

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

Sunday, September 24, 2023

17th 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

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

YOUTH READING FROM CHILDREN'S CHURCH

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: *Lord of Light 688*

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: *Softly and Tenderly 608*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, 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 Jonah

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10--4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

¹⁰When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

^{4:1}But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. ³And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸When

the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

Psalm: Psalm 145:1-8

¹I will exalt you, my God and king,
and bless your name forever and ever.

²**Every day will I bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.**

³Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!
There is no end to your greatness.

⁴**One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.**

⁵I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.

⁶**They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will recount your greatness.**

⁷They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.

⁸**The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

L: A reading from Philippians

Second Reading: : Philippians 1:21-30

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by

your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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 20:1-16

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lord of All Hopefulness 765

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.

God who is gracious and merciful, teach your church to invite and welcome all. Lead us to be grateful for the blessing of community. Challenge your church to choose equity and compassion over judgment. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: God who sends the wind and the sun, you know every worm and bush by name. Help us remember that even the humblest parts of creation are precious to you. Show us how best to care for the earth and its creatures. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: God who is ready to relent from punishing, impart your compassionate wisdom to legislators, judges, members of the military, and law enforcement. Give them courage to serve their communities in times of uncertainty, stress, or exhaustion. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: God who saves, direct your people who are tempted by evil ways. Protect your children from calamity and disaster. Strengthen all who are incarcerated. Encourage all who are in despair or pain of any kind (*especially*). Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: God who is slow to anger, may we boast about the goodness of Jesus with the confidence of Paul in prison. Inspire us to find abundance in whatever vocation we are called to in the world and in service to our congregation. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: O God, you have blessed us with a Companion Synod relationship between the Upper Susquehanna Synod and the Ansbach-Wurzburg Kirchenkreis in Germany. Through your empowerment and the work of many people both here and in Bavaria, children, youth, and adults have had opportunities to write, travel, learn, sing, and grow in partnership with each other's Synod. Thank you for these opportunities and give us new visions to partner with the churches in Germany to proclaim the risen Christ in word and service. Merciful God

C: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: God who abounds in steadfast love, we give thanks for the saints called to the kingdom of heaven (*especially*). United with them in spirit, hold us firm as we labor in this life and look to the life to come. 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 *A Psalm of Praise*

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: *Rise Up, O Saints of God 669*

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 –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.

Next weeks’ helpers: Lector –Kathy Brundick; Assisting Ministers—Ron Brundick, Deb Heydrich; Children’s Church – Molly Hollick; Head Usher –Shelby Rice; Teller –Deb Heydrich; Bulletin Sponsor – Sue Willitts; Flowers –Yost.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in memory of loved ones by the Gottschalls.

The Sanctuary Candle in October is in honor of family birthdays by Agnus Cryder.

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.

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.

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 24, 2023 17th Sunday after Pentecost
8:30 A.M. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's Church
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
- Monday, September 25, 2023
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
6:00 p.m. Christian Ed meeting
7:00 p.m. Youth Planning meeting
- Wednesday, September 27, 2023
6:30 Choir Rehearsal
- Sunday, October 1, 2023 18th Sunday after Pentecost
8:30 A.M. Adult Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship Service with Children's Church

