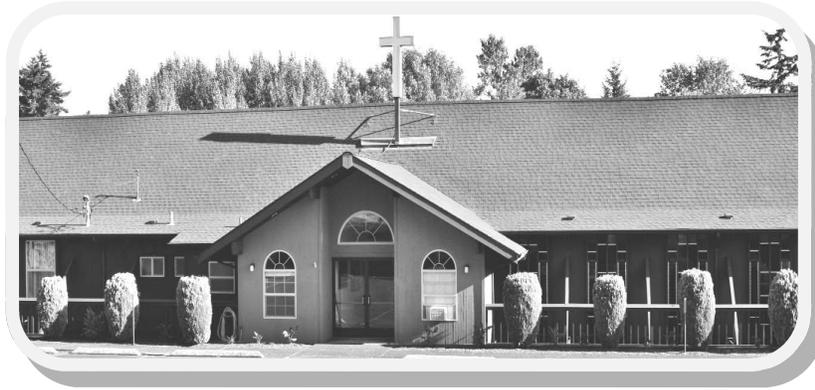


October 2020

A Pandemic Devotional

Bethany Lutheran Church



During this difficult time of physical separation, God calls us together through the power of the Holy Spirit. We invite you during this time to join together each day with our Bethany family through this daily devotional.

Your Bethany family continues to hold you in prayer, and we look forward to being physically together again. If you enjoy this devotional and would like this to continue for October, please let Pastor Megan know!

A message from Pastor Megan:

Throughout this time at home, many of are experiencing “Zoom-out”, and as we begin to become accustomed to our new routines, making time for scripture, prayer, and connection becomes more difficult. We invite you during this time to use this daily devotional as little or as much as you like. Our devotional this month has a special focus on stewardship and our stewardship season theme “Building From Our Cornerstone” as well.

Thursday October 1st, 2020

Scripture—Luke 20:17

Story— Jesus quotes his own scripture—reminding those listening that the stone that was rejected will become the cornerstone. The cornerstone is a foundational stone at the corner of a structure. Not only is it the beginning of what is being built, but it acts as a stronghold for the other stones.

Jesus reminds us that even though he is rejected, he is the cornerstone—the love and grace and life Jesus brings is the foundation, the stronghold, the rock from which we build. As we begin this stewardship season, I invite you to reflect on your cornerstones. How is Jesus your foundation in your life? How do you build from that rock of love? What other stones are we leaning on?

Prayer— Jesus, our Cornerstone, our Rock, we give thanks that you continue to reach out to us, even in your own rejection, reminding us that the rejection of this world does not define us, but it's your love and grace and life that makes us who we are—children of God. Amen.

Connect— Take some prayer time today, praying to Christ our cornerstone. Listen in silence for a few minutes, appreciating the love and grace and mercy we have received in Christ our Cornerstone.

Friday, October 2nd, 2020

Scripture—Ephesians 2:19-22

Story—In this time of physical distance from one another, I am so grateful for this text reminding us that not only is our foundation, our cornerstone, Jesus Christ, but that through him we are no longer strangers, but we are citizens, saints, members of Christ's Body together. Jesus joins us together, however physically distant we are from one another, and builds us together into spiritual dwelling places, into spiritual homes for God to dwell within us.

Prayer— Christ our Savior, we thank you for building us up together, for joining us together. In times of hardship, loneliness, and sorrow, build us up into dwelling places for your Spirit, joining us with others.

Connect— We're in October now—who haven't you called in a while? Even if it's just a 2 minute conversation to say hello, make some phone calls today.

Saturday October 3rd, 2020

Scripture—1 Peter 4:7-11

Story—"Maintain constant love for one another" - do we need to say anything else?

Prayer—God help us to serve one another. Amen.

Connect— More phone calls today! Who might need God's love shared with them today?

Sunday October 4th, 2020

Scripture—Matthew 21:33-46

Story—Growing up, I never really felt like a fit in. I was bullied in elementary and middle school, I never seemed to say the right thing, and I was constantly seeking approval, love, and worth from others.

When faith found me again, I was surprised at how much Jesus's own experience of rejection spoke to me. How much his love and care for the people rejected by others gave me hope. Building from a cornerstone that was rejected by humanity has so much meaning to it. But when I first came to faith, that meaning was simply this: "If God can work through a rejected stone to build God's kingdom, then God can work through me too."

