID-19 in Haiti remain relatively low, there is still a lack of basic medical care in many communities. Fortunately, the Good Shepherd Foundation's staff has faithfully continued to treat our patients at our monthly clinic, despite many challenges. So many of our patients experience more serious conditions than necessary because they have to wait for care for up to three weeks until our next clinic. A twice a month clinic would enable us to catch these health concerns before they become more serious and potentially life-threatening.

- \$10 covers medical care for 1 person for 1 clinic visit
- \$50 covers the salary of 1 nurse for 1 clinic event
- \$85 covers the cost of 1 doctor for 1 clinic event
- \$900 covers the cost of 1 nurse for 1 clinic every 3 weeks for a year
- \$1500 covers the cost of 1 doctor for 1 clinic every 3 weeks for a year
- \$850 provides medications for an entire clinic event

Upcoming Events



EMILY DICKINSON and the POETRY OF LENT

A LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

READ

Scripture:
John 12:20-33

Poem:
"I know that He exists,"
by Emily Dickinson.

MEDITATE:

Here Jesus compares his coming death to a grain of wheat falling to the ground, "dying," and thereby giving rise to a new plant, and so "bearing much fruit." His opponents (and his friends!) may think they are burying him forever in a grave, but they'll actually be planting him for a new round of fruitfulness and growth: the resurrection and birth of the church to come.

There's almost a playfulness, a trickster's mischief in this image, this recruiting of his unwitting opponents into the salvation process itself, as if to say, *Ha! You think you'll be killing me, but you'll actually be planting me! You think you'll put an end to the movement, but you'll actually be making it more fruitful than ever! For "unless a grain of wheat falls..."*

Dickinson's poem can help us catch sight of this divine playfulness, a spirit too often obscured in many all-too-serious religious circles. Dickinson herself was critical of the solemn Congregationalist style in

Very truly, I tell
you, unless a grain
of wheat falls into
the earth and dies,
it remains just a
single grain; but
if it dies, it bears
much fruit.

+ John 12:24



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 24th 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)

[pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBSy9MNnFMM05mZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86398759484?pwd=WC9yemptSTVpRlNBSy9MNnFMM05mZz09)

Meeting ID: 863 9875 9484

Passcode: 195625

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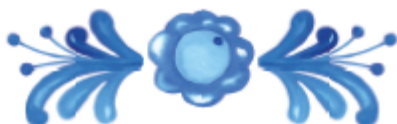
which she was raised, and here she paints God as a hidden, playful presence, "fondly ambushing" us when we least expect it, the better to elicit a blissful, joyful "surprise." But if our search for God becomes too "piercing earnest," if our joy "glazes" over into a solemnity reminiscent of a corpse's "stiff stare" – then we'll have missed the playful point entirely. Our good-humored hide-and-seek will have become a grim, funereal "crawl."

MORE LIGHT

For another take on the mystery of Jesus' death, see Dickinson's "Your thoughts don't have words every day," in which she explores how mysteries surround us: from the wordless-but-important thoughts that cross our minds to the sips of Communion wine we take, never fully comprehending the "price" and rarity of the cross.

PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of joy, praying, "God of wonder and delight, help me notice your playful, joyful presence today. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Schedule a game night or two this week, at home or online (many classic games – like Scattergories – work on Zoom!). Remember that times together in joy are great ways to build relationships, and they also give us a taste of the divine joy that's shot through creation.
- + Experiment with a "joyful fast" this week, setting aside things and activities that create undue distraction and stress: screen time, the news cycle, your social media feed – whatever threatens to pull you out of the playfulness of the present moment.
- + If you have a "Little Free Library" nearby, donate three books that will help make the world a better place: a book on racial justice and reconciliation, a book on climate change, or a novel that makes you think, laugh, and cry all at once.
- + One theologian has called Mozart's music distinctive precisely because of its character as "play," and the way it gives us a glimpse of the playfulness of God. What music brings you the most joy? The most insight into creation's playful, delightful dimension? Explore these questions with family and friends, and make a joy-filled playlist for the week!



John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

✧ PALM SUNDAY ✧

READ

Scripture:

Mark 11:1-11

Poem:

"This is my letter to the World,"
by Emily Dickinson.

