

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

& The Vineyard Christian Preschool
October, 2012, Volume 61, Number 10
Website address: goodshepherdgilroy.org

NURTURING COMMUNITY

The Holy Gospel for Sunday, October 7th is St. Mark 10: 2 – 16. In it is the story of people bringing their children to Jesus in order that he might touch them. The disciples are rude to these families and put them off. But Jesus is indignant when he sees what is happening and tells the disciples to let the children come. To such as these belongs the Kingdom of God. Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.

When I first read this, I was amazed! Imagine that: The Sunday we selected to install our new preschool teachers and invite the Vineyard parents and children to come to worship is the same Sunday as this wonderful text on Jesus and children. Two contexts need some explanation. In the Greco-Roman world of Jesus day, children were the little ones, the lowly ones, who were marginalized. They were sold into slavery and gotten rid of. They were meaningless and unwanted. No wonder the disciples pushed these families to leave Jesus alone. There was no time for children; they weren't important. However, Jesus creates community by rebuking the disciples and receiving the children. They are to be included among the disciples. They **are** important. In fact, as we consider the Gospel of Mark being read in the assemblies of the small house-churches in Rome, Jesus and the Gospel writer are saying very clearly that children are to be included in the household of faith. They are part of the widening community of what makes up the church. Mark's Gospel pushes out the edges of our boundaries to include more and more.

The second context is our own modern culture. We have sentimentalized this story with beautiful pictures of a smiling Jesus warmly welcoming cherished children into his presence and blessing them. Proud parents look on with joyful faces, while the crabby disciples puzzle over another surprise from Jesus. In our culture, children are prized and doted over by helicopter parents. They begin to groom their children for fine colleges with the best education they can buy. At least in many middle-class and upper middle-class homes. How could anyone be like those horrible disciples, we ask, and try to keep children, especially our cute bundles of joy, away from Jesus? In being overly sentimental, we may miss the point being made. Not all children are as sweet as ours; not all are bright as ours; not all as washed as ours; not all as healthy as ours. In many areas of the world, children are still sold into slavery, and even into sexual slavery. The question before us then is this: Are these people also God's people? Yes! In baptism we are called to embrace fellow Christians, the baptized in every land and culture. We promise to serve all people, following the example of Christ. These are our brothers and sisters and children in Christ. In our baptismal covenant, we declare that we will strive for justice and peace in all the earth. This is how we meet that part of our covenant: working for God's justice. As such, we are a welcoming community.

Last context: What are you doing at Good Shepherd in order to help create a welcoming community? Could this community mean enough to you for you to become more involved? To be in regular attendance when we worship together? To support with generous and regular gifts so that the community can actually thrive instead of merely survive? Could Jesus be asking you to let this little congregation become a more important part of your life? God's welcome to community is open to all. In fact, Jesus continually welcomes us by Water and touches and blesses us with Word and Meal. Come and nurture community. On October 7 be a welcoming presence at our Teacher Installation and Potluck Picnic.

Your Pastor & Friend, *Ronald E. Koch*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October, 2012</h1>						
	1 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	2 N.A. 6 pm	3 Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	4 N.A. 8 pm	5 N.A. 8 pm	6 N.A. 9:30 am N.A. 8 pm Flowers:Needed
7 Pentecost 19 9:30 am Worship <u>Good Shepherd & Vineyard Preschool Picnic at 11 a.m.</u> N. A. 4 pm	8 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	9 N.A. 6 pm Congregation Council Meeting 7:30p	10 Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	11 N.A. 8 pm	12 N.A. 8 pm	13 N.A. 9:30a Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
14 Pentecost 20 9:30 am Worship N. A. 4 pm	15 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	16 N.A. 6 pm	17 Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	18 N.A. 8 pm	19 N.A. 8 pm	20 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
21 Pentecost 21 9:30 am Worship NA 4 pm	22 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	23 N. A. 6 pm	24 Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p	25 N. A. 8 pm	26 N.A. 8 pm	27 N.A. 9:30 am Flowers:Needed N.A. 8 pm
28 Pentecost 22 9:30 am Worship NA 4 pm	29 N.A. 6 & 8 pm	30 N. A. 6 pm	31 Handbells 7 pm N.A. 7 & 8:30p			

October Birthdays

UPDATE 8 Bea Reimers 23 Jennifer Taves 25 Wayne Wiedeman
31 Ervin Heinrich & Alex Taves

October Anniversaries

4 Jack and Norma Rymers

October Assisting Ministers

Date	Coffee Time: <u>Schedule will be mailed</u> <u>Set up</u> <u>Clean up</u>	Acolytes	Lectors	Ushers
7	NO Coffee time – Cong. Picnic	Elena Finucane	Patti Johansen	Mariah Garcia & James Guerra
14	<u>Schedule will be mailed when we have</u>	Abigail Finucane	Jo Brooks	Karen and Nicci Spence
21	3 rd Sunday Brunch: Team 1 Team 1 is <u>Michelle Anderson, Carolyn Carver, Kirsten Finucane, and Zita Weyland</u>	Will Anderson	Carolyn Carver	Mariah Garcia & Kyra Guerra
28	<u>more volunteers</u>	Ben Anderson	Rozanne Koch	Karen and Sabrina Spence

FLOWERS: October 7 Patti Johansen October 14 NEEDED
October 21 NEEDED October 28 NEEDED

If you have a birthday or anniversary that you would like included in the monthly list, please let us know, and we'll add it. Thanks.