Little did I know that would lead to a life in the church, in ministry, but God can do so much with us through Jesus. Through Jesus as the cornerstone, God is doing amazing things in our eyes.

Prayer—Gracious God, give us strength when our faith, our identities, are rejected by others. Guide us to those who need your love and care, in Jesus' name we pray—amen.

Connect—It's Sunday! That means it's time to call up those you normally sit with at coffee hour, or those you don't! Reach out and share in fellowship today.

Monday October 5th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 23

Story—Our Psalm for this coming Sunday is Psalm 23, probably the most well known Psalm. It's a word that gives us comfort in our grief, in our fear, and it brings us hope through all things. We also can gloss over it because we've heard it so many times.

Prayer— Lord you are our shepherd, you give us what we need, comforting us in our fear, strengthening us, and providing us with your courage. We pray you continue to care for us like a shepherd and his flock, amen.

Connect— Write out Psalm 23 on a piece of paper today and read through it several times. If you're artsy, connect with the words on the page through doodling, coloring, etc. If you prefer, connect with this Psalm by underlining, circling, and making notes. Write out any memorable moments that included Psalm 23 in your life.

Tuesday October 6th, 2020

Scripture— 1 Corinthians 3:11

Story—The foundation of Christ for me has always been one of love. God's love for us through Jesus, God's love through us for others. How do you understand Christ as the foundation laid beneath you?

Prayer—Jesus, thank you for being our foundation. Strengthen us with your strength when we are in need, guide us to build from you, with you, throughout our lives. Amen.

Connect—Who has been foundational in your faith story? Who helped to build you up? If you can, reach out to them today. If that's not possible, write them a letter, even if you can't send it. Give thanks for all those builders before us.

Wednesday October 7th, 2020

Scripture—Isaiah 25:1-9

Story—Often we turn to Psalms like Psalm 23 in the midst of grief, fear, and sorrow. But these words from Isaiah also bring comfort and hope in the midst of pandemics, racial injustice, political unrest, disasters, and tears. Isaiah reminds us that even in all of this, God is wonderful and working towards our good. And some day, there will be no tears, no disgrace, just rejoicing. And all I can say to that today is: Thanks be to God.

Prayer—Lord we anxiously wait for that day where you wipe away all tears, help us to trust in you and work towards your good in the world, guide us to be your hands and feet giving refuge to the poor, the needy, and those in distress. Amen.

Connect—What service organizations in our community are you connected to? Check out websites, brochures, or call a non-profit doing God's work and ask how you might help. Whether that's with donation of items, funds, or time. Make a plan to be a messenger of God's refuge this month.

Thursday October 8th, 2020

Scripture—Acts 4:1-22

Story—For Peter, Jesus as the cornerstone in his life means trusting God's word and sharing Jesus' story and promises with all who will listen—and a lot of people listened! For Peter, his foundation is one of evangelism, which is something we're often not very good at ourselves. We're already finding with our online worship that we are reaching those who may never walk into our church building which is an amazing gift in this time, but what are some ways we can continue to build off this foundation of sharing Jesus with others as individuals too?

Prayer— God, give us the strength of Peter, give us the courage to share your love and grace and life with all. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Connect—Connect with your own story of Jesus in your life, how can you share a part of that story today?

Friday, October 9th, 2020

Scripture—Philippians 4:1-9

Story—Something I love about Paul's writing to churches is that he often begins with a thanksgiving for them, with love and joy in them, even when he has been away from them for long periods of time.

I miss church inside the building with all of our beloveds gathered together in person. I love and long for it. But I also recognize the importance of safety for our beloveds as well and am grateful for the work of the re-opening team and council in this.

As we wait to be physically together again, I wonder how we can embody Paul's love and joy in one another even when we are not physically together.

Prayer— God, give us strength and comfort in this time, help us to find ways to rejoice in you always, be near to us Lord, in all things. In Jesus' name, amen.

Connect—Who have you been longing to see? Reach out to them today and let them know, share in memories of being together, of joy together in Christ.

Saturday October 10th, 2020

Scripture— 1 Peter 2:1-5

Story—Hadley likes to play this game called “magic statue” where one of us pretends to be a statue, but it’s magic, so it will often move around (or run away), and there is so much laughter and joy. As living stones, hewn from Christ our living stone, let’s find laughter and joy today.

Prayer—God, bring us to our living stone, build us into your spiritual houses, and help us to provide spiritual care for others in your name. Amen.

Connect—Who brings you joy and laughter? Connect with them today.

