

The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH — LENT 2021 — ORINDA, CALIFORNIA

WHAT IS LENT?

"What should I give up for Lent this year, Pastor?", she asked in all sincerity. "Chocolate? Facebook? My nightly glass of wine?" "That all depends," her pastor replied, "It depends on your motivation."

The Season of Lent is a time-honored tradition among Christians throughout the world — constituted by those forty non-Sunday days between Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. (This year, Lent runs from February 17 until April 1.) Traditionally, Lent has been a time for us to dress our worship spaces in purple (the traditional color of sorrow.) It's been a time for us to take things on (or give things up) in mindful devotion to our Lord. It's been a time for our worship services to be a bit more somber and reflective. And — most of all — it has been a time to prepare ourselves for the Holy Week cycle of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter.

Lent isn't a divine diet plan nor a religious version of 'New Year's Resolutions'. Rather, the spirit of Lent is found in a story Jesus told about a holier-than-thou fellow and a no-good tax-collector who both went to worship one day. The pious man prayed: "Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people - robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like that tax man." Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the back pew, his face in his

hands, not daring to look up, said, "God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner." But Jesus noted that it was the tax man, not the other fellow, who went home made right with God, for if you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face.

Lent is that humble tax collector. Lent is being honest to God about who we are, who we are not, and the ways in which we have fallen short of God's best hopes for us. Lent is asking for help from the One who is all that precisely because we know we aren't all that. Lent is an attitude of honesty and humility, and at the same time an attitude of quiet joy, knowing that our sins have been forgiven by God. Lent is that long, slow walk to the cross, wherein we discover just how serious our brokenness is, and just how wonderful God's love is.

Even though it's early in March and the Season of Lent 2021 is one-third over, it's never too late to take on a Lenten spirit! For walking with Jesus in honesty, humility and thankfulness is something that never goes out of style!

EVENTS SCHEDULE

Amid these days of pandemic, we encourage you to stay connected with our community by participating in the following events:

Every Sunday at 9:30 am — Our weekly Facebook '**Worship Video Watch Party**' hosted by one of our pastors @HSLCOrinda.

Every Sunday at 9:30 am — Our '**Weekly Worship Video**' should be accessible on our webpage at www.holyshepherd.org.

Every Sunday at 10:30 am — Our popular "**Zoom Coffee Fellowship**" allows you to connect with others. The Zoom Meeting ID is 823 6201 2420.

Third Sundays from noon to 1pm — Our Sanctuary is open for socially-distanced Holy Communion. (*Join us on March 21st for our next gathering!*)

Tuesdays at 7pm — Our weekly 'Adult Ed.' Zoom Bible class has resumed following Christmas Break! We meet each Tuesday night at 7pm. Our Zoom Meeting ID# is 882 9062 7131 (no password required.)

Mission Partner Update: WINTER NIGHTS SHELTER



Needless to say, COVID-19 has brought MANY changes to the Winter Nights Shelter Program which our Social Ministry Team has championed over the past half-dozen years. Clients and staff are regularly screened for symptoms of the pandemic. Masking and cleaning protocols are being scrupulously followed. Indoor tents are being set up at greater distances from one another than in past years. Meals are being shared at individual 'family tables' rather than larger common ones. And — perhaps most lamentably — volunteers are NOT allowed inside the shelter facilities at this time. But all of those restrictions don't mean that good things aren't happening.

Karen Rose Kalvass reports that the Winter Nights Shelter will be housed at Orinda Community Church in late March and early April. Holy Shepherd plans to work in partnership with OCC and St. Perpetua's Catholic Church of Lafayette to provide meals and support services to the shelter during that time, including a special Easter dinner! If you would be interested in helping provide food or funds to support our efforts with Winter Nights, please contact Karen Rose Kalvass at krkvolunteer@gmail.com



WINTER NIGHTS
Family Shelter

Winter Nights Family Shelter strengthens families by keeping them together at a difficult time. It is a partnership of congregations and community groups in Contra Costa County committed to making a difference in the lives of hurting families by providing a safe place to begin to recover from the stress of homelessness and plan for a better future.

