



The Messenger

The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Olney, Maryland

June

2020

God of the Unwanted

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20)

God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:28-30)

Recent events in our country brought to mind the following reflection, which I preached a few years ago. I pray that it will be a blessing to you.

The other week, I had the pleasure of eating lunch with my friends Jewelle and Justin. Justin happens to be an Episcopal priest, and in our conversation, Jewelle shared an insight from one of his recent sermons that is quite apropos to the present moment. As I remember it, Justin made the point that, when it comes to the struggles of the poor, when it comes to the divisions and inequities of this world, God is not neutral. In Christ, God has chosen a side. Not necessarily in a political sense, because politics is a matter of worldly power. But in the most profound and intimate way, God has identified himself with the plight of the poor and the unwanted. As St. Paul says, “God chose what is low and despised in the world....”

Consider this: the Son of God chose to enter history as a member of an oppressed people, a descendant of slaves. He took on flesh as an embryo in the womb of a poor, unmarried teenage girl. As a small child, he became a refugee when his family fled to Egypt to escape Herod’s murderous rage. He spent his ministry as, essentially, a homeless man, dependent on the generosity of others, with “no place to lay his head.” He was arrested on trumped up charges, subjected to police brutality, and executed in gross injustice. After his resurrection, he sent his disciples out to minister as religious and ethnic minorities in a society that would hate and fear them, to live as aliens and exiles in world.

This same Jesus so closely identifies with the helpless and the unwanted that, when he comes again to judge the living and the dead, he will dismiss the wicked to their just desserts with these words:

*For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger—in Greek, the word means *foreigner*—and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.... Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.*

So, to those of you who are in need, those who are struggling, those who feel unwanted, Jesus says to you: “The kingdom of God belongs to such as you. I am on your side.”

But what will he say to the rest of us? The sad fact is that, far too often, my belly is so full that I fail to notice my neighbor’s need; my life is so sated with stuff that I am unable to hear God’s word; I am too busy to be about the business of the Spirit. I think it should be no surprise that secularism is ascendant in the Western world. It’s certainly not because (as some like to imagine) Westerners are smarter than other people—more likely because we are drowning in our own comforts. Jesus declares our material wealth to be, in fact, spiritual poverty. Don’t misunderstand. It’s not that material possessions are evil in themselves; every good gift we have comes from God. But in our sinfulness we tend to seek from material things our security and happiness, which they cannot give. So we neglect great and eternal blessings in pursuit of small and transitory ones. And our idolatry cuts us off from our fellow human beings—and ultimately from God.

But when we hear the word of Christ and begin to recognize the depths of our spiritual poverty, then (and only then) we can also begin to hear anew that Jesus is on our side, too: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. The astonishing mercy of God encompasses not only the materially poor but also the spiritually poor. Remember, the same Jesus who healed blind beggars also sat at table with corrupt government contractors and smugly comfortable clerics; he praised the faith of an occupying army officer; and he died to forgive the high priest and the governor and the just-doing-their-job soldiers who crucified him. And He died to forgive you, too. As the Prophet Micah declares,

*Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression...?
He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love....
[H]e will tread our iniquities underfoot.
You will cast all our sins into the depths of the seas.*

And so the kingdom of God draws near also to us. But make no mistake: you *cannot* be on Jesus’ side without also being on the side of the poor and the helpless and the displaced and the unwanted. Because Jesus is on their side. But when—by his grace—we join Jesus on the side of the unwanted, we become privy to glorious realities hidden from the powerful and the wise.

One of my favorite books is C. S. Lewis’s *The Great Divorce*, which tells the story of a field trip from the outskirts of hell to the edge of heaven. In one scene, the narrator comes across a grand procession of blessed spirits bearing along a dazzling woman he takes to be a great queen. It turns out that she was no one of importance on earth—an ordinary woman from an ordinary neighborhood and perhaps something of a cat lady. But in heaven she is recognized as one of the Great Ones, a mighty saint who is honored as a spiritual mother by all those who were touched in this life by her humble love and faith.

This passage reminds me of a sainted former parishioner named H.B. H.B. was, by our society’s reckoning, no one of importance. She was an elderly Black woman of limited means, living in a working class neighborhood, in the downstairs apartment of an old three-family house, in a small room. Illness and frailty had confined her to bed for more than a decade. She was, moreover, a

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We continue to pray for:

For those who mourn especially the families and friends of:

Kim Wald, due to complications with coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Gabriel Chinwendu, due to complications with coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

For those who are in need of God's care, healing, and protection.

For those who serve on the front lines of the pandemic: Emergency responders, doctors, nurses, aides, and any other medical personnel, workers in essential businesses and any other frontline personnel who are endangering their own health to save others.

For all those who serve in our Armed Forces.

Prayers of Thanksgiving for Mike Hillhouse's 27 years as Treasurer of L.C.G.S. and prayers to find a volunteer to help Alex with those duties.