Sunday October 11th, 2020

Scripture—Matthew 22:1-14

Story—This is such a weird parable. On one hand it feels like a welcoming story that those good and bad are invited to the banquet—on the other hand you end up with a poor guy who didn’t have the right clothes being thrown out.

Like...what?

“Many are called, but few are chosen” is a strange message about God’s kingdom for us. But I wonder if Jesus is trying to get at the truth that Jesus calls all people, good and bad, and sometimes people still choose to do wrong things, to harm others, choosing violence over a banquet feast. Some people come in, but don’t participate, like the man who didn’t wear the wedding robes.

With that in mind, this parable reminds us that God’s blessings are available to all, and as a response to these blessings we are called and chosen to participate in God’s kingdom, caring for others, sharing God’s love with those we meet, and fully being present at God’s table.

Prayer—Lord, help us to be present with you. Guide us to those in need of your love and care. Strengthen us in our moments of doubts, and give us the courage to trust in you. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, we pray, amen.

Connect—It’s Sunday! That means it’s time to call up those you normally sit with at coffee hour, or those you don’t! Reach out and share in fellowship today.

Monday October 12th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 96:1-9

Story—At the end of August I got to record Dorothy and Renee singing for our worship music for September. It was such a joy to laugh together, to praise God together, and to listen to their beautiful music together. From Renee singing solos to “Jesus Loves Me” to a spontaneous round through “Love, Love” - this Psalm today reminds me of that two hours spent in song praising God’s name.

And each Sunday through September and in October when those songs are shared in worship, I find myself singing along (on mute) loudly until my voice starts to go. What joy we find in song, what joy we find in praising God.

Prayer—Lord, we sing to you a new song, blessing your name, declaring your wonders among all peoples. Give us hope and joy to continue to sing your praises this week. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Connect—What are some of your favorite worship songs? Do you have them on CD or MP3? Take some time to listen to your favorite worship music today and sing praises to God!

Tuesday October 13th, 2020

Scripture— Isaiah 28:16b-17, 23-26

Story— I love these verses from Isaiah, especially in light of our theme for this stewardship season. In these words from Isaiah, the foundation stone is one we are called to trust, making justice and righteousness at the center. God does instruct us well!

Prayer— God build us up upon your foundation of justice and righteousness for the whole world, instruct us to share in your love and mercy for all. Amen.

Connect—Take some time in prayer connecting with God today.

Wednesday October 14th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 118

Story—One of my favorite contemporary songs is “His Love Endures Forever” by Chris Tomlin:

*Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King
His love endures forever
For He is good, He is above all things
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise*

*With a mighty hand and outstretched arm
His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us, Forever
From the rising to the setting sun
His love endures forever
And by the grace of God, we will carry on
His love endures forever
Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us
Forever, forever*

If you have access to the internet, I highly recommend looking it up to listen or watch the music video as we give thanks today.

Prayer—Thank you God for your enduring love, amen.

Connect—What songs remind you of God's enduring love? Listen to those songs today and connect with God's enduring love for you.

Thursday October 15th, 2020

Scripture—1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Story—Paul says to the church in Thessalonica, as he tells them how they give thanks for them, remembering "your work of love and steadfastness in hope in our Lord Jesus Christ".

During this pandemic, I have found myself saying similar words of thanksgiving. As I see the Women's Bible Study grow on Zoom, as I listen to conversations in fellowship time online after worship, as I see the work of the FISH food pantry, as I hear about phone calls and physically distanced visits, I give thanks for your love and steadfastness in hope throughout this time. And just like the church in Thessalonica, there is always more for us to do, more love for us to share, more steadfastness in hope during this time, more care for those in need. And I know, from my own witnessing, our church body are indeed strengthened in the hope we find in through Jesus together.

Prayer—God, help us to continue in our faith and labor of love and hope in you. Strengthen us when we are weak. Comfort us in our sorrows. Guide

us to continue our service to you. In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray, amen.

Connect—What might your faith and labor of love and hope be calling you to this week? Connecting with those through phone calls? Volunteering or donating to services in our community? Connect with your labor of love and hope today.

Friday October 16th, 2020

Scripture—Genesis 1:27-28

Story—This is one of my all time favorite bible verses. Partly because I love Genesis chapter 1 in general for its organized bookends and all that comes in between, but also because when we talk about stewardship, it's always important to remember why. This is God's first words to humanity, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God's first words to us are to be fruitful and be stewards of the earth. To care for God's creation as a steward cares for the owner's land.