In fiscal year 2019-2020, Holy Shepherd contributed \$1665 to the work of the Winter Nights Shelter Program through our budgeted 'Giving Beyond Ourselves' commitment. Additionally, we provided meals and volunteer staff to support the program. For more information about the Winter Nights Program, visit www.cccwinternights.org

We Remember in Prayer

Prayers for Healing

- Glo. & Ber. Enstrom
- Dou. & DoL. Timmons
- MHe Wagner
- Vic. Gess
- Dr.B and Car. Weyand
- Sus. Morgenstern
- Bru. Neujahr
- Hen. & Car. Kramer
- Dav. Madsen
- Dic. Tissue
- Kat. Bradshaw

Prayers for Comfort

- Har. Howe
- Rol. Benseler
- Mar. & Kri. Lindahl
- Mar. McGill
- DeL. Riveness
- Mar. Norleen

Prayers for Those Serving

- Meg. Howard
- Bri. Henson
- Pet. Kler

March Celebrations

Birthdays

1st Chr. Padilla
3rd Sop. Perla
5th Lis. Verley
6th Mar. Chow

13th MHe. Wagner
15th Jua. Gilbertson
20th Kim. White
24th Dr.B. Weyand
26th Sus. Patterson

27th Won Yang

Anniversaries

1st Weyands (51)
23rd Hudaks (52)

If you would like to support members and friends of our congregation through prayer, consider participating in our 'Prayer Chain'. As a 'Prayer Chain' member, you would receive occasional emails inviting you to pray for members, friends and loved ones in need to prayerful support. For more information, please contact Lisa Verley at lisaverley@holyshepherd.org.

LIFE TRANSITIONS



It is with a heavy heart that we relay the news of the passing of Ruth Pease on February 18th. She was home where she wanted to be and her passing was peaceful.

Ruth was instrumental in the development of the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center, having coordinated the Caregiver Support Group for more than a decade. Additionally, she was key in linking LARC to the larger network of community-care organizations and the Alzheimer's' Association.

Daughter Krista relates that "Greg and I were glad to be by her side, sharing memories, songs and loving words with her during her last few days. She had a vibrant spirit, and lived a full life. Mom loved her family and friends, and made an impression on so many. I am grateful she was still perky and enjoyed her 79th birthday a couple of weeks ago."

In lieu of a memorial service, the Pease family anticipates preparing an Online Memorial Tribute which will be available on our website at a future date.



Time to Take Something On For Lent??

Rather than 'giving something up' this Lent, might you consider 'taking something on'? I cordially invite you to join me in walking with Jesus this Lent by daily reflecting on his final journey — from Jericho to Jerusalem to a cross on a hill called Calvary. Using the Gospel of Luke as our guide, let us walk with Jesus as he journeys to death — and prepare ourselves for the GOOD NEWS that arrives on Easter. In faith, hope and love — Pastor John

