



*“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.”*  
~Luke 16:10

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – September 21, 2025**

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Mars, PA 16046-0411

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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!  
Know that you are welcome here just 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 worshiping at St. John, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.*

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an \* and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**. All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.*

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:*



*You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. **Visitor information cards** and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. 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 come forward for 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.*

*A **playroom** is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service.*

*This room is by the elevator on the lower level. An adult must remain with the child.*

*Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.*

*You are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew as desired. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.*

## **PRELUDE**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*As we prepare our hearts and minds for worship, you are invited to offer a prayer for God to lead, guide, nourish, and use you in worship this morning. You can use these or other words:*

***“Lord, I come to honor you in worship today. I ask that all the things of this week that can crowd you out of my heart be set aside by the power of your Holy Spirit. Open my heart and mind to meet you and receive you today. Amen.”***

## **SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION**

### **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

### **\*GREETING**

Followers of Christ, believe this – God loved the world, God loves the world, God loves you!

May the truth of this great love story shine through our worship today,  
and renew our sense of calling.

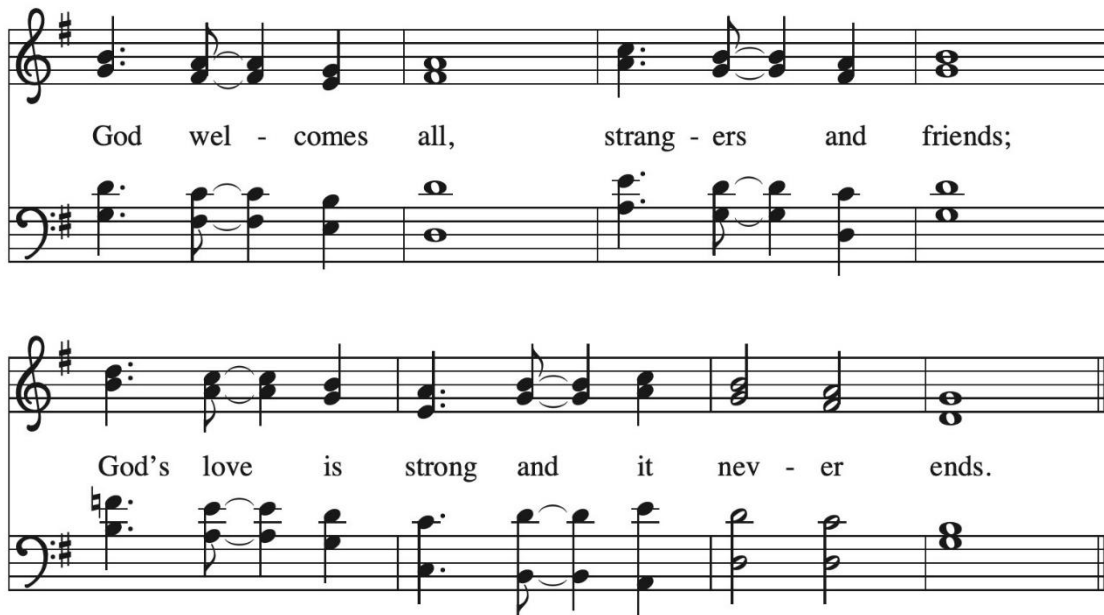
So come, with your tiredness, your frustrations and your discouragements;  
come with your doubts, your fears, and your longings;  
come, to discover yet again how Jesus reveals God’s love and mercy for us.

Come, in love for God, for each other, and for the world,  
to listen for God’s Word to us, to offer our prayers, and to renew our calling.

Followers of Christ

May 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.**  
Let us worship!

**\*GATHERING HYMN *God Welcomes All* (ACS 978) (no accompaniment)**



God wel - comes all, strang - ers and friends;  
God's love is strong and it nev - er ends.

