

**Rev. Linda Kozlowski**  
**Good Shepherd United Church of Christ**  
**170 Tuckerton Road**  
**Reading, PA 19605**  
**484-529-2241 (cell)**  
[\*\*pastorlindakoz@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:pastorlindakoz@gmail.com)

May 20, 2020

Dear People of God,



I feel as if I was just getting to know many of you when we were suddenly plunged into this time of confusion and chaos. We moved from my glorious Installation Service on March 1<sup>st</sup> to suddenly being unable to gather for worship, for learning, for prayer, for fellowship. I realize some of you are feeling isolated as you have not been able to worship with us virtually. I realize some of you are feeling overwhelmed and frightened. I realize you are all feeling a wide range of emotions—doubt, anger, sadness, loneliness, exhaustion, uncertainty. And, as I have been sharing for the past two months, Jesus is able and willing to meet us where we are. Jesus is willing and able to surround us with peace, to fill us with hope, to hold us with comfort, to meet us with love today and every single day to come.

The leadership team of Good Shepherd UCC has been meeting virtually over the past two months as we follow the wisdom of health officials and the mandates of our state government. We realize everyone longs to be able to come back together, to worship in our Sanctuary, to experience familiarity in this season when nothing seems familiar. Our priority is to make sure we can keep the most vulnerable members of our Faith Community safe and protected. This past week we created a team to explore what needs to be done to be able to open our Church safely when the time comes. We are exploring recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and the Health Secretary of Pennsylvania along with the wisdom of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ and our colleagues in ministry. This will take some time and a lot of planning AND we, too, yearn for the day when we can worship together.

Beloved of God, please know that I continue to hold you deeply in prayer for this season. I share with you this meditation entitled ***Living in the Present*** by **Joyce Rupp** from ***Inviting God In: Scriptural Reflections and Prayers Throughout the Year***.

## ***Living in the Present***

- ***For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.  
– Ecclesiastes 3:1***

***Time is such an elusive thing and I find myself constantly wanting to control it. It seems like I am always “running out of time” when I am working at something which holds my interest. Sometimes my mind and feelings are far into the future while I am clinging onto the present and not wanting to go forward. If it’s a difficult situation, I want to hurry and get it over with. If it’s a happy moment, I want to hug it to myself and not let it go. I think that I have a continuous tug-of-war with time.***

***The wise voice of the author of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for everything. Each event and experience has some wisdom to give us if we are open and attentive to what it is offering to us. The present moment is what counts. Nothing else. Here is where our wisdom happens. Sometimes the only way we come to believe this is when we face a serious illness or the loss of something or someone significant. The quality of the present moment suddenly takes on a new look and becomes a precious commodity.***

***Eternal Love,  
I desire to be less concerned about “having time”  
And more concerned about how I live with the time  
I have in the present moment. It is all the time I have.***

***Amen***

As we continue through this exceedingly difficult time, may we remember to pause and listen to God’s whispers. May we be open to receiving the wisdom God offers in this season of uncertainty. May we know and trust that God is at work in our hearts, in our lives, in our communities, in the world. May we remember that we have a God who is ever present, who is ever loving, who is ever doing something new and wondrous for all of God’s people.

Take good care of yourself. Stay safe. Know that you are loved.

Peace, love, and blessings,  
Pastor Linda



**While many activities have been cancelled, we share some recent news:**

- On May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 pm, Good Shepherd UCC's bells were ringing to honor all those who are essential workers in this time of pandemic.
- We began to celebrate **GSUCC's 175th anniversary**— on the first Sunday of each month we plan to lift some of the history of our Faith Community.
- We continue to feed folks at Opportunity House and to support them financially.
- Groceries have been purchased and delivered to members of our congregation.
- Helping Harvest, with the support of the Muhlenberg Churches Food Pantry, is providing a drive-through food distribution at Good Shepherd ELC on 5/21.



**For some wonderful news, on May 17th, the Shober family welcomed Evelyn Faye Shober into the world. She is the daughter of Maggie and Kevin Shober,**



granddaughter of Sue Shober, niece of Mark and Courtney Shober. Evelyn was born at 8:45 pm, is 19.5" long and weighs 5 lbs. 15 oz.

Let's celebrate life as we welcome this joyful blessing into our Faith Community.



**CONGRATULATIONS 2020 GRADUATES!**

Following is the list of graduates who we'll be recognizing in early June.

- Cruz Altamarino** – John Paul II Center for Special Learning
- Samuel Eddinger** – Schuylkill Valley High School
- Remi Lambi** – Muhlenberg High School
- Madison Hensel** – West Chester University
- Hanna Mengel** – Lock Haven University
- Tyler Rapposelli** – West Chester University





**Beloved friends**, if you find you are struggling financially or spiritually in this time of uncertainty, please know we continue to be present to support you. We are in this together with the help of God. Please reach out to Pastor Linda with your needs, with your questions, with your concerns. Know that you are not alone. We will move forward into whatever comes next as we continue following the Way Jesus revealed for us.



**WE GATHER VIRTUALLY** Even though we are distant socializing and sheltering in place, still we come to the Table to be fed by the Bread of Life and to drink of the Cup of Blessing. Still, we gather virtually to receive the meal Jesus offers. **If you have not been able to join us for virtual worship and want to receive Communion via phone call with Pastor Linda during the month of June, please let her know.**

