

## Sermon Musings

Luke 3:1-6 & Malachi 3:1-20

*“Our brokenness is the wound through which the full power of God can penetrate our being and transfigure us in God. Loneliness is not something from which we must flee but the place from where we can cry out to God, where god will find us, and we can find God. Yes, through our wounds the power of God can penetrate us and become like rivers of living water to irrigate the arid earth within us. Thus, we may irrigate the arid earth of others, so that hope and love are reborn.” ~ Jean Vanier, The Broken Body*



The message of the prophets delivers bad news to the oppressors but good news to the broken hearted, the broken in spirit, the broken in body or psyche or relationship. From the liminal wilderness a voice cries that loneliness opens the path of grace. The broken heart raises the valleys, the oppressed soul levels the mountains, and desperation will smooth the rough passages. Human struggles refine the junk of life, and bitterness yields joy. Does this make sense? Not really.

In the tradition of the prophets, John the Baptist offers this alternative to common sense – or offers, perhaps, another kind of sense altogether. He calls upon us to prepare the way for The One Who is to come flooding the world with hope, peace, joy, justice and love.

~ Rev. Sheri Fry

## GATHERING TOGETHER

*As the music begins, we invite you to use this time to make the transition from getting here to being here. Take these few minutes to silently prepare for worship and allow the Spirit to refresh you.*

### Prayer of the Day

May our gratitude make us generous and compassionate with all our neighbors as we wait for and prepare for love to break into the world once again. May our voices join the one in the wilderness as we prepare the way of the Lord. Amen.

Gathering Music

Jeremy Kurn

Welcome

Rev. Sheri Fry

Introit

Jeremy Kurn

\*Call to Worship

Liturgist Paul Steward

One: In the lonely places, the wilderness where we stand forlorn, windswept and alone, Your voice calls out “Prepare a way for the Lord.”

**All: In the dark places, the shadows where we hide our fears, embrace our tears; Your voice calls out “Prepare a way for the Lord.”**

One: For the desert places in which we walk, the streets we roam, the paths we cross, guide our feet, take us to places where you would go. Give us words that you would use that in this Advent season of promise and preparation, we might point the way with John the Baptist to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

(continued)



Parts of the service in **bold** are for everyone to speak in unison.  
Parts with an asterisk \* mean that all are to stand in body or in spirit.

All: O come, Thou Day-spring, from on high,  
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come again and with us ever dwell.

#### Lighting the Candle of Peace

As we reflect on the foundation of faith in our lives, we gather together around the candle of peace. The home we long for is a home that knows peace, a peace that rests between us and others, a peace at the core of our being, a peace hovering through and in our world. So today we light this candle in peace as a reminder and as a prayer. Together, we prepare the way.

\*Opening Hymn #87      *Comfort, Comfort Now My People*

\*Prayer of Confession

Rev. Sheri Fry

Holy God, when John was born, Zechariah leaned down and whispered words of love into his ear. We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out, yet we fail to hear it. We forget of your love for us. We doubt that we could possibly be enough. We wear ourselves out aiming for perfection. We deflect words of praise. We hide behind shiny first impressions. Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job. Open our ears as you open our hearts, so that we might rest on the foundation of goodness you have laid for us. Gratefully we pray, Amen.

\*Assurance of God's Love

Rev. Sheri Fry

We are loved. We are forgiven. We are claimed. This is our foundation. Thanks be to God. Amen.

\*Response of Praise

*Gloria Patri*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

## Your Church at Work



We need donations of toilet paper and dry pet food for dogs and cats.

Do you have a spare backpack?

The Food Bank would like to have a few backpacks (new or gently used) for our homeless clients. See Becky or email her at [rebeccavandyke797@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccavandyke797@gmail.com)



The annual **Christmas Joy Offering** will be received during December. See bulletin inserts.

**Thank you for your generous contributions to Good Shepherd in 2021.**

Year to date through November, our income is **\$155,898**

Our expenses are **\$185,883**

Our shortfall year to date is **\$29,985**

2022 Pledges through November 30th - **37 giving units for a total of \$98,200.00 -**

## Here's What's Happening

Monday, December 6 - Men's Shed 10 am - 12 pm

Advent Book Study 12 pm in the Sanctuary

Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:10 - 7:45pm

Tuesday, December 7 - ESL Class 6 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, December 8 - Congregational Life Committee Meeting 2:00 pm

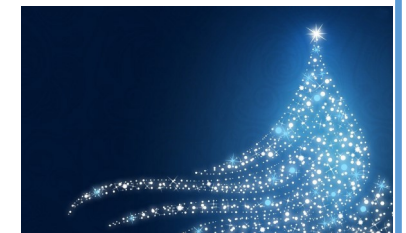
Choir Rehearsal 7 - 8:30 pm

Thursday, December 9 - ESL class 6 - 7:30 pm

## BLUE CHRISTMAS ~ A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

December 9th 5:30 pm

*A service to honor grief, loss and the fulness of life in this sacred time of year. We gather together to find light in the darkness of the holiday season.*



## Joys and Concerns

Please pray for those dealing with health issues: for Marion; Bill; Jane; Haylee; Maxine; Gil; Jane Seid’s friends Ron Hull, and Jason Buter; for all those grieving the loss of loved ones: for Burton Kugler’s family; Jean Cook’s family; Sue C.’s family; Meg Heiser’s family; and for communities affected by COVID-19 or by human rights violations here in the United States and throughout the world; and for our church, that it may thrive as it brings the good news to our area.