**\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, our maker, our helper, and our keeper. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. But first, let us consider: Where have we gone wrong this week? How have we harmed our relationship with God, with our neighbor, and with ourselves? (*a brief silence for reflection*)

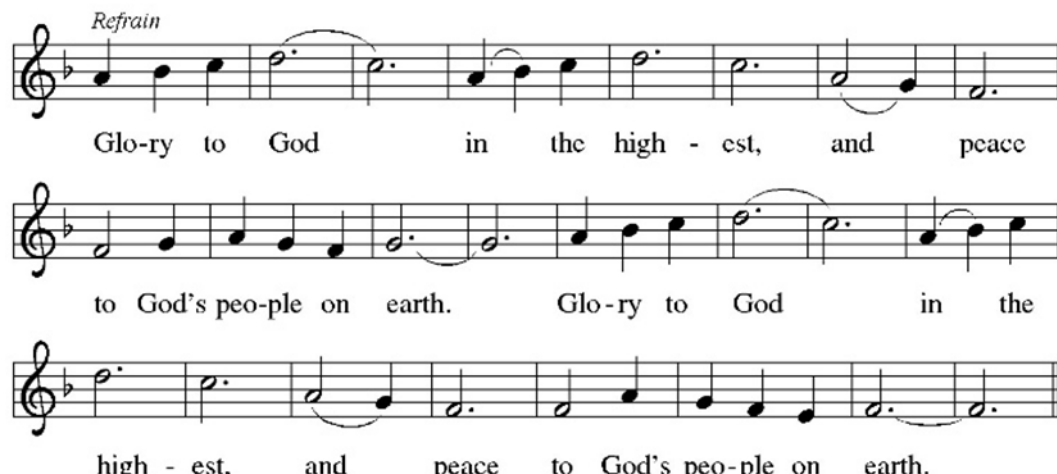
Let us pray: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

Merciful and loving God,  
**we are your stiff-necked people. We trample on the needy.**  
**We grumble about your grace to others. We turn away from the poor.**  
**Have mercy on us and forgive our sins. Rejoice over us as ones who were lost**  
**and have been found. Amen.**

Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. You who were lost have been found. In the name of ✠ Jesus, your sins are forgiven!  
**Amen.**

**\*CANTICLE OF PRAISE *Glory to God***

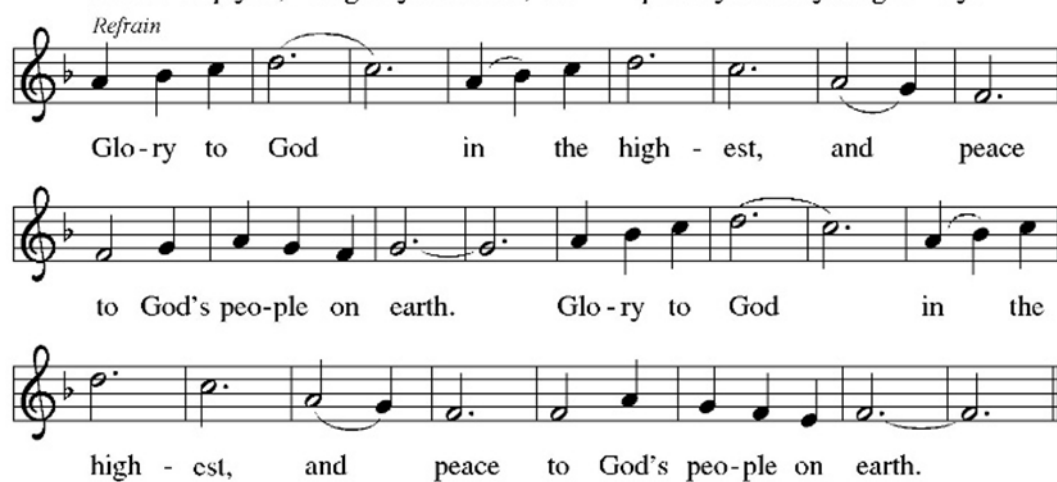
*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace  
to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the  
high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