Prayer during an epidemic

Almighty God, heavenly Father, give us grace to trust You during this time of illness and distress. In mercy put an end to the epidemic that afflicts us. Grant relief to those who suffer, and comfort all that mourn. Sustain all medical personnel in their labors, and cause Your people ever to serve You in righteousness and holiness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Prayer Request

Please send your requests to prayers@olneygoodshepherd.org. Pastor Tim, with assistance from the Worship Assistants, will compile your requests to be published in the weekly Worship Bulletin, shared in Worship during the "Prayers of the Church" and with the Board of Elders.

Christian Education

Children's Sunday School, High School & Adult Sunday Bible Class, Confirmation Class & Women's Thursday morning Bible study are holding classes via Zoom.

Children's Sunday School

Please e-mail Cindy King at cindyk5@verizon.net for more information

Adult Sunday Bible Class

9:30 am - 10:15 am.
Please e-mail the office at office@olneygoodshepherd.org if you want to receive details on joining the class via Zoom.

High School Sunday School

Meets Sunday at 10:00 am via Zoom.
Contact Steve Gordon for more information.

Women's Bible Study

Thursday from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm.
Please e-mail the Church Office at office@olneygoodshepherd.org if you want to receive details on joining the class via Zoom

Men's Bible Study

Saturday, June 6, 2020
7:30 am – 9:30 am
Join the men as they discuss topics from the Bible via Zoom

God Is Our Fortress

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Psalm 46:1

Farewell to the Hillhouse Family

By Darlene Maxfield

L.C.G.S. bids “a bittersweet farewell” to our dear members and friends, Mike, Robie, and Adam Hillhouse, as they relocate to North Carolina.

Their decades of service have blessed L.C.G.S. and furthered the Kingdom of God. They have participated in and provided leadership for many of Good Shepherd’s ministries.

Mike has volunteered as our Treasurer for more than 27 years. He has participated and led our Men’s Ministry group and has been active with other ministry teams. Mike has been a part of the Shepherd’s Bells Choir for nearly 20 years.



Sister Robie was on staff at Good Shepherd from 1996-2006 and again from 2016-2017, serving in several ministry areas including Youth (Confirmation and retreats), Women’s Ministry (Bible study and retreat leader), Children’s and Preschool ministries including the M.O.M.s group for preschool parents and Chapel leader for Shepherd’s Care Children’s Center Preschool. She has served as Vacation Bible School coordinator, as well as having served as a Worship Coordinator and Assistant. Sister Robie has enjoyed being a part of the Shepherd’s Bells Choir for many years. Her work with the Lutheran Mission Society of Maryland, Southeastern District-LCMS, and M.A.L.I.M. (Mid-Atlantic Lutherans in Mission) has enabled her to serve the larger church. With her guidance, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd has been especially thankful for the opportunity to implement the live-streaming of worship services as a grant recipient from the S.E.D. and M.A.L.I.M.

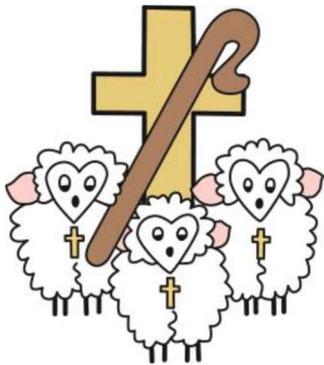
Adam has been a part of the L.C.G.S. youth since he was four years old and continues to support the Youth Group, now as a leader. He has participated in the Appalachian Servant Event in Asheville, NC since 2004. He continues to attend A.S.E. as an Adult Leader. Adam is a faithful participant in the Praise Band as a guitar player.

We will sincerely miss the presence of this God-loving family and wish them all the best in their new endeavors.



Thank You to Colette Carter for organizing the Farewell Parade on Saturday, May 30, 2020.





Shepherd's Care
Children's Center
301-570-7566

Dear Members of L.C.G.S.,

This has been quite an eventful few month! State Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon announced on May 6 that all Maryland schools are to remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Shepherd's Care is following M.C.P.S. decisions on closings. It has been difficult for the staff, who miss seeing the children's smiling faces and wonder at all things spring. Instead, some things we have been doing at Shepherd's Care during these past few weeks have been preparing and distributing packets with worksheets and art projects for each child, weekly virtual ZOOM meetings, sending letters, and even chalk writing on student's driveways! These things have been quite exciting and fun!

Ms. Karen from Kid-Fit and Ms. Sandy from Little Hands have been sharing their videos and resources for children to have additional fun activities while being kept at home. Communication will continue from the staff to help parents and children have a loving world around them and encouraging them to find comfort in God's love.

Sandra Pernie
S.C.C.C. Director

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

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refugee— who had lost most of her worldly possessions in Liberia's civil war and was forced, at the age of nearly eighty, to seek survival in the United States. I'm sure when she came here in the 1990s, there were people in this country who didn't want her here, folks who saw people like her as takers.