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### OPPORTUNITY TO PET FOSTER A CAT

Marion Hubner’s cat LUCY is a 17-year-old tabby who is declawed, box trained, and looking for a new home. Marion is in The Center at Northridge learning to walk with a fractured knee. Lucy is up to date on her vaccinations and prefers a ONE cat home. Marion is willing to subsidize Lucy’s care. If you are interested in providing a senior cat a loving home, please contact the church office at [GSPCOffice10785@gmail.com](mailto:GSPCOffice10785@gmail.com)



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE  
December 24th at 4:30 pm  
 Join us in our beautifully decorated Sanctuary for Worship on this holy night. Sing Christmas carols and hear the story of Jesus’ birth and its meaning for our lives. We will enjoy special music, a message of hope, and candles lifted high.  
 The service will also be livestreamed on Facebook.



Good Shepherd Staff  
 Interim Rev.: Rev. Sheri Fry  
[revmo25@gmail.com](mailto:revmo25@gmail.com)  
 Office Admin: Teddie McConnell  
[GSPCOffice10785@gmail.com](mailto:GSPCOffice10785@gmail.com)  
 Liturgist: Paul Steward

Choir Director: Sara Love  
 Chancel Choir & Bell Choir  
 Accompanist: Jeremy Kurn  
 Sound & Video: Astin Lopez  
[www.thegoodshepherd.org](http://www.thegoodshepherd.org)

## LISTENING FOR THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination (unison) Paul Steward

**Speak to us, Lord. Speak to us in the waiting, the watching, the hoping, the longing, the sorrow, the sighing, the rejoicing. Speak to us by your Word in these Advent days.**

First Lesson Malachi 3:1-4 Paul Steward

Leader: Listen to the voice of the Spirit speaking to the church.  
**All: Thanks be to God.**

Anthem *Waiting* by Pepper Choplin Chancel Choir

Second Lesson Luke 3:1-6

Sermon *Prepare the Way* Rev. Sheri Fry

Moment of Silent Reflection

### RESPONDING TO GOD’S GRACE

Offering Ourselves and our Gifts  
 Financial gifts make Good Shepherd’s programs and ministries possible, including this worship service. You are invited to give at [www.thegoodshepherd.org](http://www.thegoodshepherd.org) or by placing your offering in the offering plates stationed at the front of the sanctuary.

Offertory Jeremy Kurn

\*Response Doxology #607  
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all creatures here below; praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen**

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\*Prayer of Dedication (unison)

Rev. Sheri Fry

**God, you have so greatly loved us, long sought us, and mercifully redeemed us. Give us grace that in everything we may yield ourselves, our wills and our works, a continual thank offering to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen**

Hymn #77

*Isaiah the Prophet Has Written of Old*

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that a voice cried out in the wilderness, saying, “Prepare the way of the Lord.” And so, we show up and we march toward justice. We roll up our sleeves. We plant trees for our children. We make art. We choose hope. We gather at the Table. We set an extra plate. We sing loudly, with joy. We share stories and wisdom. We celebrate children. We fall together. We rise together. We love together. We do all these things because we believe that God loves us so much that God shows up here. So, we prepare. May it be so. Amen.**



## THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

The Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Gracious God, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You have been faithful to us through all

generations and continue to speak to us today. We praise You for this table of love You spread in the world as a sign of Your love for all people. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and offer our prayers to you.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Words of Institution

Communion of the People

We will share the Sacrament of Communion by coming forward to pick up the bread and cup of juice. Please return to your seat and partake of your bread and juice in your own time. **We are happy to serve you the communion elements if you prefer to stay seated in your pew.**

The Presbyterian tradition does not include a specific rite for first communion. Our parents decide when their children are ready to participate.

Communion Music

Jeremy Kurn

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

**Gracious God, you have made us one with all your people in heaven and earth. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service. Help us who have shared Christ's body and received his cup to be faithful disciples, so that our daily living may reflect your presence among us, and our love be your love, reaching out into the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## SENDING IN GOD'S LOVE

\*Closing Hymn #96

*On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

Charge and Benediction

Rev. Sheri Fry

Postlude

Jeremy Kurn