

The Shepherd's *staff*

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOLY SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
HOLY WEEK / EASTER 2021 — ORINDA, CALIFORNIA

NOW WE KNOW ...

A Prayer for Those Who Wait for Easter

Now we know: all is grace, all is gift.

You give us all good things: life and love; daily bread and water that quenches our thirst; friends and faith.

Most of all, in your Son, Jesus, you meet us with a love that will never let us go; you utter words of mercy and forgiveness that override the hurts, and heal our brokenness; you offer new beginnings where we had expected only dead ends.

We give you thanks and praise for the mystery of your suffering love that gives us life. We give you thanks and praise that you know our weakness and hear our prayers. We give you thanks and praise that all our dying and living is held in your good keeping.

Now we know: all is grace, all is gift.



BREAKING NEWS!

Our Church Council has authorized the reopening of our church campus to Sunday morning Worship on May 2, 2021! This is the vital first step to the broader re-opening of our campus this Summer/Fall. Look inside (page 3) for more details about this exciting development!

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 Worship Video' should be accessible on our webpage at www.holyshepherd.org.
- Sundays April 4 and April 11 at 9:30 am — Our weekly Facebook 'Worship Video Watch Party' hosted by one of our pastors. @HSLCORinda.
- 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 April 18!)
- Tuesdays at 7pm — Our weekly 'Adult Ed.' Zoom Bible class resumes from Spring Break on April 13! Our Zoom Meeting ID# is 882 9062 7131 (no password required.)

Mission Partner Update: LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



The current surge of Central American refugees over our nation's southern border with Mexico has renewed the sense of division across our land. Some argue we ought strengthen our border security, others demand that our chief concern should be dealing with such refugees humanely. But few on either side of the debate stop to consider the root causes of this influx of refugees and ask why they are arriving at our borders in the first place.

Called to Love Our Neighbors

For the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

— Psalm 9:18 NRSV



The peoples of Central America have found their nations and communities ravaged in recent years. Hurricanes Eta and Iota made landfall within just two weeks of each other this past November — bringing with them downed powerlines, collapsed bridges, massive flash floods and countless landslides to communities that had already laid low by gang-warfare, civil unrest and COVID-19. But rather than playing the blame-game, Lutheran World Relief has been working to address these issues directly — by rebuilding communities and restoring hope. In the country of Honduras, LWR has targeted the community of San Pedro Sula, on Honduras' border with Mexico as being both vulnerable



and vital. LWR began by addressing basic needs for safe drinking water and hygiene, and followed it up with assistance to return laborers, farmers and other stakeholders to their homes. By partnering with LWR, we are working to stabilize communities and restore hope. We ARE going in peace — to love and serve our neighbors! For more information about the work of Lutheran World Relief, visit www.lwr.org.

Lutheran World Relief was founded in 1945 to collect and send aid to people living in post-World War II Europe. Today, it continues to carry out its mission of material aid distribution, as well as relief and development programs, in countries across the globe.

Lutheran World Relief receives financial support from the "Giving Beyond Ourselves" portion of on congregation's budget, as well as through individual contributions. In fiscal year 2019/2020, Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church offered \$2016 to support the work of Lutheran World Relief both domestically and internationally.

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
- Pet. Johnson
- Hen. & Car. Kramer
- 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

April Celebrations

Birthdays

- 2nd Kal. Schaaf
- 7th Wil. Howard
- 9th Apr. Lane
- 14th Gai. Bjornsen
- 20th Eli. Humphrey

(Continued)

- 24th Edw. Szaky
- 27th Mar. Oczkus
- 29th Joa. Birke
- 30th Ste. Berchtold
- 30th Jef. Klingman

Anniversaries

- 3rd Enstroms (66!)
- 11th Yangs
- 25th Clark/Lausch
- 27th Wildmans

Our Prayer Chain

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 — or to submit a Prayer Request to the members of the Prayer Chain — please contact Office Administrator Lisa Verley at lisaverley@holyshepherd.org or via phone at (925)254-3422.

CAMPUS RE-OPENING NEWS!

The Holy Shepherd Church Council recently met via Zoom to attend to key congregational business — including an authorization to gradually reopen our campus!

The Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church Council met on the evening of March 24 to discuss a number of important issues. Primary among them was an extended conversation about how we can safely reopen our campus to both the congregation and community. The decision was made (barring unforeseen developments) to approve a return to live/in-person worship in our Sanctuary on Sunday, May 2, 2021 as a first step toward the full re-opening of our campus!

In order to facilitate the safety of all worshippers and worship leaders, this initial return to worship will necessarily involve a number of modifications to the way things were done 'pre-COVID'. Included among them will be the expectation that:

- Worshipers will wear masks and self-maintain effective social distancing from others in the building,
- Our Orders of Worship will limit corporate singing and response in accordance with County Health Dept. guidelines,
- Coffee Fellowship will initially be held outdoors and food options will necessarily be limited.

