

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
229 South Broad Street  
Jersey Shore, PA 17740  
570-398-1676

Sunday, 10 September, 2023

15th Sunday after Pentecost



**Children's Church will meet upstairs in the youth Sunday School room at end of the hallway at 9:30 a.m. Please take your child there before worship begins.**

**Introduction to the day**

*Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be God, the one who forms us,  
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,  
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

**Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,  
**you have revealed the ways of justice,  
yet we fail to follow you.  
We are overwhelmed  
by the world's violence and suffering.  
We are afraid to risk what we have  
for the sake of others.  
For the harm we have caused,  
known and unknown, forgive us.  
For the unjust demands we place on others  
and your creation, forgive us.  
For the ways we turn away  
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.  
Lead us back to you  
and set us on the right path;  
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,  
God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.  
God's compassion is beyond compare.  
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.  
In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG:** *Earth and All Stars* 731

**GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also, with you.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE:** *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* 836

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P: Let us pray.**

**O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

L: A reading from **Ezekiel**

**FIRST READING:** Ezekiel 33:7-11

*God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.*

<sup>7</sup>So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup>If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. <sup>9</sup>But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

<sup>10</sup>Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" <sup>11</sup>Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

**Psalm: Psalm 119:33-40**

<sup>33</sup>Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,  
and I shall keep it to the end.  
<sup>34</sup>**Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching;  
I shall keep it with all my heart.**  
<sup>35</sup>Lead me in the path of your commandments,  
for that is my desire.  
<sup>36</sup>**Incline my heart to your decrees  
and not to unjust gain.**  
<sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood;  
give me life in your way.  
<sup>38</sup>**Fulfill your promise to your servant,  
which is for those who fear you.**  
<sup>39</sup>Turn away the reproach that I dread,  
because your judgments are good.  
<sup>40</sup>**Behold, I long for your commandments;  
by your righteousness enliven me.**

L: A reading from Romans

**Second Reading:** Romans 13:8-14

*The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.*

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love one another; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION p.142**

*Alleluia Lord to whom shall we go?*

*You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, Alleluia.*

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 18:15-20**

*Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup>“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that

one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**SERMON “Where Two or Three Gather”**

*The assembly stands.*

**HYMN OF THE DAY: *God, When Human Bonds Are Broken* 603**

**APOSTLES CREED ( p. 105 at the beginning of the hymnal)**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

Hold us accountable, O God. Show your church where repentance is needed and lead us in paths of intentional compassion and listening. Help us extend hands of reconciliation and care, especially in relationships with other Christians and people of other faiths. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Reveal your miracles to us, O God. Move us to cherish you as we behold the wonders of creation. Renew the seas and the soil, the forests and the creatures that live in them. Turn us to ways of living that seek Earth’s thriving. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Inspire us to lead with honor, O God. Guide judges and legislators, police, and government officials to create and uphold just laws. Move us to treat all people with dignity and guide our conversations with one another. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Help us comfort those who suffer, O God. Reassure any who are harmed by the wicked acts of others. Bring peace to all who are vulnerable, frightened, despairing, or sick (*especially*). Guard their waking and their sleeping. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Awaken us, O God. Challenge and encourage your people to value the vocation to which each is called. We pray for all discerning new possibilities or changing employment (*especially*). In all our diverse callings, teach us to love our neighbor above all else. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: God of Light, our young adult missionaries may have the difficult task of finding ways into the communities in which they serve. They have many choices, ideas, and suggestions.

Experience shows us that what works well in one place does not necessarily work in other areas. For this reason, we are asking You to guide their plans and bless the work of their hands.

Merciful God

**C: receive our prayer**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: Be our hope, O God. We remember with thanksgiving your disciples who died in faith (*especially*). May their trust in your promise be our protection and our hope. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

P: Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**CHOIR ANTHEM *Seek Ye First***

**A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION**

*The assembly stands.*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

A: God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you.

We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed.

Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING P.144** (*in the beginning of the hymnal*)

**Dialogue**

**Holy Holy Holy**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

**Words of Institution**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER P 145** (*in the beginning of the hymnal*)

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Jesus invites you to this table.

Come, eat and live.

**COMMUNION**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*and each person may respond* **Amen.**

**Communion Song *Lamb of God You Take Away p.146***

**SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Jesus, Remember Me***

*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word,

Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.

Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet,

where none are left out and all are satisfied.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### **SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING** The God of glory,

✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names,

and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG:** *Praise My Soul, the God of Heaven 864*

**DISMISSAL P:** Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**C: Thanks be to God**

### **Announcements**

We welcome our visitors and ask that you sign a Visitor Attendance and Holy Communion Card that is located in the pew rack. We ask that cards be returned via the offering plate during the receiving of the offering. We practice "open Communion" here at St. John meaning that all who believe in the "real presence" of Christ are welcomed to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We offer two choices for Holy Communion, wine or grape juice. Those worshipers desiring grape juice are asked at the communion rail to place their right hand over their heart after receiving "The Body of Christ."