But H.B. was also someone who, despite everything, believed that Jesus was on her side. And so, through all the hardships of her long life, she followed him—as a missionary and a teacher and a mother and grandmother to many—not only to her own flesh and blood, but also, as I learned, to any child she met who was unwanted or in need of a home. And when she died at the age of 102, about 400 people came out to her funeral (which we had to move to a larger church), many of them flying in from as far away as Africa—people who, over the years, had been touched by H.B.'s teaching and generosity and example and prayers. Additionally (and I don't know who pulled what strings to make this happen) a proclamation from the government of Liberia declared that, in honor of H.B.'s life, the flag of the Liberian embassy in Washington D.C. was being flown at half-staff the day of her burial—declaring to all the world that one of the Great Ones was going to her rest. And I thought, as I praised God with that mighty crowd of H.B.'s spiritual children, this is a glimpse of heaven, when we will finally see people as they are—not according to the value the world places on them, but according to their true worth in the eyes of God.

Jesus invites us today to see with heavenly eyes. Within your own sphere and vocation, according to your own means, share what you have with those who have nothing. Be a friend to the friendless. Be a voice for the voiceless. Welcome the unwanted. Because in so doing you welcome Christ. And, above all, remember that when you were helpless and unwanted, the Son of God died to welcome you. By his grace, may you one day be welcomed as one of the Great Ones in heaven.

-Pastor Tim

Congratulation Graduates!

Isabelle (Bella) Lourenco



Bella is graduating from St. Vincent Pallotti High School and will attend Montgomery College in the fall to begin working toward her degree in Elementary Education. She was awarded the Pallotti community service award, the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution award and the

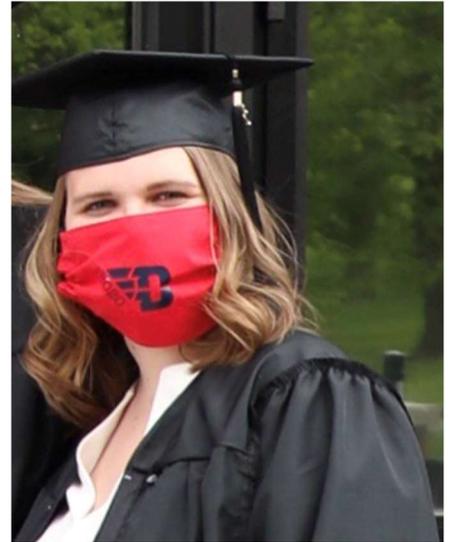
Presidential award for academic achievement as well as the chorus departmental award for Performing Arts. She has worked very hard all four years while participating in her school plays, musicals and choir performances. Bella was awarded the student who most exemplified the virtue of acceptance. Staff and students recognized her welcoming nature, always greeting fellow students and staff with a smile. She hopes to use her positive personality to aid in her pursuit of a teaching degree while continuing to grow her faith life.

Bella is a proud O.G.S.L.Y. member and loves being a part of the praise band and choir at Good Shepherd. She is excited to remain local so that she will be able to continue to participate in both while attending college. She is thankful to be able to continue worship at Good Shepherd while continuing her studies

Can't wait to see where life will take you next. Wherever it is, our prayers go with you!

Katelyn Dean

Katelyn Dean graduated on May 10 from the University of Dayton with a B.S. in Business Administration / Digital Marketing and a minor in Political Science. While at Dayton, she was active in various clubs including Women in Business and College Democrats. She hopes to settle in Chicago and find a position in Digital Marketing.



Erik Krueger



Erik Krueger graduated Cum Laude from the University of Georgia in December. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Finance with a Certificate in Legal Studies. Erik was a big Bulldog fan and

never missed a home football game. He played spikeball as a member of the Georgia Roundnet Club, which captured the first national championship in spikeball. Erik interned with Marriott International in Bethesda last summer and worked for them part-time during his last semester. He was hired full time in January. He has since moved back to his beloved Georgia and hopes to pursue a career in finance in the Atlanta area.



Susan C.	Patricia C.
Doug D.	Jean K.
Gage N.	Hope N.
Emma B.	Ian G.
Jeannie P.	Adam R.
Jane S.	Randall F.
Andrew G.	Kim L.
Bob G.	Dave K.
Joey Q.	Michael R.
Ken K.	Cheryl M.

Happy Anniversary to our June Couples

Tim & Carol L.
 Bernd & Sandy L.
 Jim & Jill R.
 Peter & Janet S.
 Chuck & Sherrie D.
 Jim & Kathie T.
 Eric & Melody W.
 Greg & Jenni C.

Sunday, June 21

Happy Father's Day!

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4



C.A.R.E.
 (Caring and
 Respecting
 Everyone)

Day Trippers Upcoming Events

Check back in August!

Please **contact Bob Wolters** at robertjwolters@gmail.com) or at 301-774-6169
 OR Dorothy Hughes at 301-437-8906

Yard Sale - Postponed
 Check back in the Fall.

Stepping Stones Shelter

On Saturday, May 30, 2020, the Social Ministry Board provided lunch for 175 clients of Stepping Stone Shelter. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies to make this mission possible.

Food Pantry

The Food Pantry distributed 12 bags of food in May to support Pastor Magarino's congregation of Spanish speaking Lutherans.

Proverbs 14:21

Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner,
 but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.