

Shepherd's Staff

HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH |

JULY 2020

Will We Ever Get Back to Church?

The 're-opening' question seems to be on everyone's minds these days. Thoughts of 'sheltering-in-place' have given way to something different. For some, they've given way to restlessness, an eagerness to push the limits and experience a sense of 'normalcy.' For others, to anxiousness, based in fear that the misbehavior of others may have life-threatening consequences to us. For others, to recklessness – and a wanton disregard for the well-being of one's neighbor. For still others, to cautiousness, grounded in the sober-minded awareness that COVID-19 still poses a significant threat to our community, our nation and our world.

While we – the people of Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church – don't want to be fearful, we do seek to be wise. While we don't want to be reckless, we do seek to be faithful. As noted last month, we are working to develop a 'reopening' strategy based upon:

- legally-binding orders from county, state and national officials,
- recommendations from our congregational insurer,
- insights from medically-trained personnel within our own congregation, and

- guidance from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and NIH (National Institutes of Health).

We WILL open for worship as soon as we believe it is safe to do so – but for now the answer as to "When?" continues to remain "Not yet."

At present, our county, state and national authorities are strongly advising that we DO NOT gather for corporate worship. Numerous situations wherein churches have reopened too quickly have been met with tragic and deadly consequences. Corporate singing has been shown to be dangerous. Greeting one another has been shown to be dangerous. Coffee-fellowship times have been shown to be dangerous. Even the sharing of the Sacraments has been shown to be dangerous. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control has identified corporate worship as being among the riskiest behaviors one can engage in at the present time – right up there with spectator sporting events and large-venue concerts!

In order to fine-tune our re-opening strategy – we need your input. Our decisions need to account for how YOU are feeling about what feels safe to you. For instance, while some may

be interested in "outdoor worship on the Preschool Playground," others may not. While some may wish to participate in a service which doesn't have singing or a liturgy or the sharing of Communion, others may not.

- If you receive this newsletter via US Mail, a copy of a brief survey is enclosed to help you communicate to us your thoughts and feelings about re-opening our church campus. Please complete it and return it to Lisa Verley in the Church Office at your earliest convenience.
- If you receive this newsletter electronically, please logon to our website at www.holyshepherd.org and follow the SurveyMonkey link to the online version of that same brief survey.

In either event, by completing this brief survey, we'll be better informed about what works for you, what doesn't work for you, and how we can best be church together.

And – in the meantime – remember the promise of the Holy Shepherd, that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, even in the darkest of valleys.



We're glad we were your teachers,
 We've come to love you so,
 We can't believe the end is near,
 We hate to see you go!
 Remember all the fun we had
 In all the things we did,
 But most of all remember
 You're a VERY special kid!

Ms. Susie &
 Ms. Joanna



HEALING

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| Marilyn N. | Reese L. |
| Will T. | Kathy McCarty S. |
| Dinah W. | Jeff K. |
| Gloria E. | Mary Helene W. |
| Doug T. | Susie M. |
| Laura Z. | Mallory W. |
| Madison V. | Dorothy L. |
| DoLoris T. | |

WELLNESS

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| Rolf B. | Ann B. |
| Carol K. | DeLane R. |
| Marilynn L. | |

PEACE / COMFORT

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| Kitti C. | Kristy L. |
| Harry H. | |

MILITARY

- Keep our armed forces safe. Give them courage,
 hope and strength.
- | | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Brian H. | Megan H. |
| Peter & Melanie K. | |

Celebrations

Birthdays

- | | |
|---------|----------------------|
| July 2 | Christopher D. |
| July 3 | Ron L. |
| July 9 | Fred S. |
| July 13 | Elise A. |
| July 16 | Opal B. |
| July 18 | Doug M. |
| July 20 | Bruce N. |
| July 26 | Tracey B. |
| July 28 | Camille S. |
| July 31 | Igor S.
Claire W. |

Anniversaries

- | | |
|---------|---|
| July 4 | Bill & Mary H.
Michael & Gretchen S. |
| July 17 | Susan & Chuck P. |
| July 20 | John & Bethany V. |
| July 24 | Paul & Karen H. |
| July 30 | Tom H. & Mary D. |



A GIFT MARKED 'FRAGILE'

Summer is in full swing. Independence Day is just around the corner. Normally that would mean getting ready for barbecues and family get-togethers and maybe a front-row seat at Orinda's Hometown Parade or Moraga's Fireworks Show. But this year is anything but "normal!" I suspect that this year's 4th of July celebrations are going to be smaller, less boisterous and probably less fun.