MEDITATE

Jesus was a skilled student and faithful lover of scripture, and here in a kind of street theater he enacts a passage from the ancient prophet Zechariah. The crowds fully participate in the performance, lavishing praise on the triumphant king, "humble and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). The sudden appearance of crowds, the waving palm branches, the ancient chant – it all gives the impression of creation itself rising up to praise Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem. Indeed, in Luke's version of the story, Jesus says that even if human beings were to keep silent, "the stones would shout out" (Luke 19:40).

Dickinson, too, senses a message of "tender Majesty" arising from "Nature" herself, a message Nature gives to "Hands I cannot see" – a phrase that could refer to God, or to her future readership, or both. In effect, Dickinson casts Nature as a poet declaring a message; and so Dickinson, for her part, is a poetic listener, transcribing "The simple News that Nature told" to God and posterity.

Both texts, then, give the impression of a much larger conversation going on between creation and God, a parade and symphony of praise – with "tender Majesty" – in which each of us is called to play our part.

Then those who
went ahead and
those who followed
were shouting,
"Hosanna! Blessed
is the one who
comes in the name
of the Lord!"

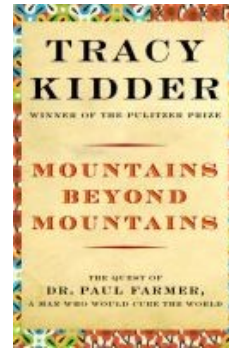
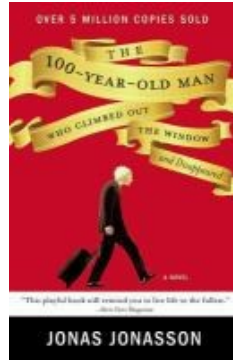
+ Mark 11:9

PRACTICES

- + This week begin each day by lighting a candle of praise, praying, "God of glory, God of love, help me praise you today in all I do and say – and give me ears to hear creation's praise all around. In Jesus' name, Amen."
- + Text three people today with words of praise and encouragement – and write a handwritten note to a fourth. And while you're at it, write a positive online review for a local business you love.
- + Experiment with a "criticism fast" this Holy Week, refraining from disparaging yourself and others, thereby making room for words of support and appreciation. And as you avoid self-criticism, try some daily affirmations each day this week (see below).
- + Where in creation do you sense a parade of praise? What stones, what creatures, what landscapes? Explore this question in a journal, or discuss it with family or friends over a meal or online.

DAILY AFFIRMATIONS FOR HOLY WEEK

I love being me
I love who I'm becoming
I am fearfully and wonderfully made
I make a positive difference in the world
I am always willing to learn
I am thankful
I am kind
I am peaceful
I am beautiful



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. In May, we will discuss "Mountains beyond Mountains" by Tracy Kidder. We will meet indoors using the new handler system as long as the infection rates are low. We welcome new members!



*Leveraging hope,
changing lives.*

SAVE THE DATE

BE OUR GUEST



FOR A VIRTUAL SPRING FLING

TUESDAY, MAY 25TH @ 7:00 P.M.

ENJOY A BROADWAY INSPIRED MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME

WITH OUR SPECIAL MUSICAL GUESTS, CHRIS COOGAN & MICHELE GRACE



*Leveraging hope,
changing lives.*

Reaching Out, Serving Others:

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



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.

Church Offering and Financial Statements

Financial Statements will be sent out in March. Please review your statement and if you have any questions, Roy Remlin will be happy to assist you.

As worship services are online and outdoor now, if you have a chance, please submit your offering to help with our expenses. Thank you for your contribution!

There are different ways to contribute. You may bring it with you to the Drive In worship service or you may mail a check if you are worshipping online with us or you may use your bank's online checking and have the bank issue the check and mail it—it's most often a free service offered by banks. Check with your bank to see if this works for you. In addition, our Finance Committee is working diligently on implementing PayPal/Venmo and plans to have it in place in the next few weeks. We will let you know as soon as it's ready to be used.

Let us know if you have any questions, we are always happy to help.

Sunday, March 28, 2021 — Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

Prayer of the Day: O God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world. Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalms 31:9-16

Second Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Gospel: Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39[40-47]