1 Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa-ther,  
we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace  
to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the  
high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right



hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo - ple on earth. Glo - ry to God in the



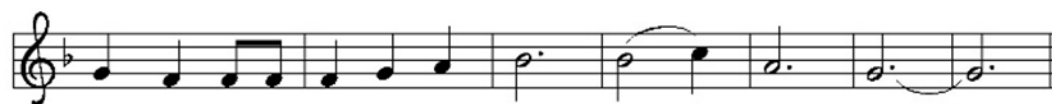
high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a -



lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly



Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est.



A - men, a - men.

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**  
**Amen.**

## **WORD**

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

### **FIRST READING: Amos 8:4-7**

**A reading from Amos.**

<sup>4</sup> Hear this, you who trample on the needy,  
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,  
<sup>5</sup> saying, “When will the new moon be over  
so that we may sell grain,  
and the Sabbath,  
so that we may offer wheat for sale?  
We will make the ephah smaller and the shekel heavier  
and practice deceit with false balances,  
<sup>6</sup> buying the poor for silver  
and the needy for a pair of sandals  
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”

<sup>7</sup> The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:  
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 113

*The psalm is read responsively. The leader will read the light printed verses.  
The congregation will read the bolded verses.*

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants of the LORD;  
praise the name of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> **Let the name of the LORD be blessed,  
from this time forth forevermore.**

<sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its going down  
let the name of the LORD be praised.

<sup>4</sup> **The LORD is high above all nations;  
God's glory above the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup> Who is like the LORD our God,  
who sits enthroned on high,

<sup>6</sup> **but stoops to behold  
the heavens and the earth?**

<sup>7</sup> The LORD takes up the weak out of the dust  
and lifts up the poor from the ashes,

<sup>8</sup> **enthroning them with the rulers,  
with the rulers of the people.**

<sup>9</sup> The LORD makes the woman of a childless house  
to be a joyful mother of children. Hallelujah!

## SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

A reading from 1 Timothy.

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is right and acceptable before God our Savior,

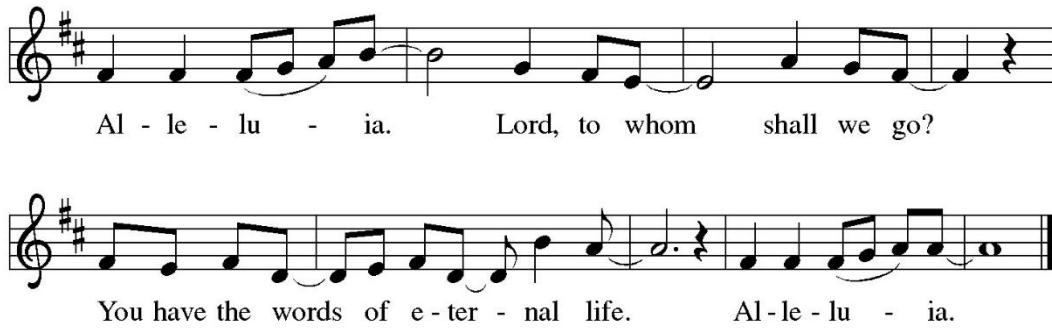
<sup>4</sup> who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human,

<sup>6</sup> who gave himself a ransom for all —this was attested at the right time. <sup>7</sup> For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## \*GOSPEL READING LUKE 16:1-13

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. <sup>2</sup> So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ <sup>3</sup> Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup> I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ <sup>5</sup> So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ <sup>6</sup> He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ <sup>7</sup> Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ <sup>8</sup> And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. <sup>9</sup> And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

<sup>10</sup> “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. <sup>11</sup> If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup> No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## CHILDREN’S SERMON SERMON

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY *Let Justice Flow like Streams* (ELW 717)**

*(Blue prayer cards are collected)*



1 Let jus - tice flow like streams of spar-ling wa - ter, pure,  
2 Let righ - teous - ness roll on as oth - ers' cares we heed,  
3 So may God's plumb line, straight, de - fine our mea - sure true,



en - a - bling growth, re - fresh - ing life, a - bun - dant, cleans-ing, sure.  
an ev - er - flow - ing stream of faith trans-lat - ed in - to deed.  
and jus - tice, right, and peace per-vade this world our whole life through.