Prayer—God help us to be good stewards of your good creation in all things, amen.

Connect—Connect with God's creation today. Whether it's looking out the window, sitting in the garden, or traveling to a lake or park to view the beauty of creation, especially in this fall season with all of God's beautiful colors.

Saturday October 17th, 2020

Scripture—2 Corinthians 9:6-7

Story—Actually as far as stewardship goes, this is one of my least favorite bible verses. (What a contrast to yesterday!) But what Paul is trying to remind us is that anything we give (time, talents, tithes, prayers), isn't meant to be out of guilt or obligation, but out of joy in God's abundant gifts for each and every one of us.

Prayer—God, help us to find ways to share your gifts with the world. Amen.

Connect—Take some time to connect with and pray over your pledge card today if you haven't already sent it in. (If you have, then take some time to meditate on your planned giving of your time, talents, tithes, and prayers)

Sunday October 18th, 2020

Scripture—Matthew 22:15-22

Story—Is it interesting that an attempt to entrap Jesus involved money? For some reason it makes me laugh a bit, since talking about money, where our money goes, etc. is something we as church people often struggle with.

I hope you'll wonder with me this Sunday. I wonder if Jesus's answer would have been different if he didn't already know that the Pharisees were asking this out of malice towards him.

I wonder, since part of understanding stewardship of finances reminds us that all that we have is given to us by God, if taxes are what belongs to the emperor, what are those things that belong to God?

I wonder, if the Pharisees were "amazed" or "afraid". In the Greek they are the same word. What if instead of amazed, they were actually afraid of Jesus's ability to escape their entrapment and still teach truth, still talk about money, in a way that was "right" even to them?

Prayer—God, be with us in our wonderings. With parables, with callings, with our own faith lives. Help us to be curious and to dwell in your word. Amen.

Connect—It's Sunday! That means it's time to call up those you normally sit with at coffee hour, or those you don't! Reach out and share in fellowship today.

Monday October 19th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 46

Story—If you've ever been in an earthquake, big or small, you probably know how absolutely confusing and disorienting it is. Our bodies don't know how to react, there is an instinct of fear, a feeling of vertigo, and a general sense of unease as the earth moves beneath us.

I remember once when I was young, a medium earthquake hit Washington while I was in school. Through all that fear, vertigo, unease, and the startled screams of my classmates, one of my close friends held my hand under the table.

I think God is a lot like that friend who reaches out their hand. Even when the earth is moved, when the mountains shake, when the waters rage, when we fear what is to come and find ourselves with just a general sense of unease, God is still our refuge and strength, God is still present with us as the earth shakes, and God continues to reach out and hold our hands.

Prayer—God of refuge and strength, continue to be a very present help in our troubles, comfort us in fear, and continue to be our stronghold each and every day. Amen.

Connect—Connect with God today, spending some significant time in prayer, in conversation with our refuge and strength.

Tuesday October 20th, 2020

Scripture— Jeremiah 31:31-34

Story—God's promise to us is that even when we break our covenants with God, even when we mess up, God will still be our God, and someday all will know God's love and grace, including us. Thank God!

Prayer—Thank you God for making unbreaking promises to us and for writing your love on our hearts. Amen.

Connect—Spend some time praying over God's new covenant with you—God writes care for the neighbor (law) on your heart, God is your God, and you are God's person. Connect with these promises from God to you.

Wednesday October 21st, 2020

Scripture—Romans 3:19-28

Story—As we get closer and closer to Reformation Sunday, we are reminded of where Martin Luther started to hear God's voice through Paul's writings about faith and works and law. Way back in the 16th century, Luther realized that salvation wasn't something that was earned.

Jesus did that for us.

And because Jesus gave us salvation, the law (which all boils down to the two greatest commandments to love God and love your neighbor), this law actually testifies to Christ's salvation work for us. We all fall short, but Jesus catches us each and every time.

Prayer—Jesus, thank you for giving yourself and giving us salvation through you. Help us to testify to your work, strengthen our faith, and continue to provide for us the gift of your grace. Amen.

Connect—Who do you know might be in need of some time of connection today? Reach out to them by phone, card, or even physically distanced visit.

