

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, August 16, 2020
11th Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction to the day

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father,
and of the ✝ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority,
I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,
In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* (ELW 858)
(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear now to his temple draw near,
joining in glad adoration!

2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning
and, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen all that is needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

3 Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do
if with his love he befriend you.

4 Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again.
Gladly forever adore him!

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

L: A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

¹Thus says the LORD:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my deliverance be revealed.

⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 67 read responsively

¹May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.

²**Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.**

³Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

⁴**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth.**

⁵Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

⁶**The earth has brought forth its increase;
God, our own God, has blessed us.**

⁷May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

SECOND READING: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

L: A reading from Romans.

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

[Paul writes:] ¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

[¹⁰Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand:¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” ¹³He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”]

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came

and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.”²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”²⁶ He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY *O Zion, Haste* (ELW 668)

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 O Zion, haste, your mission high fulfilling,
to tell to all the world that God is light;
that he who made all nations is not willing
one soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

Refrain

Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace,
tidings of Jesus, redemption, and release.

2 Publish to ev'ry people, tongue, and nation
that God, in whom they live and move, is love;
tell how he stooped to save his lost creation
and died on earth that we might live above. Refrain

3 He comes again! O Zion, ere you meet him,
make known to ev'ry heart his saving grace;
let none whom he has ransomed fail to greet him,
through your neglect, unfit to see his face. Refrain

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

A: Lord, you gather the church to be part of your mission as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. As Jesus acknowledged the great faith of a woman from outside his people, help your church discover and find blessing in the faith of people we might reject. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: You have blessed us with the bounty of the earth. Grant your grace to all your creatures, that the earth will flourish. Relieve waters choked by garbage, renew soils stripped of nutrients, and refresh the air all creatures need to live. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: You call the nations to be glad and sing for joy. Let your way be known among all the nations of the world, now divided by competing interests, contending alliances, and consumed by enormous worry. Bless us and make your face shine upon all. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: You show unexpected mercy, kindness, and generosity. We pray for those who do not have enough, for outcasts in our villages, cities, and town, and for those who need your healing (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: In you we live and move and have our being. Grant our congregation St. John grace to find our life refreshed in you. Accompany us in the rhythms of late summer. Give us rest and renewal, and strengthen us for mission in your name. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Please come forward to receive the “body of Christ” by holding out your hands in a cup like fashion as far as you can. The Pastor will drop the wafer into your hand, saying “the body of Christ given for you,” and you respond “Amen,” then go to the left or right and receive the “blood of Christ” from a pre-filled glass. The glasses will be separated so you don’t touch one another. Take the glass and the communion assistant standing in the choir loft will say, “the blood of Christ shed for you.” There will be a separate tray of glasses with grape juice for those who prefer grape juice. Please return to your seat after communing.

P: The Great Thanksgiving and The Words of Institution

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Dismissal

Postlude

Announcements

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Dawn Hauser, Ralph Lehman, Caleb Leone, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Jane Shaffer, Brenda Traxler, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The altar flowers this morning are given to the Glory of God.

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

Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659

Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

“Grab-a-Tab” - The youth of St. John would like to ask for donations of little tabs from beverage, soup and dessert cans. It doesn't matter what color the tab, just grab them and deliver them to the church office. This project will benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Danville. “Grab-a-Tab” program allows people of all ages to join in the effort of providing a “Home-away-from-Home” to children with cancer or other serious illnesses and their families.

Giving Plus+

St. John Lutheran is offering a new way to support the ministries of St. John. Now you can download the “Giving Plus+” app from your app store for your cell phone. This feature is also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card. Now this feature is available. If you have any questions, contact Scott Mitchell.

We also offer Give+ Text:

Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute (example: 25). Within a few minutes, you’ll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

Christian Education

The Christian Education committee will be meeting on Monday, August 17, to plan their respective agendas for the coming year. Christian Education meets at 6:00 p.m. in the office. Anyone wanting to join the committee or participate are welcome to attend. Everyone must wear a mask.

Christmas-at-Sea

Would you like to bring joy to seafarers who will not be home with their families for Christmas? Our port chaplains deliver satchels filled with gifts to the seafarers they meet in port in the weeks prior to Christmas. Later, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, when the ship is in the middle of the ocean, the captain will hold a celebration, and all the crew will open their satchels, each containing:

- One sweatshirt – hooded or unhooded (size L-XL)
- Three pairs of socks – thermal or white gym
- One casual pullover T-shirt (size M-L)
- One can of nuts or bar of chocolate, and
- A Christmas card from you.

We invite you to participate in a memory of Pastor Martha McCracken by purchasing the items needed for a Christmas Seafarer’s bag. Bags are available in the office. Please return by Nov. 5. For many years Pastor McCracken was President of Seafarers Ministry.

Join us for weekly prayer/Holy Communion at Trinity Episcopal Church each Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

Please leave your offering in the offertory plate located at each exit of the church.

Hunger in the Time of COVID-19:
Life for Today and Hope for Tomorrow

[Rick Steves](#), guidebook author and travel TV host; the Rev. [Elizabeth A. Eaton](#), presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and the Rev. [Shelley Bryan Wee](#), bishop of the ELCA Northwest Washington Synod, invite you to an online benefit — the first of its kind — for ELCA World Hunger. **Our goal is to raise \$250,000 to confront hunger in the time of COVID-19.**

When: Thursday, Sept. 24, 8 p.m.

Where: Zoom virtual event

We are in a historic moment, facing a once-in-a-century pandemic and a global change in hunger unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. Domestically and internationally, hunger is increasing at alarming rates. At this event, you will learn about the unique ways ELCA World Hunger is responding. Our hosts will also discuss the ongoing root causes of hunger and poverty addressed in Rick Steves' recent special *Hunger and Hope: Lessons From Ethiopia and Guatemala*. And you will hear from ELCA World Hunger partners on the front lines of the current hunger crisis, who will tell you firsthand how your gifts make a difference.

We are called by God to share hope in this time of challenge. Join us to face this global hunger crisis head-on and to continue moving toward a just world where all are fed.