



“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

~Matthew 16:24-25

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
14th Sunday after Pentecost – August 30, 2026**

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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 worshipping 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. **Guest 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.

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

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

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose compassion endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin to God. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate God, **we confess to you all our sins.**

Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves.

In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light.

Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

We hear a word of forgiveness

***GATHERING HYMN *Dearest Jesus, at Your Word* (ELW 520)**



1 Dear - est Je - sus, at your word we have come a -
 2 All our knowl - edge, sense, and sight lie in deep - est
 3 Ra - diance of God's glo - ry bright, Light of Light from
 4 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, praise to you and



gain to hear you; let our thoughts and hearts be stirred
 dark - ness shroud - ed till your Spir - it breaks the night,
 God pro - ceed - ing, Je - sus, send your bless - ed light;
 ad - o - ra - tion! Grant us what we need the most:



and in glow - ing faith be near you as the prom - is -
 fill - ing us with light un - cloud - ed. All good thoughts and
 help our hear - ing, speak - ing, heed - ing, that our prayers and
 all your gos - pel's con - so - la - tion while we here on



es here giv - en draw us whol - ly up to heav - en.
 all good liv - ing come but by your gra - cious giv - ing.
 songs may please you, as with grate - ful hearts we praise you.
 earth a - wait you, till in heav'n with praise we greet you.

***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.

*CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, 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

Refrain



for your glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high-



est, 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.

(continued)

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, 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.
 A - men. A - men. A - men.

Final refrain

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

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Exodus 3:1-15

Moses experienced the call of God when God appeared to him in a bush that burned but was not consumed. When Moses expressed his unworthiness, God promised to be with him. When Moses objected that people would demand to know God's name, God revealed his personal name, Yahweh (I AM WHO I AM), or the LORD. Israel discovered God's true identity when God took them out of Egypt.

A reading from Exodus.

¹ Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up." ⁴ When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² He said, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

¹³ But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you':

This is my name forever,
and this my title for all generations."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b

- ¹ Give thanks to the LORD and call upon God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the peoples.
- ² **Sing to the LORD, sing praises, and speak of all God's marvelous works.**
- ³ Glory in God's holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
- ⁴ **Search for the strength of the LORD; continually seek God's face.**
- ⁵ Remember the marvels God has done, the wonders and the judgments of God's mouth,
- ⁶ **O offspring of Abraham, God's servant, O children of Jacob, God's chosen ones.**
- ²³ Israel came into Egypt, and Jacob became a sojourner in the land of Ham.
- ²⁴ **The LORD made the people of Israel very fruitful, more numerous than their enemies,**
- ²⁵ whose hearts God turned, so that they hated God's people, and dealt unjustly with the servants of God.
- ²⁶ **O LORD, you sent Moses your servant, and Aaron, your chosen one.** ^{45b} Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: ROMANS 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

A reading from Romans.

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."

²⁰ Instead, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



*GOSPEL READING: Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷ “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY *Spirit, Open My Heart* (ACS 1043)**

(Blue prayer cards are collected)

Refrain



Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of
 liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing
 and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.

1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's
 2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my
 3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of

kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and
 goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and
 friend and neigh - bor. As I live from day to

Refrain

fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.
 deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.
 day, love will be my fin - est la - bor.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

Let us confess our faith in 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**

With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

For the church in every land, that its mission and ministry is anchored in the love of Christ. When threats or challenges arise, teach us to take up our cross and follow you in faith. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the well-being of your creation, that all that lives and grows on the earth may thrive. Bring relief to areas ravaged by droughts, floods, fires, storms, and other disasters. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the nations and all in authority, that they seek to live in peace with one another. Bless the work of international and diplomatic organizations and all who work to bring peace to a world scarred by violence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For all those in need, that they be satisfied. Ensure all your children have safe access to food, water, shelter, and medical care. Bring healing to all who bear wounds in body, mind, or spirit especially Geneva, Cherry, Henry, Harry, Sally, Debi, Karen, Nan, Beverly, Reed those on our prayer list, all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts and all who suffer in any way. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the congregation gathered here to serve you, that they remain strong in faith and united in purpose. Guide our committees, study groups, and other meetings toward honesty and humility, always seeking genuine love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the faithful departed, that their witness continues to strengthen and guide the church. Renew our hope in your promises in this life and the life to come. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Renewing God, you hear our every prayer, spoken and unspoken, those we can verbalize and those we do not yet have the words to name. We lift the prayers of the people gathered in this space, (*blue prayer cards are offered*), and those we quietly entrust to you from the silence of our hearts. We commend our prayers to you, O God, through Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

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 welcome to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING

You are invited to share a gift to support the ministries of this congregation during the following song. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Ongoing prayer requests, connection cards, and communion records are also collected in the offering plates.

