



**Sierra Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**MONDAY MESSENGER**  
**January 11, 2021**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” -  
Matt. 5:9*

Last Wednesday’s invasion of the U.S. Capitol ripped off the bandage hiding the bleeding wound of division and anger festering in our country. As people of faith who follow the Prince of Peace and who are called to be peacemakers, this is a time perhaps more than ever before to answer that call in whatever way we can. Below are some of my thoughts as to how we can live that out.

**Pray** - While this may sound too glib and obvious, sometimes when we’re caught up in the emotions of the moment we can forget this simple practice of turning it all over to God. I know that happens to me sometimes! So, the first (and continuing) action is to pray for healing in our country. Pray for President Trump and that God’s wisdom and justice would guide him. Pray for President-elect Biden as he seeks to lead us in the enormous challenge of healing and building up this nation. Pray for all our elected and appointed leaders that they may seek the good of the whole and not just their own self-interest. Pray for those who feel disenfranchised, that they find renewed connections and healthy ways to work for the good of all. Pray for all of our law enforcement that they may be kept personally safe and find better ways to keep our democratic institutions and events safe. Pray for the rioters and all those who see violence as a way forward that they may be stopped, brought to justice, and transformed by God’s love. Pray for the church, including this congregation, that it may be a safe and healing place to unite under Christ even with our differences. Pray for whatever God lays on your heart! He wants to hear you.

**Support Truth** - We are a people who worship and serve the One who said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6). Therefore, we have a particular investment in searching out and discerning what is truth and fact and then supporting it. Sometimes it can be a very challenging task to figure that out. We need each other to help in that task. While I recognize that there may be some people reading this who disagree with me- and you are free to do that- and welcome to share your thoughts with me - the evidence and the weight of authority is too strong to deny that former Vice-President Joe Biden won the election, free and fair. Though election processes always need to be improved, any fraud or irregularities uncovered have been considered too minimal to have any significant impact on the results. Everyone from the administration’s own election officials along with all state election officials, to the former US Attorney General, to the President’s own staunchest allies, like Senators McConnell and Graham, have accepted that. As Senator Romney pointed out in his speech following the return of the Senate into session after the riot, standing up for that truth is the best thing we can do right now to stop those who would foment more division or violence. I believe that means when we hear those who don’t accept that truth we need to lovingly and firmly state the facts. The more people do that, the more likely it is that truth and facts will win out.

**Be a peaceful presence** - The emotional thermostat is turned up way too high. That’s not only because of widespread fear and hatred but also just because we’re in the middle of a pandemic which itself brings a level of heightened sensitivity and anxiety. As people who

believe that one of the fruits of the Spirit we all receive is “peace” (Gal. 5:22), it is incumbent upon us to draw upon that Holy Spirit power as best we can to keep us personally calm and peaceful and not add to the tensions with our own angry words and actions. I know at times that’s easier said and done but there’s too much at stake not to do our best at it. That means that when we’re around people who are in “attack mode” we keep our voice and demeanor calm and even, remember that Jesus died for them as well as for us, and respond with as much respect as we can. It also means that we resist the temptation to post or forward *anything* on social media, or email, that demeans, degrades, or diminishes the common humanity of others, no matter how “humorous” or to the point it seems to us. All that does is inflame and incense others who may be in different places than we are but are still God’s children.

While the forces threatening violence and destruction may seem beyond the capability of our little selves to address or deal with in any significant way, Jesus promises that we ARE blessed when we act as peacemakers, no matter how insignificant our actions may seem. “For the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). And that makes all the difference in the world. Literally.

Walking the Way with you,

Pastor Mark Perry

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

Annual Congregational Meeting, January 31, 2021, 11:00 am, on Zoom. Watch for more information to come!

### **SELC LENTEN DEVOTIONAL WRITERS WANTED**

Our Worship and Music and Faith Formation leaders would like to develop a special daily devotional for Lent, which starts with Ash Wednesday on February 17, 2021. We are inviting anyone among our SELC members and friends who may be interested in writing a paragraph or two about their favorite Bible verse(s) to contribute their thoughts. We can also provide the lectionary verse of the day if you’d prefer. We’d like to start distributing these on February 13, 2021, so we’d like your devotional to be turned in by Sunday, February 10, 2021, if at all possible. You can email them to [admin@selcaz.org](mailto:admin@selcaz.org), or mail them to the church office. We have a number of other fun and meaningful ideas planned for Lent as well; watch for more information to come soon! Any questions, please contact Pastor Mark.

### **JOIN INTERN PASTOR ANNELA**

Sundays January 24, 31 and February 7 at 11:00 a.m. we will look at returning to our baptismal waters during a time of uncertainty and collectively contemplate what Martin Luther asks in the Small Catechism, “What then is the significance of such a Baptism with water?” My hope is to facilitate a coming together as we mindfully study and discuss -- Does water matter to us as Christians? As members of SELC? As residents of Cochise County? The study will be centered around contemplation, spiritual practice, and mindful discernment on how we as baptized members of the body of Christ value, connect and care for bodies of water that currently sustain and affirm our baptism. This will include guest speakers from the San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area and members from our own landscape committee. The sessions will be held over ZOOM in replacement of the normal coffee fellowship, only come if you want to! Please RSVP my email, to Intern Pastor Annela at [intern@selcaz.org](mailto:intern@selcaz.org) by Wednesday, January 20. There will be some supplemental materials I hope to provide before we begin.

## JOURNEY WITH ANGELS

What comes to mind when you hear the word “angel”? Calling all who are intrigued with this question for a “Journey with Angels” Bible study. The Gather magazine January/February study can be joined on zoom where the author, Reverend Christa Von Zychlin, will be leading it on Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. The event is free. A \$10 donation will be welcomed but is not required to participate. You will receive lots of tips about this 4-session study, enjoy some music, angel arts/crafts suggestions, and even some “angel” food suggestions! And, we’ll have a drawing for complimentary subscriptions to Gather magazine. Closed captioning of English to Spanish will be available. Online registration (at [www.grandcanyonwomen.org](http://www.grandcanyonwomen.org)) is required and closes at 11:59 pm on Jan. 21.

Call Linda Radwick, 439-5019, with any questions.

## BEHIND THE SCENES THANK YOU

Did you notice the beautiful Sanctuary Christmas tree this year on line? We need to thank Carl McCourt and Rich Radwick for setting up this heavy tree and helping to decorate with our special Chrismons, along with Connie Kelher, Lynette Nowlan and Sylvia Diamond. While the tree was up, our Trustees, Christie and Michael Brown had the alcove door which they sanded and refinished to look like new. It is beautiful.

When Epiphany arrived, Pastor Mark and Rich Radwick along with Donna Bryan and Wilma Bell worked together to take down and store the Chrismons and the Nativity Set.

I can't thank you all enough for what you do.

**HOORAY!!!** “Christ in Our Home” devotion booklets have finally arrived! You can pick them up from the church office. A box is outside the front office door with a number of them.