2nd Annual Church - Preschool Picnic October 7

Sunday, October 7th 2012 is the day our new Vineyard Preschool Teachers will be installed in Sunday morning worship at 9:30 am. You are invited and urged to be present for this important, official and joyful beginning to their ministry at the Vineyard and in our Gilroy community. Our Vineyard Children's Choir will sing and our own Handbell choir will ring.

After worship, we will all gather in the Social Hall for a grand Potluck Picnic. The food is always great, and the time for fellowship is the best way to get to know each other. Please bring a picnic-type of dish to share. We will eat what we all bring - a true Pot Luck.

Last year, we celebrated our congregation's 60th anniversary and our Vineyard preschool's 37th anniversary with a wonderful day of worship and fellowship. We hope to keep the tradition alive this year. **We need some volunteers to come early on Sunday, at about 9 am, to help set up the Social Hall for our potluck.** Let's aim to make this a community-building event for our congregation and preschool families. See you on Sunday, October 7th.



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

**Expected Offerings based on last year: \$85,860.
That is \$1620/week for 53 Sundays.**

Stewardship Update through September, 2012

Average attendance for 40 Weeks: 26

Expected to date at \$1,620 for 40 weeks: \$64,800

Actual Offering: \$55,543

Shortfall: \$9,257

Average shortfall per week: \$ 231

Good Shepherd Considers Becoming a Reconciling in Christ Congregation.

A very large part of Jesus' ministry was reaching out to the poor and marginalized people in the communities where he served and ministered to others. Because of the power to interpret the Law, the Scribes and Elders of the people mandated that God's people must follow certain customs. One had to do with the proper preparation of food and body for eating. Certain bowls and utensils had to be properly washed for ritual purity. Hand washing was absolutely necessary. (Read Mark 7: 1 - 14)

So when the disciples ate with unwashed hands, the religious leaders asked Jesus what was going on that they flouted the rules and traditions. Jesus said that it's not what or how you eat, but what comes out of your mouth that makes you ritually impure. In saying this, Jesus changed the perception of God from "Be holy, for God is holy," to "Be compassionate, for God is compassionate."

Our New Testament understanding of the Old Testament law and customs is also changed. We understand that God's laws are created for the protection of the poor, not for the separation of the poor from mainstream society. Something had gone terribly wrong.

In his sermon on Sunday, September 2, Pastor Koch applied our calling to be compassionate as God is compassionate to how Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people have been treated in our society. Much of our history is of excluding and even harming people in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities. Many churches have a “holiness” understanding about God and would exclude the LGBT people based on that understanding. We have a “compassionate” view and desire to express that. Our tradition at Good Shepherd is open and inclusive table fellowship at the altar and in the Social Hall. We can express this in a very intentional and specific way by declaring ourselves to be a Reconciling in Christ congregation. That means that we extend our invitation openly and lovingly to all people, including the LGBT people in the South County. No other church in the South County has declared itself openly as welcoming LGBT people.

In the story from Mark 7, it becomes clear that in order to be ritually pure, you had to have money. The poor likely had no running water or servants to bear it from the community well. They had been excluded from the holy people by virtue of their status in that culture. How could Jesus, a holy man, allow his followers to violate the customs and traditions of the respected and holy people? Jesus’ answer makes it clear that a compassionate heart trumps a “holy” and clean home. Jesus’ answer includes all the poor and marginalized people. They are important to God!

Whatever the reasons for excluding anyone from the family of God’s people, Jesus overturns by proclaiming the Good News of God’s love for all people. There are no distinctions in God’s sight, for all are equally in need of God’s compassion, for we all are broken and need to be healed. We are healed in our communities of the baptized. Baptism is our common ground. We cannot tell someone who was baptized that they are not of God’s people.

There is a long study recommended by Reconciling Works, the organization of Lutheran Christians for full inclusion of LGBT people, which would lead us on the path to becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. We have already done much of that work by

being who we are: a welcoming community of God’s people. We may want to consider more directly a statement that we would adopt as a congregation and submit to Reconciling Works so that we would be listed as an RIC (Reconciling in Christ) congregation. Once we have studied that statement, we can move to adopt it as our own. We would be stating what is already true about us: We are a congregation of compassionate people, trusting that we can be reconciled with all others through Christ.

At the September Congregational Council meeting we took up the topic and decided to go ahead with studying the issues and listening to one another. We can all grow from this study, and we certainly will benefit from listening to each other. Please keep Good Shepherd in your prayers as we seek to become more compassionate people of God.

More Volunteers Needed

We have a very small rotation of volunteers for Coffee time set up and clean up on Sunday mornings. (Only about 4 people/families.) Before we send out the next 3 month schedule, we would like to add more names to those willing to serve our community in this manner.

Please contact us by email (just click on the reply button) to let us know that you are willing to serve. Patty Gravell, our office secretary, will add your name to the schedule. If you are unable to serve when you are scheduled, you may simply call another person on the list and swap dates, or call the office and we’ll take care of it. Thank you very much.

There will be no coffee time on Sunday, October 7th due to the Potluck Picnic following the installation of our new Vineyard Preschool teachers in Sunday worship. The next Sunday we need to fill is October 14th.