

***But their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law the meditate day and night, they are like trees.....Psalm 1: 2-3a***

What is your favorite tree? I remember my dad planting a Weeping Willow tree in the yard of our house where I first lived. I loved that tree and it grew fast. I would hear the wind through the branches as they swayed and waved, as it seemed to put on this show just for me. I loved to see the beauty of this tree. I loved it and no matter how the wind blew, it stood strong. It stood brave. It hung in there. It was the most beautiful of trees in my opinion.

Psalm 1, the very beginning of the Psalter, begins by saying there is one way to be happy. "Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers." (Psalm 1:1) Happy are those that listen to God and his word. Happy are those that take to other road, the other path, that don't talk badly about one another. They are like trees, they are like strong roots and branches, they prosper and they grow. They produce fruit.

Last week in my sermon, I shared some God moments that have made me happy and allowed me to be encouraged by what I see in the world. What are your "God moments?" What is happening to make you realize that the word of God that we meditate on, study with, and believe to help you through the day?

A note on the upcoming months, especially November and December. As we go forward in the midst of this Pandemic and its restrictions and changes that we have had, one thing has not changed. That is the need for our neighbor. I traveled to the Food Shelf to bring the items that we collected at First Lutheran and I thank you for being so diligent and faithful in your giving.

They informed me that they would be making Christmas dinners that they will be putting together again and that personal items are low. "Shampoo and conditioner is a bonus." I thought much about that because I do have shampoo, soap, etc....Others do not. Whatever you give will be appreciated, and we will collect and bring them to Sandstone Food Shelf.

Thank you for continuing to love God and mediate on his word. Thank you for following the example of Jesus Christ and loving your neighbor. Thank you for allowing the Spirit, the Advocate, to walk with you and support you.

Be like the trees.....

Peace,

*Pastor Brenda*

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**FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

October 25, 2020

21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

**"We are called by God to grow in faith together, sharing Christ's love with each other and our community"**



Jesus' summary of the law in today's gospel echoes our first reading from Leviticus. We are called not only to love God with heart, soul, and mind, but also to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is out of such deep care that Paul shares the gospel with the Thessalonian community. In the confession of sins, we acknowledge that we have not loved God, neighbor, and self; yet we gather to hear the word of forgiveness and to be strengthened by word and meal to be signs of God's love and mercy in the world.

**Prelude**  
**Welcome**

**Pat Anderson**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

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

**C: Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

L: 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.**

L: 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.**

**Hymn "Jesus We Are Gathered"**

**Red Worship Book 529**

1. Jesus, we are gathered, Jesus, we are gathered, Jesus, we are gathered, we are gathered, Lord Jesus, for you.

2. Jesus, Lord be present, Jesus, Lord be present, Jesus, Lord be present, O Lord, Jesus be near us we pray.

**Greeting**

**Red Worship Book pg. 203**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

**Kyrie**

**Red Worship Book pg. 203**

**C: Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer. We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin. Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart. Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

**Prayer of the Day**

L: O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people. By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

*The Holiness Code in Leviticus urges people to be holy because God is holy. Holiness is lived out as God's people exercise justice and love in their dealings with one another. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves.*

**First Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

<sup>2</sup>Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

<sup>15</sup>You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. <sup>16</sup>You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you

shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. <sup>18</sup>You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

### Psalm 1

L: Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,

**C: nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!**

L: Their delight is in the law of the LORD,

**C: and they meditate on God's teaching day and night.**

L: They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither;

**C: everything they do shall prosper.**

L: It is not so with the wicked;

**C: they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**

L: Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes,

**C: nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.**

L: For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

**C: but the way of the wicked shall be destroyed.**

*Paul uses maternal imagery to depict the caring and nurturing relationship he shares with the Thessalonian Christians. When he first came to their city it was not to benefit himself but to share the gospel with them, which was his responsibility as an apostle of Christ..*

### Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

<sup>1</sup>You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, <sup>2</sup>but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. <sup>3</sup>For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, <sup>4</sup>but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup>As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; <sup>6</sup>nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, <sup>7</sup>though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. <sup>8</sup>So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

### The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

**C: Glory to you, O Lord. (spoken)**

**Red Worship Book pg. 206**

*Put on the spot by the Pharisees, Jesus displays wisdom by summarizing the law of God in just two commandments and by demonstrating the Messiah must be more than the son of David.*

### Gospel: Matthew 22:34-46

<sup>34</sup>When the Pharisees heard that [Jesus] had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup>and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” <sup>37</sup>He said to him, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

<sup>41</sup>Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: <sup>42</sup>“What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” <sup>43</sup>He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

<sup>44</sup>“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”?”

<sup>45</sup>If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" <sup>46</sup>No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

## "The Gospel of Our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ. (spoken)

Red Worship Book pg. 206

Sermon      **"God is Holy; You are Holy", Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18      Pastor Brenda Wicklund**  
**Matthew 22:34-46**

I cannot believe it, yet I am going to preach a bit on Leviticus. Now I admit, I haven't been a fan all my life in Christian Ministry. As it has been said, many a person has quit reading the Bible if they started at the beginning and landed in Leviticus. It has been said that someone fell asleep on a treadmill reading this book.

