



# Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church ELCA

## CHURCH OFFICE CONTACT:

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## PASTOR JIM'S CONTACT INFORMATION:

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## READINGS for Sunday September 6, 2020.

### Ezekiel 33:7-11

In his writings, the sixth-century exile Ezekiel both condemns the nations, including his own, and, beginning in chapter 33, promises Israel's coming restoration. Ezekiel's self-identification as a prophet, that is, a mouthpiece for God, is stated in this excerpt: he must speak both God's judgment and God's mercy. Yet God prefers to render mercy.

### Romans 13:8-14

Paul's understanding that the end was near undergirds his metaphors describing the Christian life: wake up; it is day; Christ's light is our armor against sin; we wear Jesus Christ. By "flesh" Paul means the body misused by the power of sin, human life turned in upon itself. Paul's Christianization of the commandments as "love" recalls Leviticus 19:18: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

### Matthew 18:15-20

The fourth discourse in Matthew's gospel is a collection of instructions for Christian assemblies. The NRSV indicates this focus in its translation of the Greek "your brother" as "another member of the church." The ambiguity in the advice about church discipline is evident when we recall that Matthew has referred to Jesus as a friend of tax collectors. Whom the evangelist meant by the "you" in verse 18 is unclear. Verse 20 indicates the church's faith in the resurrection. The passage anticipates the conclusion of Matthew, in 28:18-20.

## SCRIPTURE VERSE for September

*"There is neither Jew  
nor Gentile, neither  
slave nor free, nor is  
there male and female,  
for you are all one in  
Christ Jesus."*

Galatians 3:28

## PRAYER MINISTRY

-Steven & Jodi Swanson & Family  
(our missionary family)

- All those who have been affected by  
Covid-19

- All Essential workers

- Law Enforcement Officers

- Those suffering from racism

- Family & Friends of Andrew Trebian

- Thomas Mosbo

- Dorothy Bohnsack

- Paul & Karron Mills

- Paul Hesselbacher

- Janice McKee (Kay Hesselbacher's friend)

- Roxann Krull (Paul Mills' daughter)

- Michael Lorento (Larry & Sue's neighbor)

- Dean Mysliwicz (Israel niece's husband)

- Ken Reinert (Israel' nephew)

- Liam Vogt (Joe & Kirstin Ehrler Vogt son)

- Kate Redfearn (Russ & Brittney's daughter)

- JoAnn Hesselbacher

- Juliette Schmidt

- Kendall Smith (Hansen's granddaughter)

- Gabe Hilby (Heim girl's classmate)

- Janice Bradley (Ladora Williams' daughter)

- Liam Petelle (Edie's grandson)

- Rich Schelke

- Caroline Krug (Jim & Babette's granddaughter)

- World Leaders & Peace in the World

- Men & Women serving our country



## Weekly Giving – August 30, 2020

General Giving	\$3,140.00
Mission Giving	\$515.00
Noisy Change	\$ 49.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,704.73</b>

## **14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

### **Message & Lessons – September 6, 2020**

**LINK TO HEAR PASTOR'S MESSAGE:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbTBSoa\\_4iM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbTBSoa_4iM)

#### **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

Our Gospel reading comes from Matthew the 18th chapter verses 15 through 20. I'd invite you to take a moment and read that as well as the other lessons that I mentioned in the beginning of this video and I'll continue on with my message.

Our reading from Romans today has a basic truth in it. It's one that is, I think, almost universally known. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves, and that captures all of the other commandments.

Doesn't it give us such a wonderful footing for us to live our lives?

Of course we can ask ourselves, "Who is our neighbor?" Some of those answers are pretty obvious: those who we share a community with, those who we go to church with, and certainly our families. We don't call them neighbors, of course, but certainly families are people who we want to treat as we want to be treated. When you get right down to it, it's everybody, isn't it? It includes those we know and those we don't know. It includes those who live half a world away, and don't they feel even closer now with the world feeling so much smaller than it did some years ago?

Everyone really is our neighbor.

When we love folks as we love ourselves, good things happen. We know that. We have common ground. We find common ground. We have good discussions. We work together on common goals. We help those who are in need. We look for ways to build up peace, to find peace with one another.

We have a much better chance of enjoying our lives and living the life that God hopes for us to live when we follow that simple summary of the commandments: love our neighbor as ourselves.

