

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

Sunday, September 17, 2023

16th 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

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

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: *All Creatures Worship God Most High* 835

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: *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* 742

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, 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 Genesis.

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

Psalm: Psalm 103: [1-7] 8-13

[¹Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

²**Bless the LORD, O my soul,**

and forget not all God's benefits—
³who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases;
⁴**who redeems your life from the grave**
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;
⁵who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
⁶**O LORD, you provide vindication**
and justice for all who are oppressed.
⁷You made known your ways to Moses
and your works to the children of Israel.
⁸**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,**
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;
⁹you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.
¹⁰**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,**
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.
¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.
¹²**As far as the east is from the west,**
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.
¹³As a father has compassion for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

L: A reading from Romans

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”
¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

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 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Where Charity and Love Prevail* 359

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.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy (*especially*). Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: Gracious God, we give thanks to you for guiding us in our accompaniment with our companion synod of Lutheran Church of Liberia. Bless Bishop Padmore and Bishop Miller as they work together for your glory to proclaim your message of grace love, forgiveness and mercy. Merciful God

C: receive our prayer

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world (*like Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, whom we commemorate today*). 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.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM *Our Hope Is in the Lord*

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

SENDING SONG: *God Be With You Till We Meet Again 536*

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 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.

Next week’s helpers: Lector –Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers—Joyce Braucht and Carl Schaefer; Children’s Church –Holly Dittmer; Head Usher –Gina Johnson; Teller –Christine Barner; Bulletin Sponsor – Cozette Stoltzfus; Flowers – Gottschall.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in thankfulness for our 58 years of marriage by Gary and Gina Johnson.

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

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH MEETING AFTER THE SERVICE TODAY!

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

This bulletin and more can be found on our church website: www.stjl.org.

RALLY SUNDAY FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL is 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.

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 coast 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 17, 2023 16th Sunday after Pentecost

8:30 A.M. Adult Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

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

10:30 a.m. **WOMEN OF THE CHURCH MEETING**

YOUTH Group after worship downstairs in the Sunday School Room

Monday, September 18, 2023 10:00 a.m. Bible Study

6:00 p.m. Christian Ed meeting

7:00 p.m. Youth Planning meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time at Shore

6:30 Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, September 24, 2023 17th Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Fellowship Meal (ham barbeque sandwiches; bring a dish to share)

APPLE DUMPLINGS ORDERS DUE

CHURCH DIRECTORY DEADLINE!

1:00 p.m. Nippenose Worship

2:00 p.m. Catechism

