

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, September 13, 2020
15th Sunday after Pentecost

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

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 *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* (ELW 834)
(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise!

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.

4 Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render; oh, help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!

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: 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.

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

L: A reading from Genesis.

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.

PSALM 103:[1-7] 8-13 read responsively

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.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

L: A reading from Romans.

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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

SERMON

I acknowledge Mr Gary Johnson for today's sermon. It was well written and I asked permission to use it.

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

Let Us Break Bread Together



1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;
2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees.
let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees.



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing



sun, O Lord, have mer - cy on me.



3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;



let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BREAK BREAD TOGETHER, African American spiritual

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through 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.

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

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

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, Jade Cordrey, 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 and in loving memory of our parents, Chuck and Laurel Gottschall

Special Thanks to this week’s helpers: Lectors – Darlene Bilby; Assisting Ministers - Bill Ely and Ken Dougherty; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants-; Head Usher -Betty Allen; Tellers-Kaye Long; Bulletin sponsor -;

Next week’s helpers: Lectors –Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers -Gary Johnson and Karen Aucker; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants -; Head Usher -Betty Allen; Tellers-Kaye Long; Bulletin sponsor -;

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

Catechism to Resume

Pastor Aucker will begin a new Catechism class for all youth 7th grade or older and for second year Catechism classes on the first and third Sunday of the month from 2:00-3:00 p.m. via Zoom. If you have a child entering 7th grade or is older and never completed Catechism please contact Molly at the church office to register and pick up the Catechism materials that are available for the classes in the office.

“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.

Sunday School

Sadly, Sunday School Classes that would normally begin September 13 have been indefinitely postponed due to COVID 19. Weekly Sunday school lessons and activities are being sent home. If your family is not receiving the lessons please email the church office stjohn@stjl.org

Church Services

With the decrease in attendance during the pandemic, Council made the decision to continue with one service in September at 9:00 a.m., so that we may worship together.

Women of the Church

Come join us to find your seat at the greatest table ever! Seated with Christ

Living freely in a culture of comparison: Heather Holleman

September 18th from 5:45 p.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Crossroads Jersey Shore Campus 1454 S State Rt 44 Hwy.

Please call Gloria Ely to register 570-873-3597

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 Pastor Aucker

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.

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.

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, September 24, 8:00 p.m. Where: Zoom virtual event.** <https://community.elca.org/online-registration/sept-24-rick-steves-virtual-hunger-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.

New Neighbors

We have new neighbors behind the Sunday school building and they are asking us not to park along the grass side of the alley during church services. Please help us by letting our fellow members know if you see someone parking along their house. Thank you.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Sunday, September 13, 2020
God's Work, Our Hands Sunday

15th Sunday after Pentecost

We welcome donations of pudding cups for the Backpack Program in the Jersey Shore Schools

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service

7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Monday, September 14, 2020

PB&J Day

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

7:00 p.m. A.A. and N. A. meetings

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

10:00 a.m. Communion/ Prayer at Trinity Episcopal

11:30 a.m. fellowship time at Restless Oaks

Friday, September 18, 2020

5:45 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. *seated with Christ* Crossroads Church

Sunday, September 20, 2020

16th Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service

7:00 p.m. AA meeting

