

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

Sunday, July 30, 2023

9th Sunday after Pentecost



Introduction to the day

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

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 the holy Trinity, † one God,
who greets us in this and every season,
whose word never fails,
whose promise is sure. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of our neighbors.

Merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned. We have hurt our community.

We have squandered your blessings. We have hoarded your bounty.

In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Righteous God,

we confess that we have sinned. We have failed to be honest.

We have lacked the courage to speak. We have spoken falsely.

In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst.

God offers boundless grace when we fail.

Claim the gift of God's mercy:

you are freed and forgiven

in the name of † Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG: *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*

Verse 1 Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner, It must not suffer loss:
From vict'ry unto vict'ry His army He shall lead,
Till ev'ry foe is vanquished, And Christ is Lord indeed.

Verse 2 Stand up, stand up for Jesus, The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict In this His glorious day:
Ye that are men now serve Him Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger, And strength to strength oppose.

Verse 3 Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own:
Put on the Gospel armor, Each piece put on with pray'r;
Where duty calls, or danger, Be never wanting there.

Verse 4 Stand up, stand up for Jesus, The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle, The next the victor's song:
To him that overcometh A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of Glory Shall reign eternal.

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: *Jesus Loves Me* 595

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from 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 First Kings

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know

how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

PSALM: Psalm 119:129-136

¹²⁹Your decrees are wonderful;

therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰**When your word is opened it gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.**

¹³¹I open my mouth and pant

because I long for your commandments.

¹³²**Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as you always do to those who love your name.**

¹³³Order my footsteps in your word;

let no iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴**Rescue me from those who oppress me,
and I will keep your commandments.**

¹³⁵Let your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶**My eyes shed streams of tears,
because people do not keep your teaching.**

L: A reading from Romans

Second Reading: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Be Thou My Vision* 793

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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Almighty God, we pray for the church and all servants of the gospel. Equip rostered and lay ministers to proclaim that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Form confirmands and catechumens into disciples. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Gracious God, we pray for the well-being of creation. Safeguard the environment, clean polluted rivers and lakes (*local waterways may be named*), preserve the mighty tree and the tiny mustard seed, and send advocates for sustainable practices. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Compassionate God, we pray for the nations. Instill in all who govern the ability to discern between good and evil, free those who are oppressed, and protect those facing danger. Promote peace across the world and in our towns and neighborhoods. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Merciful God, we pray for all in any need. Protect those fleeing from war, shelter any who are in poverty, clothe the naked, soothe all who grieve, and heal the sick (*especially name/s*). Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Holy God, we pray for this congregation, both those gathered today and those absent from our assembly. Grant safety to travelers and refreshment and safety for children attending summer camps or community programs. Give direction to any experiencing life transitions. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all nations, we lift up before our siblings in faith who live and serve you in the Ansbach-Wurzburg Kirchenkreis in Germany. Bless them as they share your Good News where they are planted. Direct them and provide them with whatever they need in their service to others in Jesus' name. Hear us O God

C: Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: Eternal God, we give thanks for your saints who now rest from their labors. Inspire us by their witness to treasure the gospel, and continually nourish us with your grace. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION

OFFERING PRAYER

A: God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things.
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us,
that the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

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

Dialogue

Holy Holy Holy

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Words of Institution

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: All people are called to Christ's table.
Come, eat what is good.

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 We thank you, generous God, for the refreshment we have received
at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world,
through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING

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

BLESSING The God who calls across the cosmos
and speaks in the smallest seed

✠ bless, keep, and sustain you now and to the end of the age. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: Seek Ye First WOV 783

Verse 1 Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
And His righteousness,
And all these things
Shall be added unto you,
Allelu, alleluia.

Verse 2 Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God
Allelu, alleluia.

Verse 3 Ask, and it shall be given unto you.
Seek and ye shall find.
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Allelu, alleluia.

DISMISSAL P: Go in peace. Share the harvest.
C: Thanks be to God.

We extend our sympathies to the family of Mary Jane Zinn who died on Saturday, July 22, 2023 at the Gatehouse. The funeral service was on Wednesday, July 26, 2023 at Welker Funeral Home with burial at the Jersey Shore Cemetery.

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 worshippers 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, Agnes Cryder, Don & Helen Delaney, Mary Ellen Dougherty, Joanne Fisher, Dina George, Barb Hoffman, Mick Miller, Cora Pelletier, Shane Snyder, Nancy Wolfe, 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.

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, Kenny Leitch (retiring 8/4 !), 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 –Pam Wehler; Assisting Ministers— Matthew Stachouse and Cozette Stoltzfus; Head Usher –Deb Heydrich; Teller –Kaye Long; Bulletin Sponsor – Betty Allen; Flowers—Cryder and Ferguson.

Next week’s helpers: Lector –Kathy Brundick; Assisting—Ron Brundick and Deb Heydrich; Head Usher –Kaye Long; Teller –Jim Ely; Bulletin Sponsor – Mike and Ruth Aldridge; Flowers– Theresa Levins.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in honor of Pastor and Karen Aucker by Agnes Cryder and Bill and Cindy Ferguson.

The Sanctuary Candle in July is given in memory of my husband by Agnes Cryder.

Women of the Church will meet after service on Sunday, August 13.

Thank you to all who helped with Vacation Bible School this year. The theme was “Fiesta VBS” and was held at Trinity United Methodist Church with a nice attendance of around 30 kids. Special thanks to Pastor Aucker for presenting the Bible lesson “The Prodigal Son,” and to Gloria Ely, Theresa Levins and Pam Wehler for providing the refreshments for the kids on Tuesday night. Every night we all yelled our VBS theme cheer: “Wanna taco ‘bout JESUS!, Wanna celebrate GOD!, Wanna fill up on *God’s LOVE!*, Celebrate FIESTA!” The kids had a fun filled week with lots of great activities. The theme expressed how we have an emptiness in our lives until God comes in- like an empty taco shell by itself, and each night we “*filled up*” with what God offers us- like a taco gets filled with good stuff. Celebrate God filling your life!

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

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund has been depleted as we responded to people in need. If anyone would want to donate to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, make your donation to St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church with the memo: Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Thank you for providing for the needs of people in our community.

A white basket in the back of the sanctuary that was used to collect used bulletins for recycling has disappeared. One of our members bought those baskets. We ask that the white basket be returned.

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the **LUKE STRONG 125 mile ride** 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.

Calendar

Sunday, July 30, 2023 9th Sunday after Pentecost
9:30 a.m. Worship Service
St James Picnic

Tuesday, August 1, 2023 6:00 p.m. Council
Deadline to Register for Catechism Class

Sunday, August 6, 2023 10th Sunday after Pentecost
9:30 a.m. Worship Service