Now we, of course, realize that loving our neighbor isn't always going to work out just the way we intended. Sometimes it's our fault. Sometimes it's our neighbor's fault. Sometimes we just don't know exactly whose fault it is, but things just aren't working out. What do we do then? Sometimes it happens when everybody is well intentioned, but there's conflict.

That's where our Gospel comes in for today.

It gives us some really practical guidance on what we should do in those situations. Now there's lots of other things we can do when there's conflict or difficulty or someone has sinned against us. There are lots of alternative options that are quite contrary really to our gospel for today. We can gossip about it. We can tell other people. We can call the person names. There are all kinds of nasty things that happen when people have conflict with one another and when they can't get along or when one has wronged another.

That's what makes our Gospel passage for today so powerful and so meaningful.

It gives us some good guidance as to what we might do when things just aren't quite working out with someone. We are invited, in summary, to have communication with them. What a gift that is when we have the opportunity to visit with someone. We can find common ground, perhaps when it's least expected.

I often like to tell the story and, perhaps you've heard it before, of a time many years ago when I was a very young man and I was spending some time with my mother-in-law. A very hot button social issue came up in our conversation and we took a deep breath knowing that each of us had very different views on that issue. Frankly, we were thinking, probably, that the other one was sinful in their approach to that very difficult issue. Now the details aren't really that important at this point, who was on which side and why we had our particular opinions. But we had them, and they were strong but we talked and we discussed the issue and we were amazed at what happened. Just the two of us visited with maybe my wife and father-in-law looking on. We were amazed, once we got to talking, just how close we were on that topic. Oh yes, we did have different opinions. We came to, in the end, a different conclusion, but

many of the same faith-based beliefs underpinned both of our opinions. Many of the same ethical considerations strengthened each of our cases. Yes, we did come to different conclusions but we had a very meaningful discussion.

That kind of conversation, I think that's what our Gospel is getting at today. We are invited, when there's a problem, to go and talk to the person, person-to-person, on the same playing field, on the same on a level playing field. A time where we can take turns, share our opinions, share our thoughts, share our reasoning, and listen to the other and have a good and meaningful conversation.

Sometimes those conversations might involve other people and I think that's addressed in our Gospel passage for today as well. Other people can help us to sort things out, maybe even serve as a mediator, helping to clarify what might not be understood one to another.

We give thanks for those special relationships and those people who can help us. Maybe it's a member of our congregation. Maybe it's someone who's a bit more separated from the issue, isn't quite as invested, or has a way of seeing both sides of things.

We give thanks for those kinds of conversations.

We must also remember that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is with us wherever two or more are gathered. We trust that Jesus is there with us and what a gift that is.

We give thanks for the opportunity to love our neighbors as ourselves. We also give thanks that our Christian faith through today's Gospel reading and others gives us the tools to live faithfully in this world. It is a place where we know things don't always go smoothly, where people don't always agree, people don't always understand things in exactly the same way. Sometimes those disagreements can be very contentious.

What a gift it is for us to have a process for reconciliation where God is fully involved.

Might we take some time for prayer as we look for ways to get back to loving one another as we ourselves would like to be loved. Amen.

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

C **Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

P Faithful God,

C **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

P God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

C **Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### **FIRST READING: Ezekiel 33:7-11**

<sup>7</sup>So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

<sup>10</sup>Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

### **PSALM: Psalm 119:33-40**

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, O LORD, the way | of your statutes,  
and I shall keep it | to the end.

<sup>34</sup>**Give me understanding, and I shall | keep your teaching;  
I shall keep it with | all my heart.**

<sup>35</sup>Lead me in the path of | your commandments,  
for that is | my desire.

<sup>36</sup>**Incline my heart to | your decrees  
and not to | unjust gain. R**

<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from be- | holding falsehood;  
give me life | in your way.

<sup>38</sup>**Fulfill your promise | to your servant,  
which is for | those who fear you.**

<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach | that I dread,  
because your judg- | ments are good.

<sup>40</sup>**Behold, I long for | your commandments;  
by your righteousness en- | liven me. R**

### **Second Reading: Romans 13:8-14**

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 18:15-20**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup>“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*.A brief silence.*

P ... Lord, in your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

## BLESSING

P Mothering God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

C **Amen.**

## DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Remember the poor.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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## *Weekly Announcements*

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### WORSHIP SERVICE UPDATE

You will be receiving a call to see if you would like to schedule your service for Sunday or the week following. You can also contact me (Pastor Jim) at [\(563\) 599-2096](tel:5635992096). Everyone has been very gracious in this process. If weather affects a service, it will not be rescheduled due to the frequency of services.