Yet it's not just COVID-19 and its attendant 'shelter-in-place' order that are going to alter our celebrations of Independence Day this year. No – the recent news of the brutal murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of law enforcement personnel – and of Ahmaud Arbery at the hands of racial supremacists – and the marches and the protests which those murders spawned – have left our nation fractured and frustrated and fearful. A spirit of discontent has us firmly in its grips, and has revealed just how fragile the Union is which we share.

I can't but imagine that you have said a prayer or two for our nation amid these days. (In fact, I'd be saddened if you haven't said a prayer or two for our nation amid these days!) But what should we rightly be praying for? For many of those prayers I've seen posted online as regards our nation in recent days have been of the "My will be done" variety — rather than the "Thy will be done" sort that our Savior first taught us to pray.

In times like these – when I myself am not sure just what to pray – I find the prayers in our hymnal to be a helpful resource. And this one in particular seems to speak to the challenge of these days:

Holy Trinity, one God, you show us the splendor of diversity and the beauty of unity in your own divine life. Make us, who came from many nations with many languages, a united people that delights in our many different gifts. Defend our liberties, and give those whom we have entrusted with authority the spirit of wisdom, that there might be justice and peace in our land. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our sovereign and our Savior. Amen.

May God bless our fragile nation amid these days.

Pastor John



"Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature."

Genesis 1:26

Why does God love you with an everlasting love? It has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with 'whose' you are. You are his.

How can we respect our neighbors? What is God's solution to angry racism that gives birth to violence and bloodshed? Government programs might help. Lectures might enlighten. But, in the end, God's plan is the only plan: see every person on the planet as God's idea.

And He has no bad ideas.

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<https://maxlucado.com/gods-ancient-answer-for-racism/>



Our sister in the faith, Char Demos, recently passed away following an accident in her home. Her death comes as a huge shock to her sons, Christopher and David, and daughters-in-law and her beloved grandchildren -- those for whom she would do anything. Char will be remembered for her quiet demeanor, her impeccable fashion sense, her quick smile and her deep sense of compassion. Char was active here at Holy Shepherd with the Fellowship Committee, as a Counter and she served as Secretary on the Church Council among other things. She will be greatly missed by all. A small family memorial service is being planned at this point, with the understanding that we will find a way to celebrate Char's life and love as the opportunity becomes available.

ONLINE SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. our "Facebook Premiere" community worship airs. By using the chat feature on Facebook, you'll be able to greet your fellow worshippers.

Our Webpage at www.holyshepherd.org posts the Sunday worship services. The most current one is accessible at about 10:15 a.m. each Sunday morning.

E X O D U S

from Captivity to Community

Our Weekly Sermon Series for the Summer of 2020

Week #1 – June 14th
"Whom Shall We Serve?"
Exodus 1:1-4

Week #2 – June 21st
"Whom Shall I Send?"
Exodus 3:1-17

Week #3 – June 28th
"Plagued with Problems"
Exodus 11:1-10

OUR SERIES SCHEDULE
Pull out your Bible
and join in the Journey!

Week #4 – July 5th
"Birthing a New Nation"
Exodus 14:10-30

Week #5 – July 12th
"Trouble with Teenagers"
Exodus 15:22-27 & 17:1-7

Week #6 – July 19th
"What Does God Want?"
Exodus 20:1-6 & 22:20-28

Week #7 – July 26th
"How Do We Serve?"
Exodus 25:1-16

Week #8 – August 2nd
"When Things Go Bad"
Exodus 34:1-10

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

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