

Cross of Glory member,

Greetings in Christ's name!

Please know that in person Sunday morning worship, Wednesday Lenten worship and Lenten bible study will be suspended until further notice. This is in keeping with the CDC request that all in person gatherings of more than ten people be halted at this time.

We offer you this "at-home" worship service for Sunday, March 22. Even though we will be physically apart, we can still be united together in worship. Please consider using this worship service at 9:30 a.m. next Sunday (or at another time.)

My prayer is that you will be safe during this time and even more that the strength and peace of Jesus will fill you anew as we journey together faithfully.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Lee*

WORSHIP SERVICE for the Fourth Sunday in Lent March 22, 2020

INVOCATION & PRAYER

We gather together as we live each and every day of our lives, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray...Eternal God and Father, as we come to worship you today as Cross of Glory Lutheran Church, we know that whether we are physically apart or together we are united in you. We invite your presence to be with us as we worship you today. Fill us with your spirit, that we may celebrate your glory and worship you in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN #824 "This Is My Father's World" verses 1 & 3

1 This is my Father's world,
and to my list'ning 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.

3 This is my Father's world;
oh, let me not 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 heaven ring;
God reigns, let earth be glad!

PSALM 23

¹ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
³ he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

WORSHIP SONG of PRAISE The Potter's Hand

Verse 1 Beautiful Lord wonderful Savior
I know for sure all of my days are
Held in Your hand crafted into
Your perfect plan

Verse 2 You gently call me into Your presence
Guiding me by Your Holy Spirit
Teach me dear Lord to live all of my life
Through Your eyes

Chorus Take me mold me
Use me fill me
I give my life
To the Potter's hand
Call me guide me
Lead me walk beside me
I give my life
To the Potter's hand

EPHESIANS 5:8-14

⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— ⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. ¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; ¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,
'Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.'

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Wondrous Love" Marie Pooler

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, that caused the Lord of bliss,
To bear the dreadful curse, for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse, for my soul.
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity, I'll sing on.

JOHN 9:1-12

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' ³Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' ¹⁰But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' ¹¹He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' ¹²They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

SERMON

"LIKE a SHEPHERD LEAD US!"

Psalm 23

Sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace. Amen.

Being the church of Jesus Christ is amazing! Even though we are not physically together today, we are still the church. Because the church is first and foremost a community of faith, we may not physically see each other at this time but we can still be spiritually united together in Christ. No matter where we are, we are church! Here's how we are going to be church together during this time:

We're going to trust God.
We're going to care for one another.
We're going to look out for our neighbors.

Ironically, our psalm appointed for this fourth Sunday in the season of Lent is Psalm 23. Not only is this scripture perhaps the most famous passage in the Bible, but it has an important message for us at this specific time. I believe it speaks to us about **trusting God, caring for one another and looking out for others.**

This psalm does not shy away from the fact that there will be difficult times in life. "*Even though, I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.*" What is this rod and staff? A shepherd always carried a long stick to beat away any predators that may attack the sheep. The staff is the crook, a long hook used to reach out and pull back the sheep that are wandering close to danger. The psalmist is saying that just the sight of the rod and the staff are a comfort to him. It says to all of us, "Come what may, God's got our back! God's with us and looking out for us." If we've ever needed the assurance that we have a God who like a shepherd leads us, it is now!

Now if we think of God as shepherd that means that we are sheep. Honestly, who wants to be called a sheep? Sheep are known for being dumb! I've had experience with sheep, and I can

certainly attest to the fact that sheep at times are not the smartest animals in God's creation. However, sheep do have some redeeming qualities. One such quality is that sheep look to the shepherd and they know their shepherd's voice. I've seen this first-hand while growing up on our farm. My Dad's flock of sheep (one of his hobbies- they were nothing but a nuisance and provided no monetary value) one day got out of the pasture. They were nowhere to be found. We searched and searched. I felt we should forget about them and give them up to God as an offering. We finally located them miles away and mixed in with another farmer's flock. How would we ever be able to tell which sheep belonged to us? It turned out that all my father had to do was call out "come sheep". Amazingly, our sheep looked up from their grazing and literally came over to him. They knew his voice. They heard his call and they followed once again!

