

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS AT HOME WORSHIP
APRIL 21, 2024

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, It is not always easy to live out the gospel in our daily lives. We are sometimes met with opposition or rejection when we stand solidarity with those who are marginalized. Strengthen us by the example of early Christians that we might persist in our call to bear witness to you. In and through Jesus Christ. Amen.



SCRIPTURE READINGS: MARK 13: 9-11

⁹As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. ¹⁰And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

ACTS 17: 1-9

After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ²And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, ³explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.” ⁴Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. ⁵But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason’s house. ⁶When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, “These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, ⁷and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” ⁸The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, ⁹and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

1 THESSALONIANS 1: 1-10

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. ²We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL BY ASSISTING MINISTER DICK WERPY

The More Things Change, The More Things Stay the Same!

Acts 17:1-9

In this biblical passage, the apostle Paul and his companions arrive in Thessalonica. Paul follows his custom of preaching in the synagogue, reasoning with the people from the Scriptures. His central argument is that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, and he proclaims that Jesus is indeed the Christ. Many are persuaded by his message, including Jews, Gentiles connected to the synagogue, and leading women. However, some synagogue leaders become jealous and incite a mob against Paul. They accuse him of turning the world upside down and acting against the decrees of Caesar by proclaiming another king, Jesus. Acts tells us the city was in an uproar. There was great division and great angst. People like Jason were arrested and had to be bailed out. Mobs and ruffians were incited by the leaders. Can you imagine the fear and trepidation that ran through the city?

Is our world any different today? Are we still seeing conflicts between religious groups in our country and our world? I am constantly amazed at how little has changed since the time of Jesus. Violence and force seem to permeate our differences.

1Thessalonians 1:1-10

But Paul sends reassurance here. Verse 2 really struck me. **2. We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers.** And in verse 4 he adds, **4 For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you,** **5 because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit.** In the midst of all the nastiness and violence, Paul gives thanks for all his brothers and sisters who are on the spiritual journey with him and for the work they are doing in God's name.

The question occurred to me, "How often do I stop and give thanks for all of you who are on this faith journey with me?" We are still faced with religious conflict, religious groups are castigated and judged for their views. Christianity in many ways is judged harshly in our country. Sort of like Thessalonica!

So, this morning I give thanks for each of you who are part of Shepherd of the Hills and are a part of the ministry we all share on this faith journey. Amen!

HYMN OF THE DAY | LESS LIKE ME

https://youtu.be/MIUHOyK_8RE?si=77GjDOTC6M4KIUTC

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Trusting in the promise of the resurrection, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *(A brief silence.)*

O God, you sustained Paul and the early Christians through harsh opposition and persecution. Give us the persistence to do your work of justice even when we face strong pushback or personal risk. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

We human beings are the most adaptable creatures on earth, inhabiting even the most hostile of climates. Wherever we live, fill us with mutual love for the natural world around us, that we would sustain the environments that sustain us. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Open the minds of all who lead to new ideas and learnings from younger generations and other nations, that together we might solve the issues that negatively affect the whole world. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and wholeness to those recovering from injury or surgery, and to all whose health is challenged in any way, especially Dorothy, Lori, Terry, Dave, and all those we lift up through our Prayer Chain. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Comfort the victims of violence, especially gun violence, and bring healing to families and communities torn apart by it. Commit us to doing whatever is needed to end violence in our nation and our world. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen us to care for those in need through the outreach ministries of our community. To all who have hunger, give daily bread. To all who have bread, give hunger for justice. Bring aid and support to those who are poor, beaten down, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided, especially those seeking help through the Community Infant Program, the Little Free Pantry, Rise Against Suicide, and the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Provide for the work of the Joshua School and organizations like them. Empower the staff and parents of children living on the Autism Spectrum. Nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of these children and adults, that they might reach their highest quality of life. Fill the hearts of those providing help and transport for these children with compassion and stir their hearts to protect and keep them safe. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Encourage and empower those impacted by war, tyranny, and gun violence. Still the sounds of weapons. Teach us to seek security that comes from respect rather than violence. Strengthen and comfort the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Gaza, Sudan, Haiti, and all those throughout the world whose lives are impacted by violence. Remind us of what You require of us: That we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, our help in every trouble, we pray for peace in the Holy Land. Protect those traumatized by ongoing violence, especially those with no access to safe spaces. Release people held hostage; provide food, water, fuel, and supplies for all in need; sustain medical personnel as they work in horrendous conditions; tend to those who are wounded; comfort all who grieve. Direct your people and its leaders into the way of peace. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

So many saints from Paul to the present have risked their safety, their reputations, and their lives for the sake of the gospel. Inspire us by their example to be willing to do whatever is needed to make sure your message of love and justice is carried forward. God of new life, **hear our prayer.**

We place in your arms all for whom we pray, out loud or in our hearts, confident in your mercy and grace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION & SENDING

You had not imagined that something so empty could fill you to overflowing.

You have seen and so you are already blessed.

You have been seen and so you are the blessing.

There is no other word you need. Simply go and tell.

Go with confidence, trusting in God's unfailing love and faithfulness.

You are the work of God's own creation and his love endures forever.

Go in joy to love and serve the Lord! **Amen!**



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.
Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all.
Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

SHEPHERD CALENDAR OF EVENTS APRIL 21 – APRIL 28, 2024

Sunday, April 21st – Church at Thessalonica

9:30 a.m. – Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion
Coffee and Conversation immediately following Worship

Wednesday, April 24th

11:00 a.m. – Amazing Grace Book Study by Zoom

Friday, April 26th

7:00 a.m. – Men’s Zoom Breakfast Bible Study

5:00 p.m. – Friday Perspectives

Sunday, April 28th– Church at Corinth

9:30 a.m. – Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion
Coffee and Conversation immediately following Worship

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>APRIL</u> <u>BIRTHDAYS</u></p>
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SHERILYN S. 4/6

KAY W. 4/9

DOROTHY F.

4/13

CINDIE S. 4/27

DAILY NARRATIVE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 21, 2024

Monday, April 22, 2024 – 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Thanks to Thessalonica

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/1-thessalonians-11-10-thanks-to-thessalonica2024>

Tuesday, April 23, 2024 – Acts 6:1-7 Seven Chosen to Serve

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-61-7-seven-chosen-to-serve2024>

Wednesday, April 24, 2024 – Acts 6:8-15 The Arrest of Stephen

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-68-15-the-arrest-of-stephen2024>

Thursday, April 25, 2024 – Acts 7:1-53 Stephen’s Speech to the Council

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-71-53-stephens-speech-to-the-council2024>

Friday, April 26, 2024 – Acts 7:54-81a The Stoning of Stephen

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-754-81a-the-stoning-of-stephen2024>

Saturday, April 27, 2024 – Acts 8:1b-3 Saul Persecutes the Church

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/acts-81b-3-saul-persecutes-the-church2024>

Sunday, April 28, 2024 – 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Factions in the Corinthians Church

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/1-corinthians-110-18-factions-in-the-corinthian-church2024>