Because we are aware that not all members and friends of the congregation will be comfortable returning to worship in this phase of our reopening, the Church Council authorized a 'Sanctuary Technology Upgrade' which will allow us to both 'live-stream' our worship services and make them available via Facebook and the church website (as has been our practice throughout the past year.) The Council recognized the extraordinary effort Pastor John has made weekly to ensure that our worship videos were available and accessible, but realized the impracticality of trying to offer both in-person worship on our campus and pre-recorded / well-edited worship videos at the same time.

In other business, the Council confirmed Congregation President Fred Schroeder, Vice-President Joan Kiekhaefer, Bethany Valentine and Henry Chow as our Voting Members at the upcoming 2021 Synod Assembly — joining Pastor John and Pastor Pam.

Treasurer Steve Swanback also reported that the Federal Government has formally forgiven the "PPP" (Payroll Protection Program) Loan we received last summer, amounting to more than \$107,000! These funds were used to support salaries for LARC, Preschool and HSLC staff members in the initial days of the pandemic.

Tunnel Traffic

A Holy Week Reflection from Pastor John Valentine



Do you perchance recall your initial trip through the Caldecott Tunnel? We who live in the shadow of the Oakland/Berkeley Hills usually taken that series of tunnels for granted, but I have a vivid recollection of the first time I traversed that 'Hole through the Hills'.

My dad had taken a position in the Bay Area which required our family to move west — from Akron, Ohio to Lafayette. After arriving at SFO, we crossed the Bay Bridge and merged onto Highway 24, only to have my dad announce that there was a tunnel coming up — and that it was a LONG tunnel. My brother and I took deep breaths (as was our custom on family road-trips) to see if we could make it all the way through. But this tunnel was too long and too dark and too scary! By the time we made it through, I'd taken a whole number of breaths, I was glad that it was over and I was certainly glad to be on what was to become "our side of the Hills".

The week we know as 'Holy Week' is like that tunnel. It's something through which we MUST pass if we hope to get to the other side. There's just no getting around it. We want to get to Easter, and the joy and hope which it brings — but we can only get there by going through the dark tunnel which is Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Unless we journey with Jesus through his betrayal, his trial and his brutal crucifixion, we can never fully bask in the bright sun of Easter's joy.

Though this year we won't be able to be all in the same physical worship space as we share in Holy Week worship, I dearly hope that you'll find a way to share this year's journey through that tunnel with us. As we connect with one another via Facebook and/or our website, we clamber together onto the Gospel Bus to take a journey with Jesus. On Maundy Thursday, we hear Jesus tell his friends and followers just how much he cares about them (and us.) And on Good Friday, we witness the depth of his commitments to love God and his disciples to the end. And then — finally — on Easter Sunday, we discover how God can take the worst which the world can dish out and transform it into a joy that has no ending.

So come, and join us on a journey through that Holy Week tunnel, which ultimately leads to a Cross and a Tomb — for it is there that we will discover that Tomb to be empty, for Jesus Christ is Risen Indeed!

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE — THE THREE DAYS

MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 1, 2021

"The Night He Was Betrayed ..."

Join us via Facebook or our website @ www.holyshepherd.org — or connect with our Facebook "Worship Watch Party" at 7pm. Additionally, you're invited to a special Zoom-based sharing of Holy Communion at 8pm, for which you'll need your own bread and wine.

Zoom Meeting ID# 874 8416 4763
(Passcode 94563)



GOOD FRIDAY

April 2, 2021

"Father, Forgive Them for They Know Not What They Do"

Join us via Facebook or our website @ www.holyshepherd.org — or connect with our Facebook "Worship Watch Party" at 7pm, as together we recall, in word and song and prayer, Jesus' death on the Cross — and as we realize that it was for us and for our sakes that he made that fateful journey.

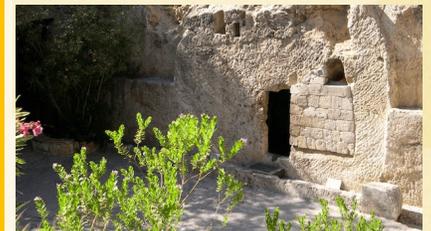
EASTER SUNDAY

(The Day of Resurrection)

April 4, 2021

*"Jesus Christ is Risen Today!
Alleluia!"*

Join us via Facebook or our website @ www.holyshepherd.org — or connect with our Facebook "Worship Watch Party" at 9:30am, as together we celebrate that the Tomb is empty, that Christ is risen and that God has forever changed our lives and our world. For "Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!"



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