

VERSE OF THE WEEK

"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Proverbs 12:18

Wisdom teaches us that we do not have to say everything we think, or even everything we think others need to hear. It is wise to learn to listen more than we speak and then discern what we do speak.

JAMES GERBER, DMA

"Sing a new song unto the Lord, praise the Lord with sounds of every kind of instrument!"

Music is such an important part of our worship, one our congregation values and supports greatly. I am thrilled to have been called to serve you as your new Organist and Music Coordinator. Music ministry has been an important part of my own life and my personal faith journey, and now I am looking forward to sharing my gifts with you and collaborating with the many dedicated members of this congregation participating in the music programs. Furthermore, I am excited to meet, get to know, and work with the each of you in the days to come as we serve God and his Church.

James Gerber, DMA
Organist and Music Coordinator

SCRIPTURES FOR SERVICE:

Lesson: Romans 13:8-14

Psalm: Psalm 119:33-40

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

MIDWEEK MESSAGES

September 2, 2020

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR LOWELL NELSON

Dear Family & Friends of ALC,

Cooperation is an important word to describe our work together as a congregation. The word means to work together for the sake of a common purpose. I hope you can recall enjoying an especially productive, enjoyable time of working with others for a common pursuit. These experiences can range from the joy of playing sports together, to workplace camaraderie, and family life together over the generations. A spirit of cooperation is a distinctive delight of congregational life when we work together for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In this email blast, we have an example of how we work together. What a pleasure to work with such effective Church Council presidents during my time here: Marty Livingston, Dick Jorgenson, and this year, Terri Polk. What a joy to work together as pastor and elected lay leadership!

Please take a look at Terri's article which is always informative and encouraging. What a joy it is to work with a committed staff for ALC! Also, in this email blast, we have an article from Dr. James T. Gerber, Organist & Worship Coordinator, who starts full-time employment with us this week. Thank you, God, for bringing us such a talented, thoughtful person to join our ministry. I love working together with Pastor Gary and Pastor Judith; please take a look at Pastor Judith's "cooperation" with the Holy Spirit to discern how to move to Arizona completely. The last example of how we work together is you--the readers of this email blast. As we reopen for worship, it is vitally important we cooperate with each other for the sake of health & safety. Making reservations, receiving guidance from our ushers on where to sit, maintaining physical distancing, and mask usage are signs of our mutual respect.

Cooperation, working together for the sake of our mission to Proclaim, Invite and Bless, is the key for our life together. Thank you for your sustained investment of time, talent, treasures and testimony for the sake of our ministry together.

Love, Pastor Lowell

HOW TO REGISTER FOR ALC WORSHIP SERVICES

1. You can either call the church at 623-974-2512 or register online at www.alcsuncity.org. EVERY PERSON ATTENDING MUST BE REGISTERED AS THERE IS A LIMIT OF 50 PEOPLE.
2. On the Welcome page, click on the link listed below the service you want to attend.
3. You will be redirected to another page, Realm. Input your information: first and last name, email, and phone number.
4. Click Next.
5. On the page that loads, click on ADD A GUEST if there is anyone else that will go with you; OR each person can register separately.
6. Click Next.
7. Ensure the information is correct on the screen. If so, click Next again.
8. Click Register and you are done. You will receive a confirmation email from Realm.

CAUTIOUS ENTHUSIASM

I never thought our Church Home would be closed for public worship for so long. At last, trending for the COVID virus has been going down over a sustained basis. Our Reopening Committee has been working for months on how to safely reopen. And now, we are at that point. Reopening for public worship begins Saturday, September 5, at 4 p.m. and Sunday, September 6, at 9:30 a.m. Services will only last about 30 minutes with limited fellowship, following physical distancing guidelines, in the courtyard area.

Pastor Lowell did a wonderful job of presenting guidelines for our reopening in the September Outreach. I am pleased that we will be offering both virtual and in-person worship and will reintroduce communion once a month both in-person and on-line. Our in-person worship will be different than all may remember, more contemplative in nature; we will be introduced to Dr. James Gerber, our new Worship & Music Coordinator. We can say prayers of thanks for Linda Shirck who kept our music flowing, as well as Janet MacDonald, George Zoske, the Personnel Committee, and other volunteers

who helped with the “search” or additional music and singing. Thank You. Thank you to all who are working on the Reopening Committee led by Bob Wecker. We believe our reopening plan is solid and that we have committees in place that have been working, and will continue to work, on keeping our sacristy, narthex, restrooms and other areas clean, and ensure the guidelines we have in place will be followed. However, YOU are your best indicator of whether you should come back now, or a few weeks from now, or after we get a vaccine.

I called this article “Cautious Enthusiasm” because we are being cautious with our reopening. We may find that we need to make adjustments or changes. We might find that COVID cases begin to spike, and we need to go back to solely on-line worship for a while. We are concerned for your safety and health. Yet, we are a congregation that enjoys our worship together with options that fit your spiritual needs. We are enthusiastic in our opportunity to worship together.

Stay safe and healthy, Terri Polk, ALC Council President

GREETINGS FROM PASTOR JUDITH RAINFORTH

Another chapter in my life is unfolding as I have sold my home at Riverside Lakes in Waterloo, NE, and have bought a home in Ventana Lakes. I will be just 2 miles away from American Lutheran Church. As you probably already know, I am a “water person” and an animal person. This is my third lake community to live in, and I continue to have a rescue dog in training for Care Ministry. I love playing in the outdoors and engaging my animals to do the same. Enjoying nature has always been a big part of my spiritual journey.

I feel God has called me to be a ministry of presence as Pastor of Spirituality and Care at ALC, otherwise this would seem nearly impossible to change plans I had made for my “Senior” years close to my NE family and friends. God certainly has a sense of humor when we think our plans are in place. I laugh and rejoice along with God as I read over my journals from years past and see how I have prayed my way towards God’s will not mine. I have been told frequently to be careful what you ask for because God works in mysterious ways.

I so look forward to each day of ministry, even in this time of Covid-19, and planning worship for when we once again gather in person. I am inspired to engage with teams as we continue with WNA and Women’s Ministry. And, of course, “Being in the Word” with all of you as we work together in various other ways being the hands and feet of Jesus. May we feel blessed to be a blessing and accept where God has called us this day.

My prayers include focusing on the words, “God Bless You!” May we feel it in our heart and soul when we say it or when we hear someone say it to us. In times of change and whether we feel excited or dismayed, whether it be about geography or health, whether it be about coming or going, may we remember the sending words we hear regularly in worship services.

“The Lord Bless you and keep you.
The Lord’s face shine upon you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.”

Thanks for sharing my journey in relocating from NE to AZ with love and peace. My ordination hymn continues to be my favorite, “Here I am Lord.” My ministry is based on the chorus, “Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.”

Prayerfully, Pastor Judith