**\*APOSTLES' CREED**

Let us confess our faith using the words of the 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**

Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

O God, teach your church to act in solidarity with the poor, frustrating the efforts of those who trample on the needy and practicing justice in our own life and community. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Almighty Creator, we pray for an end to the misuse of the earth and its resources, that all people may benefit from your abundant gifts and that our stewardship of creation would be marked by justice and sustainability. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Holy One, embolden elected leaders to pursue policies of economic justice for the benefit of all, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. Persuade them by your example of generosity and compassion. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Compassionate God, we pray for all facing illness, those near death, or those grieving the loss of loved ones especially Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts and all who suffer in any way. May they find comfort and strength in your love. Prepare us to surround them with your healing care. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

God of love, motivate our congregation to enact economic justice through tangible action, prioritizing the needs of our community and sharing resources generously through our outreach and justice ministries. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Gracious God, we give thanks for the saints who now join the heavenly chorus in praising your name. Lift us up from the dust of grief and remind us of your promise of new life. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.  
**Amen.**

## **\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

*You are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace as we prepare to receive God's grace in communion. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcome to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.).*

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

### COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING

*You are invited to support the ministries of this congregation through gifts and prayers at this time. Ongoing prayer requests, connection cards, communion records, and financial gifts are collected in the plates as we remember that we offer all of ourselves to God.*

### OFFERTORY HYMN *We Are an Offering* (ELW 692) (sing 3 times through)

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an  
of-fer-ing. Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our  
lives, they are yours: we are an of-fer-ing. All that we have, all that we are,  
all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.  
We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you:  
we are an of-fer-ing, we are an of-fer-ing.

### \*OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## \*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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who on this day overcame death and the grave,  
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow - er and might,  
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

O God most mighty, O God most merciful, O God our rock and our salvation,  
hear us as we praise, call us to your table, grant us your life.

When the earth was a formless void, you formed order and beauty.  
When Abraham and Sarah were barren, you sent them a child;  
When the Israelites were enslaved, you led them to freedom.  
Ruth faced starvation, David fought Goliath, and the psalmists cried out for healing,  
and full of compassion, you granted the people your life.

You entered our sorrows in Jesus our brother.  
He was born among the poor, he lived under oppression, he wept over the city.  
With infinite love, he granted the people your life.

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 his death, we cry out Amen. **Amen.**  
Celebrating his resurrection, we shout Amen. **Amen.**  
Trusting his presence in every time and place, we plead Amen. **Amen.**

O God, you are Breath: send your Spirit on this meal.  
O God, you are Bread: feed us with yourself.  
O God, you are Wine: warm our hearts and make us one.  
O God, you are Fire: transform us with hope.

O God most majestic, O God most motherly, O God our strength and our song,  
you show us a vision of a tree of life with fruits for all and leaves that heal the nations.  
Grant us such life, the life of the Father to the Son, the life of the Spirit of our risen Savior,  
life in you, now and forever.  
**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

You are invited to come to the table of grace; receive the gift of new life.

We come to this table not because we must but because we may,  
not because we are strong, but because we are weak.

We come, not because any goodness of our own gives us a right to come,  
but because we need mercy and help.

We come, because we love the Lord and would like to love him more.

We come, because he loved us and gave himself for us.

We come and meet the risen Christ together.

Come and taste the truth of God's love, for God's love is for you!