So, I confess it is not or never has been my "go to" book of the Bible. Yet clearly and boldly we begin today. The book is about law, code and order for the life of the people who were listening to the Law of God. Many people believe and rightfully so, that this is for the priestly persons that are taking care of the tabernacle; it is also for all people and for us. Our reading for today is from Chapter 19, and has striking words. This book for me and maybe others didn't seem to make a whole lot of sense for our lives, until it does.

It's about being holy. Holy. "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy for I know the Lord your God am holy (Leviticus 19:1-2)." You shall be holy, because I am holy says our God. You shall be holy, because you are made in my image, and it I am holy, and stand for love, then you to shall be holy and be loved, to love.

Just as the tabernacle could be tarnished and hurt by making the common when it should be holy, we would be amiss if we didn't separate it. Just as the night and the day were separated, so to the unclean and clean should be separated. This Holy God is living amidst a world of sin and defilement and it need not be. It is not so much about a certain priest or person, or personal holiness, but a right order to keep chaos out of the way. God, who loves us, wants us all to have a life that can flourish for us, and others. God can dwell with his people. ***"You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19: 17-18).*** That law, this law, these commands are in the midst of our Gospel reading today. Law and Gospel, as we discussed this week in Bible study, the Law and Gospel is all over in the Bible, even in Leviticus. It is easy and clear. Now before we read the Gospel know this. The Sadducees have disappeared and been silenced. The Pharisees are going to try one more time to give this Jesus and catch him in a trap.

Read Matthew 22:34-46

God gave the Ten Commandments, all of them which Jesus Christ sums up in the Gospel reading for today. A Pharisee who was a lawyer asked him a question. "Teacher which commandment in the law is the greatest?" (Matthew 22:36). Now Jesus could be in trouble here, if he said the right answer, they would say, yes we have been saying that all along, if he said the wrong answer, well he would just be out I would assume. He answers, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5) the Shema that everyone knew, yet wait he is not done. He quotes Leviticus 19:18 "Love your neighbor as yourself." Also, Jesus Christ the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus first speaks of the human-divine and then he speaks to the human-human experience. The second being a function of the first. Loving your neighbor is loving God, and loving God means loving your neighbor. You cannot have one without the other. Loving the neighbor means the neighbor near and far, and even the person next door (Raj Nadella, Working Preacher). It does not just mean being kind to the neighbor which is certainly true and shall be done, it is taking that step that Jesus Christ does in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is more action than just loving the neighbor, not hurting them, not speaking ill of them, not being "holier than thou" but willing your neighbor to have all they need and desire, without losing the holiness that is in them.

We do this all for the sake of Jesus Christ and though the work of the Holy Spirit because we cannot do this ourselves. We are made holy; to be holy and to see holy through God and all he has done for us.

Jesus Christ is nearing the his suffering on the cross for all he is speaking up against the powers that be so that we might live this life of forgiveness of sins for us. Jesus Christ taught, forgave, loved, allowed all people in so long ago, and still does.

You brother or sister, are loved, forgiven and promised an abundance life now and into eternity. Jesus Christ still lives, the Resurrection still means that we are free to love God with our heart, soul and mind, and love our neighbor as yourself, or adding to that, how they would like to be loved and respected. All the Law and prophets hang on these words of the Torah and on the words of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we live in hope. We live in the promises' of God. We live in the grace granted and given each day, month and year.

Holy one of God, stand firm in knowing whose you are and what he promises.  
Amen.

**Hymn "We Are Called"**

**Red Worship Book 720**

**1** Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God.

***Refrain***

*We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly; we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

**2** Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear! We are called to be hope for the hopeless so hatred and blindness will be no more. ***Refrain***

**3** Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that great day when all will be one! God will reign, and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love. ***Refrain***

**Nicene Creed**

**Red Worship Book pg. 104**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\* who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

L: With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

L: In your love, you speak to your church. Give courage and the bond of love to all who gather in your name, that this love turn toward our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

L: In your love, you create our earth filled with living things of every kind. Sustain the intricate connections among plants, insects, animals, and organisms we don't even know or recognize. Bless the work of scientists who help us extend neighbor love to the natural world. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

L: In your love, you guide with justice. Inspire leaders for truthful conversations and wise policies, that decisions are made for the good of all. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

L: In your love, you tenderly care for your children and nurse them to health. Bring relief to all those who need healing, hope, or restoration this day. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

L: In your love, you accompany us in life's transitions. We pray for new parents, those grieving a loss, those who are retiring, and those embarking on new ventures. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

L: In your love, we remember those who were dear to us and now rest in you. We give thanks for Martin Luther and all who seek to reform and renew your church. Give us courage to live out your gospel, revealing your love until our days on earth have ended. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

L: Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **Offering Prayer**

L: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen**

### **Words of Institution**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

### **Prayer**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Red Worship Book pg. 208**

**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.**

#### **Hymn-**

#### **"I Love to Tell the Story"**

**Red Worship Book 661**

**1** I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love. I love to tell the story, because I know it's true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

#### **Refrain**

I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

**2** I love to tell the story: how pleasant to repeat what seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet!

I love to tell the story, for some have never heard the message of salvation from God's own holy word.

