



*"... for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."
~Romans 13:8b*

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
15th Sunday after Pentecost – September 10, 2023
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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning! You are welcome here as you are. If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. Please join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**. Throughout the service, you may stand or sit as is comfortable for you. At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. Visitor information cards and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all are welcome to receive the elements. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to receive a blessing.*

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

As we prepare ourselves for worship, you are invited to help prepare our space for worship. Help to gather items together and prepare for our service activity.

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

May the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, be with you all.

And also with you.

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you that you have made us your own by water and the Word in baptism. You have called us to yourself, enlightened us with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished us in the community of faith. Uphold us in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth. We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church. Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God? **We renounce them.**

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God? **We renounce them.**

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God? **We renounce them.**

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

You have made profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

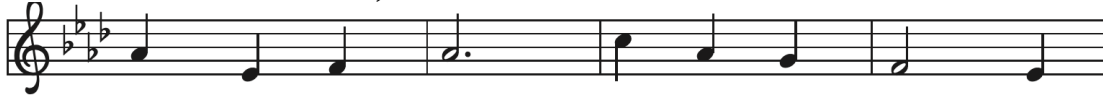
to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

We do, and We ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, and the spirit of joy in your presence. Grant that we may use them to bear witness to Christ in lives that are built on faith and love. Make us ready to live the gospel and eager to do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

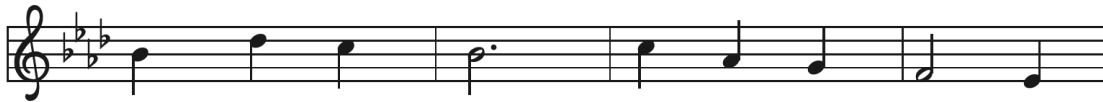
GATHERING SONG *God's Work, Our Hands*



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
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shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 13:8-10

A reading from Romans.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

PSALM: Psalm 119:33-40

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,
and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for that is my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to your decrees
and not to unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood;
give me life in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise to your servant,
which is for those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach that I dread,
because your judgments are good.

⁴⁰**Behold, I long for your commandments;
by your righteousness enliven me.**

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 18:15-20

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Trusting in God’s abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

A brief silence for reflection

Hold us accountable, O God. Show your church where repentance is needed and lead us in paths of intentional compassion and listening. Help us extend hands of reconciliation and care. Inspire us to lead with honor. Move us to treat all people with dignity and guide our conversations with one another. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Help us comfort those who suffer, O God. Reassure any who are harmed by the wicked acts of others. Bring peace to all who are vulnerable, frightened, despairing, or sick especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Roy, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Debi, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts (*prayers may be offered aloud or silently*). We remember with thanksgiving your disciples who died in faith. May their trust in your promise be our protection and hope. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Awaken us, O God. Encourage your people to value the vocation to which each is called. Move us to cherish you as we behold the wonders of creation. Turn us to ways of living that seek Earth’s thriving. We pray for all discerning new possibilities or changing employment. In all our diverse callings, teach us to love our neighbor above all else. 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.

Amen.

REFLECTION

OFFERING and PREPARATION OF SERVICE

OFFERTORY HYMN *Listen, God is Calling* (ELW 513)

Refrain
Leader All



Ne - no, ne - no la - ke Mu - ngu la - ku - i - ta we - we,
Lis - ten, lis - ten, God is call - ing, through the Word in - vit - ing,



ne - no la wo - ko - vu, te - na je - ma. ma.
of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort, and joy. joy.

Leader All



Ye - su a - li - se - ma, Mka - hu - bi - ri.
1 Je - sus gave his man - date: share the good news
2 Let none be for - got - ten through - out the world.
3 Help us to be faith - ful, stand - ing stead - fast,

Leader All *Refrain*



Ne - no la - ke Mu - ngu la wo - ko - vu.
that he came to save us and set us free.
In the tri - une name of God go and bap - tize.
walk - ing in your pre - cepts, led by your Word.