**Thanks be to God!**

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

*Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.*

## 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 *We Give Thee but Thine Own* (ELW 686)



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;  
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,  
3 The cap - tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,  
4 And we be - lieve thy word, though dim our faith may be:



all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.  
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.  
to teach the way of life and peace—it is a Christ - like thing.  
what - e'er we do for thine, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

## COMMUNION HYMN *This Is Christ's Body* (ACS 967)



This is Christ's bod - y, bro - ken and blest. Feed us with



mer - cy and love. We are Christ's bod - y,



bro - ken and blest. Heal us and make us one.

### \*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in grace.  
**Amen**

### \*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants.

Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

## SENDING

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

### \*BLESSING

The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, ☩ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

### \*SENDING SONG *Rise Up, O Saints of God* (ELW 669)



- 1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;
- 2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulfs earth's frame;
- 3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;
- 4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;
- 5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;



Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.  
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.  
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se - quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.  
stretch forth your hand of heal - ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.  
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

### \*SENDING PRAYER

Holy One, we thank you for all that you have given us. We thank you for the relationships with which you have blessed us, the guidance you have given us in your word, and the support, healing, and love you have fed us with at your table. Take away our sin and carry us into the week with the new beginning we have in your promised forgiveness. Lead us this week to be your hands, your feet, and your voice in the world. **Amen.**

### \*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.**

**The flowers on the altar today were supplied by Cindy and Dave Knauff in gratitude for beautiful September days.**

**Assisting in worship today:**

**Assisting Minister: Valerie C**

**Acolyte: Carissa M**

**Young Reader: Carissa M**

**Offering: Ella N and Abby C**

**Greeters:**

**Attendance from last week: 64 +3 zoom**

### **Notes for the day's texts:**

How could Jesus tell a story where the main character is a crook? Why did the boss commend the bad manager? What is Jesus trying to tell us? This parable can be difficult for us to interpret. One possibility: Dr. Audrey West, in the 2004 Lutheran Woman Today Bible study, described a parable as a story about something ordinary, with a surprise or twist that leads us to experience reality in a new way, so that it may even transform our daily living. The surprise in this parable is not the manager's self-serving behavior, as we've seen for ourselves in some corporate accounting scandals in the news. The surprise is the boss showing mercy.

Does this boss remind you of someone? Maybe the landowner in another parable who pays a full day's wage to farm workers who spent barely one hour in the vineyard? The father running out to welcome a shamed and destitute, long-lost son? Or someone who's been in the news lately? Is there any way that he reminds you of God?

In God's economy, people matter more than profits. The prophet (first reading), the psalmist, and Jesus, telling the parable, agree on this. The epistle writer adds a prayer for "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity" for everyone, boss and beggar alike.

### **Today's Music**

*God Welcomes All.* Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949, Music: South African traditional; transc. and arr. John L. Bell. GIA Publications, Inc.

*Let Justice Flow like Streams.* Text: Jane Parker Huber, b. 1926, Music: Aaron Williams, 1731-1776. Westminster/John Knox Press /Public Domain.

*We Are an Offering.* Text: Dwight Liles, b. 1957, Music: Dwight Liles. Word Music Group, Inc.

*We Give Thee but Thine Own.* Text: William W. How, 1823-1897, alt., Music: L. Mason and G. Webb, Cantic Lauda, 1850. Public Domain.

*This Is Christ's Body.* Text: Anne Krentz Organ, b. 1960, Music: Anne Krentz Organ. Augsburg Fortress.

*Rise Up, O Saints of God.* Text: Norman O. Forness, 1936-2009, Music: William H. Walter, 1825-1893. Dr. Norman O. Forness, admin./ Public Domain

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### **Next Week's Readings**

*Amos 6:1a, 4-7 Warnings to those who are comfortable or wealthy*

*Psalms 146 The Lord gives justice to those who are oppressed*

*1 Timothy 6:6-19 Eager to be rich or eager to pursue the richness of God's justice?*

*Luke 16:19-31 Story of poor Lazarus and the wealthy man*