

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Sunday, September 27, 2020**  
*17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

**Introduction to the day**

*Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy 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 *O Master, Let Me Walk with You* (ELW 818)**

(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 O Master, let me walk with you  
in lowly paths of service true;  
tell me your secret; help me bear  
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

2 Help me the slow of heart to move  
by some clear, winning word of love;  
teach me the wayward feet to stay,  
and guide them in the homeward way.

3 Teach me your patience; share with me  
a closer, dearer company,  
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,  
in trust that triumphs over wrong,

4 In hope that sends a shining ray  
far down the future's broad'ning way,  
in peace that only you can give;  
with you, O Master, let me live.

**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 love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, 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: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

A reading from Ezekiel.

*Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.*

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? <sup>3</sup>As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. <sup>4</sup>Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

<sup>25</sup>Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? <sup>26</sup>When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. <sup>27</sup>Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. <sup>28</sup>Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. <sup>29</sup>Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

<sup>30</sup>Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 25:1-9 read responsively

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD,

I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you be put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>**Show me your ways, O LORD,  
and teach me your paths.**

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

<sup>6</sup>**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,  
for they are from everlasting.**

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup>**You are gracious and upright, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

<sup>9</sup>You lead the lowly in justice  
and teach the lowly your way.

**SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13**

L: A reading from Philippians.

*As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.*

<sup>1</sup>If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
<sup>7</sup>but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
<sup>8</sup>he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

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 21:23-32**

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.*

<sup>23</sup>When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup>But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

<sup>28</sup>"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup>He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go.

<sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

<sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

P: The gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

*Silence for meditation*

**HYMN OF THE DAY *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me* (ELW 623)**  
(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee;  
let the water and the blood,  
from thy riven side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure;  
cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

2 Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfill thy law's demands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;  
thou must save, and thou alone.

3 Nothing in my hand I bring;  
simply to thy cross I cling.  
Naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, look to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly;  
wash me, Savior, or I die.

4 While I draw this fleeting breath,  
when mine eyelids close in death,  
when I soar to worlds unknown,  
see thee on thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee.

**APOSTLES CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **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.*

A: In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged, so that all of creation confesses you as Lord. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions (*especially*), change our minds and teach us to trust your authority. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community (*especially*); make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death. 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.**

## **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink,  
and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,  
through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

### **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **PREFACE by Pastor**

### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of pow'r and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God,

our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,

you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,

and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.

You sent your Son to eat with sinners

and to become food for the world.

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 life given for us and his rising from the grave,  
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.  
By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:  
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,  
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.  
Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church, both now and forever.  
**Amen**

### **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.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Come to the banquet table  
where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

### **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.*

## **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 the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace.**

## **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 give you thanks, gracious God,  
that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ.  
Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard  
to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus  
Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## **SENDING**

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

## **BLESSING**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **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, Cora Pellitier, 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); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; 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 celebration of our 55<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary by Gary and Gina Johnson.

Special Thanks to this week's helpers: Lectors – Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers -; Joyce Braucht and Carl Schaefer Acolyte –; Communion Assistants-; Head Usher -Betty Allen; Tellers-Kaye Long; Bulletin sponsor -;

Next week's helpers: Lectors –; Assisting Ministers -Kathy Brundick; Acolyte –Deb Heydrich and Ron Brundick; 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

### **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. 1. for many years Pastor McCracken was President of Seafarers Ministry.

**Catechism to Resume** - Pastor Aucker will begin a new Catechism class for all youth 7<sup>th</sup> 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. Starting October 4 & 18. If you have a child entering 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Pro Life March** on the Golden Strip in Williamsport  
Sunday, October 4, 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Anyone interested in joining those who are planning to attend please call Joyce Braucht 570.398.2852 to for more information.  
Thank you.

**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.

## ***THIS WEEK'S EVENTS***

Sunday, September 27, 2020 *17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*  
9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service  
7:00 p.m. AA meeting  
Monday, September 28, 2020  
6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts  
Tuesday, September 29, 2020  
7:00 p.m. A.A. and N. A. meetings  
Wednesday, September 30, 2020  
10:00 a.m. Communion/ Prayer at Trinity Episcopal  
Thursday, October 1, 2020  
Sunday, October 4, 2020 *18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*  
9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service  
2:00 p.m. Catechism  
7:00 p.m. AA meeting