

SIERRA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
MONDAY MESSENGER - July 20, 2020

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us... ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

- *Romans 8:18, 22-25*

Groaning. Who isn't engaging in at least a little- if not a lot- of groaning over what's happening these days? There's a lot right now that tries our patience and tests our faithfulness. So, it is encouraging to hear in this passage that St. Paul acknowledges that reality and, in effect, is saying that is not only okay to engage in that groaning but, in fact, that our personal and communal groans are part of the groaning of all creation. That's an astounding insight! It's saying that the pains we're enduring are connected to the pain that the creation itself is going through, and vice versa. It's an acknowledgement of the deep divine interconnectedness that exists throughout the whole universe, including humanity and beyond. It assures us that we are not alone. We don't suffer by ourselves. And, not only that, but it is part of the ongoing process of God's promise to bring in a New Creation. The connection of these "groans" to a woman in labor pains is a vivid and striking analogy. Although things can be really tough right now, and suffering is very real and widespread for millions of people, animals and things, there is a "glory about to be revealed to us" to which we can look forward with hope.

There is so much to meditate upon in these verses. I invite you to spend time doing that as you feel and express your "groaning" times these days. I'd love to hear about your insights and thoughts. And know this: Your groans are heard. Your pain is shared. Your suffering is not forever. And your patience will be rewarded beyond imagination.

Your fellow faith journeyer in Christ,

Pastor Mark Perry

GOODBYE AND GOD BLESS TO INTERN PASTOR PAUL, MONICA AND JOY

This coming Sunday, July 26th, we will share worship online one more time with Intern Pastor Paul and his family as well as offer a virtual "Blessing and Sending" time. All are invited to join us online at www.selcaz.org at 10:00 am.

Following worship, starting at approximately 11:30 am and continuing as long as cars are there, there will be a "drive by goodbye" time. The Benz family will stand in front of the church office along Lenzner Ave. while members and friends wave and say their (masked, please) goodbyes from their car as they pass by them in the drive-through, going north. If there's a line up, we ask that cars wait along Bella Vista Dr on the south side of the church and in the east parking lot. As you head to Lenzner Ave., please turn right into the drive-through and proceed out the north exit, only turning right on Lenzner Ave. Please do not turn left so the flow of cars goes smoother.

Of course, you're also encouraged to call, email and send notes of appreciation before they leave Sierra Vista on July 29th. Intern Pastor Paul will then start a year-long Chaplaincy Residency at Harbor View Medical Center in Seattle, Washington. We have had a great year together, even in the midst of a pandemic. We praise God for the loving and faithful connections that have been made!

(Note: Because of the drive by goodbye, there will be no Zoom Coffee Fellowship time. We'll meet in that format again on Sunday, August 2nd, 11:15 am).

CONSIDER A MORE IN-DEPTH LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Are you wondering "How can I more significantly deepen my knowledge and understand of God and His calling for my life?" *Diakonia* is a Synod-sponsored two-year program that provides a system of study to help answer that question. With a lot of us having to stay home more, this could be the ideal time to engage in a program like this! It encourages increased participation in the church and in the community. Students learn from ordained pastors in a cohort setting. They study traditional seminary disciplines, identify their particular gifts, and are encouraged to grow spiritually. Classes are being offered online this fall in "real-time" video sessions. Cost is \$360/year plus books. If interested in hearing more information, go to www.diakoniaaz.org or email, info@diakoniaaz.org, or contact Pastor Perry. (Note: this is not part of a process of becoming a rostered minister or deacon in the ELCA but is a program meant to build up stronger and more knowledgeable lay leaders and learners in our state).

FAITH

Every Night In Every Home!

Our FAITH5 verse of the week is Romans 8:15-17: ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

(Post or keep this weekly scripture in a handy place and every morning or evening share the following as a couple, or with family members in the home or even with a dear friend over the phone.)



Share your highs and lows of the day with one another.



Read the verse of the week and if time permits, the Bible story that pertains to the Scripture of the week.



Talk about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows of the day or how it's speaking to you.



Pray for one another's highs and lows and other prayer requests.



Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other's forehead or the palm of your hands and say something simple such as: “God bless you and keep you in His love and care!” Or feel free to make up your own blessing that incorporates a part of the FAITH5 verse of the week.

Be Creative!

SUNDAY LECTIONARY DAILY READINGS

The readings are chosen so that the days flowing out from Sunday (Monday through Wednesday) reflect upon that Sunday's readings. The days leading up to Sunday (Thursday through Saturday) prepare for the next Sunday readings.

Monday

Psalm 75

Nahum 1:1-13

Revelation 14:12-20

Tuesday

Psalm 75

Zephaniah 3:1-13

Galatians 4:21–5:1

Wednesday

Psalm 75

Daniel 12:1-13

Matthew 12:15-21

Thursday

Psalm 119:129-136

1 Kings 1:28-37

1 Corinthians 4:14-20

Friday

Psalm 119:129-136

1 Kings 1:38-48

Acts 7:44-53

Saturday

Psalm 119:129-136

1 Kings 2:1-4

Matthew 12:38-42

Sunday

July 24-30

1 Kings 3:5-12

Psalm 119:129-136

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52