**Communion:** Communion will resume using special factory sealed cups that contain both the wafer and juice. Distribution will be carefully organized. The resumption of communion using these cups, during this unusual time, was considered and supported by the church council. Additional changes that help the congregation adapt to our current circumstances are continually explored by Pastor Jim and the council.

**Reminder:** Please accept a reminder that masks are required at all our outdoor services if you leave your car. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Pastor Jim

### LAVERNE GREBNER'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

LaVerne Grebner is celebrating a big birthday on Thursday, September 17---100 Years Old! LaVerne is a life-long member of Shepherd of the Hills, and he has worked faithfully for our church, spreading the good news of the Gospel. To celebrate this event, Shepherd of the Hills will have a parade past LaVerne's window at the Galena-Stauss Assisted Living facility on Saturday, September 12, at 10:00 AM. Please save the date! Car will line up begins at 9:30 at Galena Primary School on Kelly Lane (Franklin to Hill Street to Kelly Lane) \*\*Follow signs\*\* A card basket will be available at the curb for those who have cards. Poster boards will be available at church for those who may want to make one for their car. Come and celebrate with or without posters!

### GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS – CHURCH OUTSIDE CLEANUP

If anyone is able to volunteer right after the parade for LaVerne Grebner on Saturday, September 12, 2020, to help clean up the grounds around the church, please stop by. Please wear gloves to help pull weeds. If you have a trimmer please bring them to trim the bushes. Also please remember to wear your mask and do social distancing.

## **ANNUAL STEAK FRY**

The canceling of the Annual Steak Fry is an unfortunate turn of events as there are several very worthwhile food pantries that rely on the proceeds of this event.

In lieu of having an actual steak fry at church, we are promoting a "virtual steak fry". With this we are asking that, if possible, please provide a donation to the church with a designation of "steak fry" or "food pantry". Any donations will be held until early October and at that time the monies will be distributed to the food pantries noted. Once distributed, there will be an article in the weekly newsletter advising of the distributions and amounts.

A sincere thank you for consideration to help those in need during these difficult times we are in.

In Peace, please stay healthy and safe, Your Church Council

Friends,

Hurricane Laura, a powerful Category 4 storm, has hit Louisiana and parts of Texas with devastating force, causing at least three deaths, major damage and leaving hundreds of thousands without power. With extremely dangerous storm surge and winds of at least 150 mph, it's one of the most powerful storms to hit the area in a century, and it left widespread destruction in its wake. Given the complexities caused by COVID-19, sheltering those impacted will be a challenge.

Lutheran Disaster Response is engaging with Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response (Upbring) and the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast and Southwestern Texas synods, which are assessing the immediate needs and initiating a response. While the extent of the damage is not yet known, we will accompany devastated communities from immediate relief through long-term recovery. This is an important part of Christ's call to our church.

**Please give today. Your gifts ensure that our church will be able to provide help and hope for those whose lives have been devastated by Hurricane Laura. Gifts designated for "Hurricane Response" will be used entirely (100%) for hurricane response efforts until they are complete.**

Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by hurricanes. Please join me in prayer and partnership, and stay connected to the latest events and our response to this and other disasters through our [Facebook](#) page.

The Rev. Daniel Rift

Director, ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response Funding  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## **GIVING WHILE WE ARE CLOSED**

Thank you to all who have been faithfully sending your giving to the church during our shut down. Please consider continuing your weekly offering by mailing it to the church office at 536 E Schapville Rd, Scales Mound, IL 61075, or arranging for online banking.

Please stay safe and healthy, Church Council

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## **Theological Reflection**

Jesus instructs the disciples, "if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Matt. 18:17). At first this sounds like condemnation, but consider the people Jesus welcomes, eats with, and heals. Jesus eats with Zacchaeus the tax collector and even declares, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" (Luke 19:9-10). It seems when some are lost and turn away, Jesus is even more deeply invested in their lives.

## **Theological Reflection**

Twice in today's first reading God calls Ezekiel "mortal," as though it is his name. This is a not-so-subtle way of reminding Ezekiel, and us, that he is not God. He bumps up against the limits of being human. Unlike God, sooner or later mortals die. The question of the day seems to center around the sort of life we will live. Is it a living death apart from God, or a full, vibrant life, the life God has intended for creatures and creation?