**Refrain**

- 3 I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song, I'll sing the old, old story that I have loved so long.

**Refrain**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

*the worship is ended ... let the service begin...*



**Prayer Concerns ~ (Names will be on for one month unless requested longer.)**

John Jabe, Peter Thorvig, Kay Conway, George and Joan Wells (brother/sister-in-law of Gary and Gail Wells), Eric Mettling (deployed for service), Gracie Edin, Jessica Lindahl, Carol Bostrom, Leigha Ness (Pastor Brenda's great-niece), Bob Pyle (friend of Dave and Kay Kadous) and Barbara Ekberg (sister of Loretta Sprado.)

We will put in the Confirmands Faith Statements in the bulletin, providing there is room.

**Dana Opal Marks**

so i'm not gonna lie i honestly have no idea how to start this faith statement but here goes nothing. so these past few years have been pretty hard, and my faith has definitely been tested a lot. so when i was younger i had and still have an amazing life. i have my family, my friends, my church family, i had anything i ever needed. i went to church a lot with my family and participated in FIA i had a lot of faith. but about two years ago i was diagnosed with severe depression and anxiety. it was definitely an adjustment for not only me but my family to make. with doctor appointments, therapy appointments and my medication. one day was particularly hard. i was struggling at school and i felt like i had nobody. and i had attempted to take my own life. i admit it. i lost my faith, i lost the hope that it was gonna get better i lost my faith that God was gonna help me through this. thankfully i had my best friend she knew something was going on and she told my parents and they stopped me. when i think about that day. i have a lot of guilt. thinking about the people i would've hurt and the people i would've left. i wouldn't be able to see my nephew and nieces grow up. i wouldn't be able to see my brother get married. i would've lost everything. all because i lost my faith. in july of 2019 i went on a mission trip to chicago. on the thursday before we came home we went to the Seed Of Abraham church. i was down by the stage with a bunch of other people. after everything that happened i felt a lot of guilt and i didn't think i was worthy of forgiveness. i mean i would've left everything and everyone for something that would eventually get better. but the pastor came on stage and he was talking about forgiveness and suicide and how hard everything is. and there must've been about 100 people in there and i remember me having tears in my eyes and him looking me in the eye and saying "God forgives you, it's about time you forgive yourself". at that point i lost it. i had never felt so touched and so close to God. i felt that god was

somehow speaking to me through the pastor. this pastor had no idea who i was. it was a little dark in the church but still he looked at me out of all people. i felt forgiven i felt free. i felt God. now after all of that i realized i always had my faith sometimes it just was tested now it wasn't sudden don't get me wrong. it took months. but i finally put everything i have into my relationship with God. i put all my trust in him. and i'm happy to say that i haven't had a relapse since then and never will again. because i know i have people i can go to. i have my best friend, i have pastor, i have my family, i have God, and most of all i got my faith. and that is one thing i never want to lose again.

### **Adam Lloyd Nelson**

Hello, my name is Adam Nelson and I am the son of Candi and Erik Nelson. My first memories of church are coming up for the children's chat as I felt welcome and enjoyed talking with Pastor even though I know the adults and my parents especially were wondering "what is he going to say this week?" It was the beginning of my faith and feeling close to God.

Confirmation helped grow my faith and gave me a clearer understanding of the Bible and what it talks about. To me, having faith means putting your trust in God, knowing and believing that Jesus dies on the cross for our sins so we could be forgiven for our sins and he came back to life again. Having faith and believing helps me as I know God is always there for me, I can connect with Him through prayer anytime, I know God has a plan for me even if I don't know what it is, and God is always watching over me. Faith is giving love by encouraging others, being kind, and helping them soar just like God does for us as found in Isaiah (NIV) chapter 40 verse 31 "but those who Hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles!"

Thank you to those who believed in me, laughed with me, taught me, and supported me, and helped me into who I am today.



**Welcome to worship!** Did you know some Bible verses from the New Testament are also in the Old Testament? Jesus knew the Old Testament stories by heart. One important verse is found in Deuteronomy. It is called the Shema (shay-mah), Hebrew for “hey, listen everybody!”

**Love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.**  
Deuteronomy 6:5

**Write or draw what you think it means to love God “with all your might.”**

## hear & celebrate

**The dynamic duo!** Matthew 22:34-46

God gave Moses the ten commandments. When a Pharisee asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment, Jesus gave a surprising answer. He said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 27:37-39).

### **Make Connections**

How do we love God and love our neighbors? There are stories all around us.



**Love Is:** Jesus wants us to love God and love others. Read about love in 1 Corinthians 13.

*LOVE is....patient, kind, caring, helpful, nice hopeful*



*Learn to say the word “love” in American Sign Language. Sign it often!*

### **This week**

Write the verse from the front page of this folder on a card. Put it where you can see it as a reminder all week!

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