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you,

O Lord our God, maker of all things.

Through your goodness you have blessed us and called us your own.

In your grace, we offer ourselves to your service

and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made,

for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

INVITATION TO SERVICE

“But be doers of the word and not merely hearers.” *James 1:22a*

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

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.
Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray.

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

Taste and see that the Lord is good!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Those who do not receive the elements of bread and wine are invited to receive a blessing.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request.

Communion will be administered to people where they are.

COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God*

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN *Where Charity and Love Prevail* (ELW 359)



1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found;
2 With grate-ful joy and ho - ly fear, God's char - i - ty we learn;
3 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells Christ, God's ho - ly Son;
4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; let all con - ten - tions cease.
5 Let us for - give each oth - er's faults as we our own con - fess,



brought here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in re - turn.
as mem - bers of each bod - y joined, in him we are made one.
Be God's the glo - ry that we seek; be his our on - ly peace.
that we may love each oth - er well in Chris - tian gen - tle - ness.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of the abundant table, you have refreshed our hearts in this meal.

Give us your grace that we might serve our neighbors with joy;
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SPACE AND LEADERS

BENEDICTION

God, who gives life to all things
and frees us from despair,
bless you with truth and peace.

And may the holy Trinity, † one God,
guide you always in faith, hope, and love.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* (ELW 836)



- 1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
- 2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
- 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

DISMISSAL

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord say, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’

And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’”

Isaiah 6:8

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

As you leave, you are invited to help move the school kits to the door by the parking lot as we prepare to send them to those in need.

Today's altar flowers are in dedication to the glory of God by Dave and Cindy Knauff

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister:

Acolyte: Nathan K

Usher:

Greeters: Kim R

Offering: Ava N and Ella N

Notes for the day's texts:

In Romans, Paul chooses to address the community with hope. Paul highlights love and law as the main principles of being in a Christian community. Though we acknowledge that God's commandments are hard to follow and we will fail at times, we know that this is not the end, because Christ gives us chance after chance. When we lead by love, we fulfill the law and act in accordance with Scripture. When you learn how to love, your anger subsides, the walls of division dissipate, and you see as Christ does in the Gospel reading. In the Gospel reading Jesus offers to mend our broken relationships. He understands that splintered relationships are inevitable, part of our broken humanity. He looks at his own disciples and how they too share this struggle. Jesus normalizes it and then offers ways to resolve conflict. Anger, malice and disagreement should not be stewed upon but instead confronted privately with the one who has angered you. Jesus urges us to go to one another, seek resolution and, if that is not feasible, ask someone else to assist in this, because sometimes we can't do it by ourselves. We live in a world that is broken, fractured and divided, yet in living in such a space, we are called to embrace the harsh world and to care for one another. Love prevails, and Christ lives in us, offering unyielding love, no matter what we are, what we do or who we are. There are no hoops to jump through or concessions we have to give. Christ looks at every one of us, calls us by name and loves us when we can't love ourselves or one another. Christ lays out a blueprint for the church, a church that is accessible to all, built on unyielding and immovable love.

Today's Music

God's Work, Our Hands. Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954, Music: David N. Johnson, 1922–1987. Augsburg Fortress.

Listen, God is Calling. Text: Tanzanian traditional; tr. Howard S. Olson, b. 1922, Music: Tanzanian tune; arr. Austin C. Lovelace, b. 1919. Public Domain / Augsburg Fortress.

Where Charity and Love Prevail. Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt., Music: attr. Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842. World Library Publications, a division of GIA Publications, Inc. / Public Domain.

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee. Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852-1933, Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827, adapt. Public Domain. Liturgy words and music taken from SundaysandSeasons.com Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

Next Week's Readings

Genesis 50:15-21 *Joseph reconciles with his brothers*

Psalms 103:1-13 *Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy*

Romans 14:1-12 *Accepting diversity in the community of faith*

Matthew 18:21-35 *A parable of forgiveness in the community of faith*