Thursday October 22nd, 2020

Scripture—Proverbs 16:3

Story—I like this proverb, and...I don't. It's a wonderful reminder to commit our works to God, that what we do is hopefully part of our calling by God in our lives. But we have all had experiences of plans for ministry that didn't quite work out. I think it's important to remember, this proverb says "your plan will be established." Not "your plan will work out perfectly" or "Your plan will be easy and quickly completed."

Simply—When your works are for God, the plans you have can begin and take hold in your mind. And it's that plan, that vision, that God will use for God's work.

Prayer—God, help us live into your call to us in our lives, may our work be for you. Pour out your Spirit of Wisdom as we make plans to serve you and our neighbors. Amen.

Connect—Spend some time in prayer asking God what work God might be calling you to do in this time.

Friday October 23rd, 2020

Scripture—1 Timothy 6:7-8

Story—Food and clothing. According to Paul that's all we need to be content. I am hoping that Paul is using these as bookends to describe basic needs, which are of course food and clothing, but also water, sleep, shelter, heat in the winter and shade in the summer. For many of us basic needs also include medical care and prescriptions, security and safety, honestly it takes a lot to keep humans alive if you really start to think about, much less content!

But I don't think this verse is trying to say "all you need are food and clothes", but rather a reminder that all the things our human bodies need are temporary. All of the physical things we want are temporary.

And it's always a good reminder that we can't take those physical things with us when we do pass into God's eternal arms.

And it's true, we aren't born with any physical things. But we aren't born with nothing.

Thinking about this text shortly after my baby nephew's birth, I know he was born with something. **Love.**

Love from God, love from his parents, love from me and his whole extended family. And sometimes the only love we are born with is from God, from a caregiver, from a nurse. But no matter what—we are always born with something—and that's God's love for us.

Prayer—Thank you God, for pouring out your love for us, for giving us something to bring into this world. Help us to provide basic needs, to provide love, to those in need. Amen.

Connect—Take some time to share love with someone else today.

Saturday October 24th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 24

Story—If you have a hymnal at home, I invite you to open it up to ELW 824, if you have internet at home, you can look up this song online, sing or hymn along to this old hymn:

This is My Father's World

1 This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world:
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas--
His hand the wonders wrought.

2 This is my Father's world:
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world:
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

3 This is my Father's world:
O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world:
Why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring!
God reigns; let earth be glad!

Prayer—Lord this is your world, all of creation, we give you thanks for the beauty you have created, and ask you to guide us in being good stewards of all that you give. Amen.

Connect—Spend some time listening to worship music today and giving thanks to God and to our king of glory, Jesus Christ today.

Sunday October 25th, 2020

Scripture— John 8:31-36

Story—It's Reformation Sunday! Remember to wear red today as we celebrate and remember that 503 years ago the beginnings of our tradition ring out as we celebrate today the core tenant of the Lutheran faith—that grace is a gift given to us by God, that faith calls to us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it is by that faith—not works—that we are saved.

Our Gospel text for this Sunday is always about the freedom we find in Christ. That is the freedom that allows us to care for and love our neighbor as ourselves not out of guilt or obligation, but through God's love for us shared through us with others.

One of my favorite thing about today is the hymns. Even though the words are often...well a little battle-y for my taste. There is nothing like singing along to "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" while wearing red.

This Reformation celebration will of course be different this year. Most of us will be in our homes, some of us with access to worship online, others following along the bulletins they receive in the mail.

But I hope you know, whether you are online with us, joining in later in the day, or sharing in worship through bulletins or some other path, today we are all together as the Body of Christ giving thanks for the freedom and grace we have been given. The Holy Spirit can do so much, and the Spirit is here with you, connecting you to the family of God.

Even if you forget to wear red.

Prayer—Amazing God, we pray for your whole church. Gather through technology and the Holy Spirit. Share your presence among us, reform us into something new, and strengthen us with your grace. In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray, amen.

Connect—It's Sunday! That means it's time to call up those you normally sit with at coffee hour, or those you don't! Reach out and share in fellowship today.

Monday October 26th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 43

Story—I really love this Psalm, because the psalmist is dealing with the fact that they're feeling rejected, gloomy, heavy, and disquieted, but they keep hoping that God will restore them, will give them strength, will send

out a light for them to follow, will fill them with joy and gladness.

And through out this time, I can relate. There is so much going on that we sometimes feel overwhelmed with gloom. But the psalmist today reminds us that there is always hope in God, there is time yet when we will give thanks again.

Prayer— Lord, whatever we might be feeling or going through today, we ask you as the psalmist did to be with us, to shine your light over us, and to strengthen us, amen.

