

VERSE OF THE WEEK

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

John 14:27

May we look to scripture daily to find peace that passes all understanding. It is also helpful if we can share the verse with another human being that we trust will process the text with us. Sometimes we may find it revealing to journal our thoughts and feelings as we reflect upon our state of being.



MIDWEEK MESSAGES

October 7, 2020

MESSAGE FROM JUDITH RAINFORTH

Greetings to All,

Relocation has happened! My Nebraska home sold, Arizona home bought, boxes packed, boxes unpacked, and my ministry at ALC continues in exciting and new ways. Obviously, the ways are different than Pre-COVID-19 but just as vital.

Plans as Pastor of Spirituality and Care include, but are not limited to, leadership in Stephen Ministry, Women's Ministry, Advent planning with Taize worship, Blue Christmas Service, Navajo Nation Partnership, WNA planning, Meditation Group, retreat planning, Zoom ministry, phone ministry, and the list goes on. The preaching, teaching and leading worship services are an ongoing blessing as we have worship services shared by Pastor Lowell, Pastor Gary and myself.

Praise God I have partners in ministry that make it possible to plan upcoming events in ways that will enable us to assist one another. Praise God American Lutheran Church (ALC) is filled with many brothers and sisters in Christ that make it possible to accomplish our goals one day at a time. Otherwise, it could be overwhelming; but I remember the verse from Mark 9:23, "Jesus said to him, 'If you are able! All things can be done for the one who believes.'"

Each day I awaken and thank God that I am healthy and energized to do what God is calling me to do at ALC in my daily life with parishioners, family, friends and responsibilities which come with selfcare. I thank God at the end of the day that I have been led to stay safe and healthy by doing what I can to protect myself and others.

During this time of the pandemic and unrest in the world, our ministry as Christians means more responsibility every day. We cannot rest on our laurels and think that we can do things the way we always have. It has never been more difficult to be who we are as children of God as we try to be sensitive to others.

My prayer is for patience and understanding as I face each day with hope and determination to follow the will of God. I am reminded often that it is principles before personalities; and that if I want to continue to be equipped to carry out the duties of my ministry, I have to let go of the toxicity of these troubled times. That often means walking away from people, places and things that are trying to divert me from God's primary purpose for my life. If someone has an agenda and wants to argue and be disruptive to my peace of mind in Jesus Christ, I have to pray my way through the situation and know that perhaps my time and energy is best used in better ways than to engage in debate about things I cannot change.

Scripture for this Weekend's Service:
Philippians 4:1-9
Psalm 23
Matthew 22:1-14



WORSHIP & MUSIC



For a little over a month, we have had the opportunity to gather each week for in-person worship services. And while our liturgy format, the amount of music, and our level of outward participation is quite different than what it was when we suspended services this past spring, being able to come together to listen to God's Word, receive Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament of Communion, and having opportunities for fellowship with one another has truly been a blessing for us all. Over this same time period, I have begun my ministry to all of you as your Organist and Worship Coordinator. You have all been a blessing to me as you have welcomed me to American Lutheran Church and offered many words of encouragement. In the midst of this health pandemic and the on-going challenges we all face, it has been helpful to me to find the blessings and opportunities for growth. A blessing for me has been the opportunity to meet and talk with many of you before our services so that we may introduce ourselves and get to know each other. This has also been an opportunity for all of us to explore new and creative ways to minister to the Church while we learn and develop new skills. I would like to acknowledge and thank Jan MacDonald for the tremendous work she has been doing to prepare the virtual choir recordings we will soon be able to enjoy during our on-line worship services. Even if you attend an in-person service, I would like to encourage you to listen to the music prepared by many of our Celebration Choir members. It is my hope and prayer that our worship offerings will continue to enrich your spirit in the days and weeks and come.

Dr. James Gerber, Organist and
Worship Coordinator

Every day I pray the Serenity Prayer:

"God, grant me the Serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And Wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Entering one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace,
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it.
Trusting that He will make all things right
If I surrender to His will.
That I may be reasonably happy in this life.
And supremely happy with Him forever on the next.
AMEN."

Love in Christ,
Pastor Judith

OUR GOD IS A GENEROUS GOD



"Our God is a Generous God." Sometimes, when we are in the midst of adversity, it is difficult for us to remember this: God never promised us an "easy" way, but He did say if we were to follow Him, He will lead us through troubled times. Think of all the examples we have before us of God's generosity...His healing powers, His miracles, His generosity of feeding and clothing others. He has shown us His many gifts, and He encourages us to use our gifts. I can think of one way we might be able to follow his gift of generosity right now, even in the middle of this pandemic.

The food shelves in our area, specifically, West Valley Community Food Pantry (WVCFP) and Valley View Community Food Bank (VVCFB) are in desperate need of food. Their shelves are getting bare, and the numbers they feed are still continuing to grow. Suppliers are now limiting the amount of food that food banks can

purchase. They are in desperate need of shelf-stable items (flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, cake and brownie mixes) and canned goods. Vegetables, soups, tuna, peanut butter and jelly, boxed mac and cheese, boxed potatoes, canned fruit, cereal...ANYTHING you would feed your loved ones. We cannot accept fresh produce at this time. Please consider giving. You can bring your donations to worship service on Saturday or Sunday, or the Sunday "parking lot drive-thru". Judie VanDevere-Stage and Larry Stage will coordinate delivering food one week to WVCFP, and I will coordinate food delivery to VVCFB the next week. We would like to continue this food drive through the end of this year. If you need us to pick up food from your house, please call us at the phone numbers listed below. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make your check payable to either West Valley Community Food Pantry or Valley View Community Food Bank, place it in a marked envelope, and drop it in the church mailbox.

Thank you for your generous spirit!
Terri Polk (317) 258-7590
Judie VanDevere-Stage
(623) 337-7747
Larry Stage (602) 284-5353