**Remember in prayer:** Rowan Aldridge, Jim Allen, Christine and Dave Barner, Linda Caris, Agnes Cryder, Don & Helen Delaney, Mary Ellen Dougherty, Joanne Fisher, Dawn Fryer, Dina George, Barb Hoffman, Mick Miller, Elsie Parks in Haven Place, Cora Pelletier, Shane Snyder, and all of our shut-ins.

We also remember in prayer Family Promise; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton – ELCA; Bishop Craig A. Miller - USS; for our Companion Synods in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany, and for peace in Ukraine.

We pray for the safety of our military troops around the world including Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Trevor and Nehemiah Eberhart, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Jeremy and Haley Naugle Sorrell, Richie Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Kevin Titus, and Jenna White. We also lift up in prayer their families who strive to keep a normalcy in the family and continue on often with added stress.

Thanks to this week's helpers: Lector –Darlene Bilby; Assisting Ministers—Bill Ely and Ken Dougherty; Children's Church -- Pam Wehler; Head Usher –Gina Johnson; Teller –Christine Barner; Bulletin Sponsor – Sue Willits.

Next weeks' helpers: Lector –Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers—Gary Johnson, Karen Aucker; Children's Church – Cathy Eisner; Head Usher –Gina Johnson; Teller –Christine Barner; Bulletin Sponsor – Cozette Stoltzfus; Flowers –Johnsons.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in celebration of Bob and John's birthday by Pam Wehler.

The Sanctuary Candle in September is given by Myrtle Long in memory of her brother.

The Lutheran Church Women's Prayer Chain is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597      Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**Birthday Card Shower Celebration for Agnes Cryder's 97th Birthday!** Join in the celebration by mailing a birthday card to Agnes beginning the week of September 4th! Agnes will be turning 97 on September 12th. The more birthday cards she receives the merrier it will be! **Address:** Agnes Cryder 201 S. Broad Street Apt.2 Jersey Shore, PA 17740

The **LUKE STRONG 125 mile ride** was on Saturday, September 2 by Parks-Dean Team. Donations are to assist with a handicap bathroom for Luke. Checks can be made out to Luke Antolick Benefit Fund.

**This bulletin and more** can be found on our church website: [www.stjl.org](http://www.stjl.org).

**RALLY SUNDAY FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL** is **NEXT** Sunday, September 17. We are planning a kick-off event for the start of this year's Children's Church. Our weekly attendance during the school year has been growing as we bring our children together for a Bible lesson and activity at the beginning of worship each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Come join us for this fun faith-building event.

**The BENEFIT of church choirs**, from an article in the Washington Post-- the physical & mental health benefits of singing with others. Choirs are large families, said the paper. Singing in them promotes social bonding & joy. Choir members are more optimistic, less lonely, more likely to contribute positively to community. A sense of achievement comes from creating notes with the body & working together to master a work. The text is often inspiring & beautiful, so despite the day's travails, choir members leave rehearsals feeling "this is a very positive thing that I can be a part of." The Bible knew that all along. Choirs are a biblical part of God's scheme of worship! Don't miss it in your church! The Choir Members knew this all along. **PLEASE** come join us! Requirements: move your lips and smile. Wednesdays at 6:30.

**FELLOWSHIP TIME AFTER CHURCH, Sunday, September 24.** The Women of the Church are sponsoring the meal and providing Ham Barbeque sandwiches. Bring a dish to share and enjoy lunch with your church family!

**CHURCH DIRECTORY DEADLINE!** Your information for the church directory is needed by the end of September. Need a picture? We can take one at the fellowship meal on Sept. 24.

**OCTOBER FELLOWSHIP TIME.** Who wants to participate in the October 22 Chili cook off? Please talk to a council person. Cookers of Chili are needed!

**Seafarer's Bags** are due November 1 (It's fast approaching!) The bags, list, and directions are on the table in the office. Our very own Pastor Martha McCracken was on the board of Seafarer's International and served as their president.

**Bible Study books** on the Gospel of Mark are available in the office. Help yourself. Bible study will begin September 18 at 10:00 am. Note the date and time change back to 10:00 a.m.

**Women of the Church are selling APPLE DUMBLINGS.** The cost is \$9.00 for a pan of two. The dumplings will be freshly baked Friday morning, September 29 and you can pick them up in the social room from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Orders must be returned by Sunday, September 24. You can remit payment with your order or pay when you receive them.

### Calendar

Sunday, September 10, 2023      15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
9:30 a.m. Worship Service  
1:00-2:30 pm Visitation  
2:30 pm "Celebration of Life" service for Nancy Wolfe  
3:30 pm Time of Fellowship

Wednesday, September 13, 2023      6:30 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, September 14, 2023      Pastor's Birthday

Sunday, September 17, 2023      16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

Children's Church **Sunday School Rally Day!**

YOUTH Group after worship downstairs in the Sunday School Room