Connect—What are ways you care for yourself when you've got the gloom? Even if you're feeling joyful and glad today, use this time to connect and care for yourself, seeking out those healing moments today.

Tuesday October 27th, 2020

Scripture— Micah 3:5-12

Story—Our reading from Micah this week is one about God's frustration with hypocritical people, especially those who use God's name to give themselves authority but accept bribes to say whatever people want to hear.

For Micah, he knows that what he says won't go well for him, but he knows that the Spirit of the Lord calls for justice and truth, and so he stands sharing these difficult words.

Prayer—Lord, guide us to your truth, to act for your justice, and strengthen us to speak your truth, amen.

Connect—Spend some time prayerfully considering Micah's words today—connecting with that scripture. What stands out to you? What bugs you? Is there anything in this reading that speaks to you in a new way?

Wednesday October 28th, 2020

Scripture—1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Story—Paul sure does love the church in Thessalonica in his first letter to them. But there is something about these verses that I absolutely adore—the familial imagery Paul uses. That there's this shared relationship between them.

I think we have that too sometimes. We often struggle to listen to our parents urging or encouraging, but we hear differently from others who care for us in the way a parent cares for their adult child. Not nagging or pestering or guilting, per say, but loving one another enough to spend the time together, whether it's on Zoom or by phone or with distanced visits. Relationships are at the core of who we are as a family of God together.

Prayer—God, help us to be your family, to care for one another as family is called to care. We know that families don't always do this work well, and so we know that we might fail, but Lord please renew us and energize us to continue sharing your love and care with others, amen.

Connect—Take some time to reach out to someone you want to encourage today. Let them know that they are important to you and give them the encouragement you are feeling called to share.

Thursday October 29th, 2020

Scripture—1 Chronicles 29:10-20

Story—Did you know stewardship doesn't end when the pledge cards come in? I love David's prayer/sermon here in 1 Chronicles, because it reminds us of all that God has done for us, continues to do for us, and calls us into a praise and thanksgiving not just with our voices, but with our actions and our whole selves.

Prayer—Bless you Lord, bless you and thank you. Amen.

Connect—David shares his blessings and thanksgiving with his assembly, who might you share blessings and thanks with today?

Friday October 30th, 2020

Scripture—Psalm 107:1-7

Story—There's a song that's been on Christian radio for a few years now, but every time I hear it I belt out the chorus so loud and hard. It's called "Redeemed" by Big Daddy Weave.

Share with me in the chorus that I always sing way too loud in my car:

*I am redeemed, You set me free
So I'll shake off these heavy chains
Wipe away every stain, now I'm not who I used to be
I am redeemed, I'm redeemed*

Sometimes we need that reminder—we are redeemed. Wherever we might wander, however lost we might feel, God continues to redeem us as we proclaim the love and grace we receive.

Prayer—We give you thanks Lord, for your goodness, for your mercy, for redeeming us through your Son, Jesus Christ, help us to find ways to sing your praises, for all that you have done and continue to do in our lives and in our world. In the name of the one who redeems us, Jesus Christ, we pray, amen.

Connect—Is there a song about redemption you particularly like? Take some time today to reach out to loved ones, to members of our church

family, to someone who might need a smile, and share with them the lyrics of that or another song. You could even sing them if you want to (as long as the other person is also okay with it).

Saturday October 31st, 2020

Scripture—Revelation 7:9-17

Story—Tomorrow is All Saints Sunday. It's a time in our tradition of remember all those who came before us—all those who have moved on from this life.

It's a meaningful day, but also a difficult day for many of us within the church.

I know for me, I am often filled with tears as the montage of photos of these saints we care for move across the screen.

And so I always love this text from Revelation as part of our readings for All Saints Sunday, because not only are we reminded that we are part of a great multitude, from every nation, from all peoples and tribes and languages, not only do we get this beautiful imagery of the fullness of God's love.

But we also are reminded that "they will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" and on days like All Saints Sunday, I give thanks for these words of hope and comfort as we collectively grieve together and look towards God promises.

Prayer—God of salvation, comfort us in our grief, wipe away our tears, and guide us to join in the unending praise and worship of you. Amen.

Connect—Spend some time today and tomorrow remembering those who you grieve for, giving thanks for their lives, giving thanks to God for sharing that person/these people with you, for caring for them, for wrapping God's everlasting arms around them. Connect with God today.