

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

In these days of troubling times and wondering what we can do for others and ourselves to alleviate some of the angst and fear, we must once again turn it over to God. What can we do just for today to find peace? The answer lies in this Bible verse. Praise God for our faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

my horse until my eye heals. The list goes on. I was feeling discouraged and then I realized this may be the new norm, at least for a time. Just as COVID-19 has taken a toll on our world, we have to humbly admit we are not in charge. God is.

I thought of how gracefully my mother and Grandmother aged as they accepted their limitations. I asked myself, "Who do you think you are and why are you are having such a hard time accepting life on life's terms?" Long story short, I am appreciating another lesson on my pilgrimage that says, slow down and "Be still and know that God is God." Psalm 46:10

My mother always told me, "You can't do it all," and my thought was, *but I want to*. These thoughts and feelings may be some you have had also and I know that as we search the scripture we find the answer to all our situations while we wait upon the Lord. I appreciate further proof of the benefits of that in Psalm 62:5: "Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him."

I thank each of you who have taught me lessons along the way. We learn from and with one another. Because we are Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we have a community to share our burdens. Church communities are a place we can learn more about the fact that we are never alone in our times of trials and tribulations. In Galatians 6:2 we read, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Often, because of our egotistical ways we want to hide our weaknesses, and in so doing, we do not allow others to help us along the way. As I listen to people share burdens, I am reminded once again to act justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with God. As Christians we never have to walk alone. I want to be an example of how our fellowship can change our lives while living authentically; knowing we are blessed to be a blessing as we listen, love and learn. We start aging from the day we are born and that will never change.

Thank you for your prayers. It is a comfort knowing we are all praying for each other.

Love in Christ,
Pastor Judith

MIDWEEK MESSAGES

November 4, 2020

MESSAGE FROM JUDITH RAINFORTH

Greetings,

I awakened this morning wondering, *what does the Lord ask of me as I live out my senior years?* It is obvious to me I feel called to serve as Pastor of Spirituality and Care at ALC until God decides otherwise, but beyond what I do, who is God asking me to be? I thought of the verse from Micah 6:8, "He has shown you O Mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

I realized my humility was being affected by my recent health concerns. Egotistically, I thought I would be healthy until my last breath. I want to run around and play like I have always been able to do. Well guess what? God reminded me with my recent eye struggles that I am vulnerable to the aging process just like all others I serve.

I had planned on donating blood this day and realized that would not be possible until I healed. I wanted to kayak on my day off with a friend on Monday. My doctor said, "absolutely not". He also said I cannot ride

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEKEND'S SERVICE

Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Psalm: Psalms 70

Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13



REOPENING UPDATES

The ALC Council continues to keep the health and safety of our congregation our top priority while simultaneously monitoring coronavirus infection rates. In our meeting on October 27, 2020, Council reviewed our Reopening Committee's recommendations. The Council decided to keep the current worship schedule (Saturday at 4 pm and Sunday at 9:30 am), and worship size (limited to 50 worshippers) through November. At our next meeting on November 24, we will review COVID-19 infection rates and needs for additional services and /or increasing worship size.

Our Church Council also agreed that our Thanksgiving Service has historically been a large and inspirational event. Our challenge this year is providing a meaningful service that captures the essence of the experience while also reaching as many worshipers as possible. With that in mind, and with an abundance of care and concern for our congregation and visitors, Council agreed that Thanksgiving service will be online only.

Council concurred with the recommendations from the Reopening Committee that:

- 1) Advent services in a 30-minute format be held on Wednesday December 2, 9, and 16 and a Blue Christmas service on Monday, December 21. Services will be contemplative in nature with Taize music.
- 2) Christmas Eve services be expanded to three services to be held at 3:00, 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. Recommended number of worshippers will be evaluated at the November Council meeting.
- 3) Due to concerns over serving food, and the need for planning and booking our presenters for Wednesday Night Alive (WNA), Council agreed that all WNA activities be cancelled until the Gala Event in the Fall of 2021. The WNA Committee will work throughout the spring to plan for an exciting 2021-2022 season.
- 4) Committees that need to meet in person for ALC business-related matters (Executive, Trust, Council, Finance Committee, and Stephen Ministry Leadership Team) limit their meetings to no more than 10 people in attendance for no longer than 45 minutes with mask usage, physical distancing and no food preparation/distribution. Permission was also given to the Sewing and Crafts group to meet in Fellowship Hall, following the above guidelines, in order to complete their quilt projects for the charities they give to for the holidays. All small groups need to work with Toni Molck, Operations Coordinator, to reserve meeting space. Each group should appoint an individual to be responsible for sanitizing the areas after the meeting is completed.

Again, please realize that we make these decisions based on an abundance of care for the health and safety of our members. Thank you for your concern and patience as we work together for the sake of the Gospel.

With appreciation,
Terri Polk, ALC Council President



THE STORY BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL POINSETTIA, also known as the Christmas Star and Christmas flower. The story is told from a Mexican legend. The story is that a child with no means for a grander gift, gathered humble weeds from the side of the road to place at the church altar on Christmas Eve. As the congregation witnessed a Christmas miracle, the weeds turned into brilliant red and green flowers. The flower is named after Joel Roberts Poinsett the 1st US ambassador to Mexico. He was an amateur botanist, who introduced the plant to the U.S. in 1825.

To sign up for one of these beautiful flowers to be purchased for our altar this year for Christmas, please call the office at 623.974.2512 or just stop by Monday-Friday 8am-4pm. You can also email our Receptionist, Elizabeth Borgman at E.Borgman@alcsuncity.org. They will be \$12 and can either be paid for through the mail by check or in-person during office hours.

MEDITATION GROUP

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In addition to the other programs we are hosting this fall, we will continue with our Meditation Group on Friday mornings at 9 a.m. All are welcome to join us for a time of spiritual renewal as we sit in silent prayer and meditation. Please come quietly into the chapel and we will gather with masks and physical distance that will keep us safe and healthy. I am looking forward to this time with a community of believers while we focus on the presence of God, remembering the verse from Psalm 46:10: "Be still and Know that I am God." Please email me at j.rainforth@alcsuncity.org to register for this group as we will limit it to 10 people and meet for no more than 45 minutes, adhering to the protocol we are following at ALC.



Prayerfully, Pastor Judith Rainforth

TAIZE SERVICES

Plan on joining us for Taizé Advent services on Wednesday evenings, December 2nd, 9th and 16th at 6 PM. Taizé Worship will be led by Pastor Judith Rainforth, Dr. James Gerber and Janet McDonald with the same COVID-19 guidelines as we follow for weekend services.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Hello Ladies!

I have been doing bible study planning with Pastor Judith and am pleased to announce an in-person Advent bible study on Wednesday, December 2 and 9 at 10 am. (The room location will be announced later). At this time, we will be limited to 10 people, however, I am willing to host this several times to accommodate as many people who are interested.

The study will be similar to a "Lessons and Carols" format. We will study the scripture and listen to music as it applies to the prophesy and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Overlapping this will be our Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy.

Should more than 10 be interested, I can hold a second Wednesday session at 1:00 pm on both December 2 and 9. Please let me know by either by email or a phone call, if you are interested in attending this study and the time you prefer.

Thank you. It will be so good to be together!

Debbie Nelson
deborahnelson@cox.net
402 651-3635

WEEKLY VIDEO SERIES

Greetings,

I will be starting a new study for Women's Ministry at American Lutheran Church, which will include a weekly video or movie followed by discussion. We will begin on Thursday, Nov 12 at 9:30 am. and every Thursday thereafter except during the holidays. The numbers will be limited to ten people and we will be gathering in the Fellowship Hall for no longer than 45 minutes. Refreshments will not be served.

Please email me at j.rainforth@alcsuncity.org to register for this group. I will host more sessions as necessary to accommodate the number of reservations.

I am looking forward to resuming programs as we can do them safely with the guidelines provided by our Church Council.

Prayerfully, Pastor Judith