Day 1 (March 1) – Read Luke 18:31-34

Ponder: *What's the hardest task you've ever been asked to do?*

Day 2 (March 2) – Read Luke 18:35-43

Ponder: *What would you ask Jesus to do for you?*

Day 3 (March 3) – Read Luke 19:1-10

Ponder: *Whom do you identify with in the story of Zacchaeus?*

Day 4 (March 4) – Read Luke 19:11-27

Ponder: *What treasure has God entrusted to you?*

Day 5 (March 5) – Read Luke 19:27-40

Ponder: *When have you been part of an adoring crowd?*

Day 6 (March 6) – Read Luke 19:41-44

Ponder: *What is something you see that breaks your heart?*

Day 7 (March 7) – Read Luke 19:45-48

Ponder: *Why did those in power want to kill Jesus?*

Day 8 (March 8) – Read Luke 20:1-8

Ponder: *How do you feel when people don't believe you?*

Day 9 (March 9) – Read Luke 20:9-19

Ponder: *Have you ever 'doubled-down' on a bad life choice?*

Day 10 (March 10) – Read Luke 20:20-26

Ponder: *What are "the things that are God's"?*

Day 11 (March 11) – Read Luke 20:27-40

Ponder: *What do you imagine heaven will be like?*

Day 12 (March 12) – Read Luke 20:41-44

Ponder: *What is something that confuses you about the Bible?*

Day 13 (March 13) – Read Luke 20:45-47

Ponder: *What does it mean to 'devour widows' houses'?*

Day 14 (March 14) – Read Luke 21:1-4

Ponder: *Have you learned a life lesson from a poor person?*

Day 15 (March 15) – Read Luke 21:5-19

Ponder: *Can you recall a time when you were 'led astray'?*

Day 16 (March 16) – Read Luke 21:20-25

Ponder: *Have you seen something you cherished get destroyed?*

Day 17 (March 17) – Read Luke 21:25-33

Ponder: *Have you ever seen a sign of hope amid hard times?*

Day 18 (March 18) – Read Luke 21:34-38

Ponder: *What worries weigh you down these days?*

Day 19 (March 19) – Read Luke 22:1-6

Ponder: *Have you ever felt betrayed? If so, how did it feel?*

Day 20 (March 20) – Read Luke 22:7-13

Ponder: *What is your favorite holiday to prepare your home for?*

Day 21 (March 21) – Read Luke 22:14-23

Ponder: *Can you recall the first time you shared Communion?*

Day 22 (March 22) – Read Luke 22:24-30

Ponder: *Who – to you – is a good example of selfless service?*

Day 23 (March 23) – Read Luke 22:31-34

Ponder: *What do you imagine Jesus is praying for you today?*

Day 24 (March 24) – Read Luke 22:35-38

Ponder: *Can you recall a time you were 'woefully unprepared'?*

Day 25 (March 25) – Read Luke 22:39-46

Ponder: *What does it look like to put God's will above your own?*

Day 26 (March 26) – Read Luke 22:47-53

Ponder: *Which character in this text can you relate with?*

Day 27 (March 27) – Read Luke 22:54-62

Ponder: *Why do you think Peter 'went out and wept bitterly'?*

Day 28 (March 28) – Read Luke 22:63-71

Ponder: *Physical pain, emotional pain, relational pain. Which of those seems most unbearable to you?*

Day 29 (March 29) – Read Luke 23:1-5

Ponder: *Have you ever been falsely accused of something?*

Day 30 (March 30) – Read Luke 23:6-12

Ponder: *Why does mockery hurt so much?*

Day 31 (March 31) – Read Luke 23:13-25

Ponder: *Have you felt pressured into doing something wrong?*

Day 32 (April 1) – Read Luke 23:26-43

Ponder: *Which of Jesus' final sayings rings sharpest in your ears?*

Day 33 (April 2) – Read Luke 23:44-49

Ponder: *What adjective would you use to describe this scene?*

Day 34 (April 3) – Read Luke 23:50-56

Ponder: *Joseph did the right thing amid particularly challenging times. Have you ever known anyone like that?*

One Way We're Making a Difference

Sometimes we wonder if our work with service organizations REALLY makes a difference to those we seek to serve. This story — related to us by the crew at the Winter Nights Shelter — say "Yes it does!" (For more on the Winter Nights Shelter program, see inside!)

When Robert, Alison and their four children moved to California they had no idea that they would be using YouTube to learn to live in a van. The Marine veteran and his wife were left homeless after a series of challenges. These loving parents never let their children know it was anything more than an adventure. They woke to watch the sunrise, got breakfast, and went to school and work. Alison did her make up in the restroom at the mall. Robert diligently called shelters and housing agencies for help. Many were full. Some did not accept families, together. In fact, on Christmas Eve in 2019, Santa left presents in the back of their van.

The family desperately needed a place to stay and in January, Robert heard that a Parking Lot Program had opened nearby. He was told to call Bill Shaw, Program Director for The Winter Nights Family Shelter. The wheels of change began to turn. The following night Robert, Alison and their children were safely parked at the Parking Lot Program of Winter Nights. The next morning when the kids went to school, and Alison went to work, Robert continued working hard on obtaining housing for him and his family.

When space became available, the family moved into the Winter Nights Family Shelter, trading their van for a large tent in the community hall. Volunteers provided all the meals and the children thrived in the tutor program. Two made the honor roll! The video truck came the first weekend to everyone's delight. The four kids could be kids, and Alison and Robert could focus on plans for their future. In collaboration with our many partners, the family was stably housed in March. They have a steady income and a plan for the future. In partnership with Winter Nights, we are grateful to have served them.

"THE ACHE FOR HOME LIVES IN ALL OF US. THE SAFE PLACE WHERE WE CAN GO AS WE ARE AND NOT BE QUESTIONED." — Maya Angelou

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