This is a time when we especially want to hear God's voice, listen to God's call and **to trust God** to shepherd us through this time. "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" I remember back to a Sunday in the fall of 2007. We had just finished our third worship service for Rally Sunday when I felt a pain in my side. I landed in the hospital with a ruptured appendix. The doctor assured me that I would be out of the hospital in just two days- three at the most. However, I wasn't improving, and the doctors were perplexed. The days began to multiply, and I was getting worse. The medical staff couldn't figure this out. It took twelve days for a solution to be found. How did I cope? I kept repeating the words, "*The Lord is my shepherd*" silently to myself. I needed something to cling to- something to get me through that dark valley. Those words became my prayer mantra and God's rod and staff were with me when a surgeon was able to develop a procedure to help my body heal. Psalm 23 literally shepherded me every step of the way. I would encourage all of us to rekindle a close relationship with this beloved passage of scripture during this time! The Lord is our shepherd. We rely solely on God. **We are going to trust God!**

Ironically, another characteristic of sheep is that they are known to band together and to stick together for protection. At times, their only means of survival is to band together to protect the flock. Sheep also have a tendency to follow each other and to keep track of each other. Doesn't this also describe the church- our community of faith. Certainly at this time **we want to care for one another.** Even though we are physically apart we can be united through:

- Praying for the mission and ministry of Cross of Glory. Even in this time, the mission and ministry of this congregation continues. Please pray that we may have God's guidance and strength to know how we can best be about God's work during this unique time.
- Praying for others in this community of faith. We will continue to list prayer concerns in our communication with you. Please don't hesitate to call my cell phone: 763-567-9843 with concerns or needs that you may have at this time.
- Telephoning, texting and emailing others in the congregation. This would be a good to reach out to those you know and to those that you don't know as well. Why not contact someone and say, "As a fellow member of Cross of Glory, I just want to see how things are with you at this time."
- Contact someone and ask them to remind you of the promises of God!
- Send a card to encourage someone. Reach out to those who are most isolated.

In times of anxiety and crisis, the church finds its true mission to be a beacon of love, peace and mercy in all the world. During this time of global pandemic, let us commit **to look out for our neighbors-** both near and far away. Please stop to consider those who are the most vulnerable in our world at this time. Are there ways that God might be leading us to respond?

We don't want to forget that March is food share month! Also, please know that one important way in which we as believers care for our neighbors at this time is by heeding the call of the CDC to limit our physical contact with others and when we do have contact to keep ourselves separated by a safe distance- six feet.

As we continue to move through these days of Lent, a time of drawing close to God, may we already hear the angels at the tomb, saying "*Do not be afraid.*" Breathe deeply these days into God's grace to calm your fear. We have hope because God in Christ is certainly on this journey with us. New doors will be opened, and new possibilities created. Always remember, "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" Why not welcome God to shepherd you through this time. Amen.

HYMN #789 "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" vss. 1, 2 & 4

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| <p>1 Savior, like a shepherd lead us;
much we need your tender care.
In your pleasant pastures feed us,
for our use your fold prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have bought us; we are yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have bought us; we are yours.</p> | <p>2 We are yours; in love befriend us,
be the guardian of our way;
keep your flock, from sin defend us,
seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
hear us children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
hear us children when we pray.</p> |
| <p>4 Early let us seek your favor,
early let us do your will;
blessed Lord and only Savior,
with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
you have loved us, love us still.</p> | |

CONFESSION of FAITH- Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

-Lord Jesus, during your earthly ministry you showed your peace and compassion by healing all people of ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel your power of healing through the care of doctors, nurses and all health care staff.

- O God, we lift to you our concern for people who are more likely than others to become severely ill from COVID-19- the elderly and people with chronic health conditions. Keep them from harm and be their comfort in this time of uncertainty.
- Loving God, give to us all a sense of calm in these days of distress and uncertainty. Thank you that we don't need to journey in this time alone. We praise you for the assurance of your presence with us always. We thank you for family, friends, congregational members and others who surround us with the assurance of your care and strength.
- Holy One, be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. Inspire and invigorate people developing better tests to diagnose the virus, vaccines to prevent it, and protocols and communication to eliminate the disease's spread. May honesty, truth and empathy be the way of people setting policies for our protection.
- Gracious God, be especially present with these people from our community faith who need your healing touch and presence at this time:

Bev Hoium	Gil Hartlage
Marcy Hartlage	Terry Stejskal
Vicky Jacobson	Doris Boyum

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.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SENDING FORTH HYMN #624 "Jesus, Still Lead On" vss. 1, 2 & 4

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| <p>1 Jesus, still lead on,
till our rest be won;
and, although the way be cheerless,
we will follow, calm and fearless;
guide us by your hand
to the promised land.</p> | <p>2 If the way be drear,
if the foe be near,
let no faithless fears o'ertake us,
let not faith and hope forsake us;
safely past the foe
to our home we go.</p> |
| <p>4 Jesus, still lead on,
till our rest be won;
heav'nly leader, still direct us,
still support, console, protect us,
till we safely stand
in the promised land.</p> | |

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God!