

VERSE OF THE WEEK

"Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Since the pandemic began, we have been filled with struggles like we have never faced before with such magnitude. Now that many are being vaccinated, it seems maybe we are making headway. My hope is that we continue praying as fervently, if not more so than ever as we incorporate the lessons we have learned along the way. May we continue to grow spiritually and express our gratitude to God by reaching out to others with continued compassion made possible by the love of Jesus Christ.

QUILTS

The quilters donated 24 quilts to the Palms Care Center. Pictured are some of the recipients that received them.



SCRIPTURE FOR WEEKEND SERVICE

Lesson: Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

Gospel: John 2:12-22

MIDWEEK MESSAGES

March 3, 2021

MINISTRY MOMENTUM

I sense increased ministry momentum for our congregation as we reopen worship in the Sanctuary, increase the number of worshippers up to 125 per service and increase the number of weekend worship services from two to three (4 pm on Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 and 10:30 am). Wednesday Lenten Services continue at 4 pm as we gather to sing the Holden Evening Prayer Service and learn about ways to seek and extend forgiveness.

The impact of the pandemic challenged the life of our congregation as we deeply love to gather for worship, fellowship, and service. Thank you for staying engaged with our mission to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ, invite others to participate in our faith community, and be a blessing to all in word and deed.

I see this mission expressed in many ways and want to highlight one ministry that is coming to an end. When ALC suspended in-person worship a year ago, people still wanted to share their offerings and come to the church. Our Finance Committee Chairperson, Bob Bouldin, wisely understood people needed to feel connected to the church and each other. Accordingly, he instituted a Sunday morning offering ministry where people would drive up, share their offering and receive a brief, safe point of personal contact. Pastor Judith and ALC's mascot, Tinker Belle, joined Bob in sharing the good news. I deeply appreciate Bob and Judith's ministry partnership and for all the members who participated. Thankfully, we are regathering in worship this Sunday morning so the parking lot ministry can come to its conclusion now. I will recall its purpose and implementation with fond memories as we struggled to retain our sense of gratitude and community within the pandemic isolation. As we move forward in God's grace, I give thanks for our efforts to sustain our ministry momentum (i.e. online worship, virtual choir, online and conference call meetings/Bible studies, letters and calls of encouragement to one another, just to name a few.)

The love of Christ compels us forward with positive momentum! I give thanks to God that I am called to serve with you in this time and place! See you online or in person! Be well and thanks be to God!

Love,

Pastor Lowell

Pastor Lowell



FRIDAY MORNING BOOK STUDY

Friday Morning Book Study will be in Fellowship Hall starting March 5th at 9:00 am. The book will be Beautiful Outlaw by John Eldredge. For more information or questions, contact Dianne Garvey at 575-551-4207 or digagarvey@gmail.com.

This book clears away the religious fog that can cloud our perceptions of Jesus with bland, one-dimensional stereotypes. In a small group setting, John Eldredge takes a winsome, narrative approach, as he invites us not only to discover who Jesus really is, but to enrich our daily experience of him and fall more deeply in love with him. By uncovering the real Jesus, you are welcomed into the rich emotional life of Christ. Come and experience the real Jesus, a Perfect Love who defies conventional belief. The cost of the book is \$15 and study questions are available.

LETTER FROM PASTOR JUDITH

Greetings,

It is with great joy that I am sharing the dates and time of our New Member Orientation. Please share the excitement of our inside worship and activities as you invite new people to our classes for March 20 and 27th at 10 am in Fellowship Hall. It will be amazing to share our community with others that they may find a home for worship and activities to bring joy into their lives as brothers and sisters in Christ. ALC is one of the most caring communities I have ever been part of, and I look forward to increasing our membership as we recover from the devastation of the pandemic. Share the invitation so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed in Word and Deed. We want people to know we are Christians by our loving invitation.

I also continue to celebrate our latest ministry of our co-ed hiking group. We meet in the Courtyard for devotion and prayer 15 minutes before we caravan to the hiking trail. We choose trailheads that have options for those who want easy and those who want more difficult ones. It has been interesting to explore and discover all the hiking areas. Due to seasonal changes and schedule conflicts, we are adjusting our hiking times. This Friday, March 5th, we will meet in the Courtyard at 8:45 am, then beginning March 12 and thereafter we will meet at 9:45 am. This week we will be hiking new trails on Thunderbird Mountain in Glendale. The next week we will hike on Westwing Mountain Trail.

These two upcoming activities will enhance our spiritual journey together! Please call me at the church on my cell 402-880-0398 if you have any questions regarding these offerings. I hope you will join in opportunities such as these and others at ALC.

Prayerfully,

Judith Rainforth, Pastor of Spirituality and Care



THE PAUSES THAT COME WITH THE MORNING HOURS

Unless my alarm clock wakes me up, I usually start the morning rolling over in bed, open my eyes to see if there is any sign of light under the shade, glance at the clock, closing my eyes, roll over in bed again, and then give a short prayer of thanksgiving for waking up to this new day. PAUSE #1- PRAYER AND PEACE TO START MY DAY.

I then s—t—r—e—t—c—h—and yawn and then usually “pop” out of bed (I need the momentum in order to actually get up!). After walking around in a daze, I find my coffee cup, fill it with coffee and the “creamer” that I know I should not have, take a sip...ahhh...and walk back to the bedroom to turn on the television news and enjoy my first cup of coffee. A short time after this, and

usually at least a second cup of coffee, I get my prayer books and read my prayer cards, daily devotional and “Jesus Calling”. THIS IS THE SECOND PAUSE THAT I NEED. THIS IS THE PAUSE THAT HELPS ME “CENTER” MY DAY. For me, this “second pause” is just so important. Not only do I continue to thank God, but I “feel” His presence and His nearness. I remind myself, during this second pause, to slow down, let today “happen” in God’s way, enjoy, smile, be kind and caring and serve others.

After a-while, I decide it is time to shower and get dressed. I remind myself that I can’t hang around in my bathrobe all day. So, I jump in the shower and if the mood serves me and the water is hot, I usually strike up some singing. After all,

singing never sounds as good as when you are in the bathroom with those marvelous acoustics and, this is PAUSE #3- SINGING AND PRAISING. I can usually belt out some pretty good sounding hymns and Christmas music, YES, even though it is not a Sunday or Christmas time. Fortunately, the water usually drowns out any “bad notes”, or so I would like to think. This time tends to ENERGIZE me. So, now I have started my day peacefully, centering myself and energizing myself and it is still early morning. I have the whole day ahead of me....look out world!

Stay tuned for Part 2:
“My Daytime Hours”.

In the Glory of God,
Terri Polk---ALC Member