OFFERTORY HYMN *Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song* (ELW 808)



1 *Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te;*
1 Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney;
2 Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.
3 As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant,
4 I fear in the dark and the doubt of my jour - ney;



Jé - sus, je vou - drais t'an-non-cer à mes voi - sins par - tout,
I'll tell ev - 'ry - bod - y a - bout you wher - ev - er I go:
May all of my joy be a faith - ful re - flec - tion of you.
to car - ry your cross and to share all your bur - dens and tears.
but cour - age will come with the sound of your steps by my side.



car toi seul es la vie et la paix et l'a - mour:
you a - lone are our life and our peace and our love.
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.
For you saved me by giv - ing your bod - y and blood.
And with all of the fam - 'ly you saved by your love,



Jé - sus, je vou - drais te chan - ter sur ma rou - te.
Lord Je - sus, you shall be my song as I jour - ney.
Lord Je - sus, I'll praise you as long as I jour - ney.
As long as I live, Je - sus, make me your ser - vant.
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our jour - ney.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts.
Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love,
so that all creation can taste your abundance.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. **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, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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 death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, 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

Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

Taste and see that the Lord is good. This meal 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, Lamb of God.

COMMUNION HYMN *Will You Come and Follow Me* (ELW 798)



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call



your name? Will you go where you don't
 your name? Will you care for cruel and
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners
 your name? Will you quell the fear in -
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low



know and nev - er be the same?
 kind and nev - er be the same?
 free and nev - er be the same?
 side and nev - er be the same?
 you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as -
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and



name be known, will you let my life be
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



grown in you and you in me?"
 pray'r in you and you in me?"
 mean in you and you in me?"
 sound in you and you in me?"
 grow in you and you in me.

COMMUNION HYMN *Bind Us Together* (WOV 748)

refrain

**Bind us together, Lord
Bind us together
With cords that cannot be broken
Bind us together, Lord
Bind us together
Bind us together in Love**

Verse 1

**There is only one God,
There is only one King
There is only one Body,
That is why we sing. (*refrain*)**

Verse 2

**We are the family of God
We are the promise divine
We are God's chosen desire
We are the glorious new wine. (*refrain*)**

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

***BLESSING**

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always.
Amen.

***SENDING SONG** *Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen* (ELW 548)



1 Rise, O church, like Christ a - ris - en,
 2 Rise, trans - formed, and choose to fol - low
 3 Rise, re - mem - ber well the fu - ture
 4 Ser - vice be our sure vo - ca - tion;



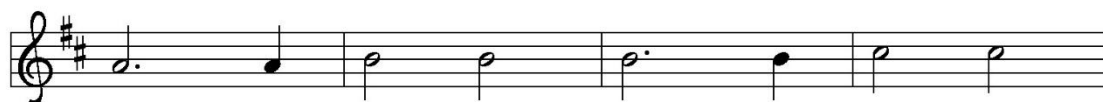
from this meal of love and grace;
 af - ter Christ, though wound - ed, whole;
 God has called us to re - ceive;
 cour - age be our dai - ly breath;



may we through such love en - vi - sion
 bro - ken, shared, our lives are hal - lowed
 pres - ent by God's lov - ing nur - ture,
 mer - cy be our des - ti - na - tion



whose we are, and whose, our praise.
 to re - lease and to con - sole.
 Spir - it - ed and then let us live.
 from this day and un - to death.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia;
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia;
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia;
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



God, the won - der of our days.
 Christ, our pres - ent, past, and goal.
 Spir - it, grace by whom we live.
 Rise, O church, a liv - ing faith.

DISMISSAL

Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!
 Thanks be to God.

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Denise H

Acolyte: Volunteer

Offering: Volunteers

Notes for the day's texts:

Peter may be the “rock” on which Christ will build the church (Matt. 16:18), but when Jesus reveals the suffering that will come first, Peter becomes a tempter and stumbling block. Assuming God must have a different way to save the world, Peter protests Jesus’ suffering and death. Jesus explains to Peter and all his disciples that, in fact, this is the way to life—losing one’s life in order to find it.

By tempting Jesus to an easier way than his journey through suffering to resurrection, Peter personifies a temptation common to all generations of Jesus’ disciples: seeking a way to avoid “losing oneself” instead of surrendering all to and with the one we follow. Rather than losing our lives—our selves, possessions, and time—we hold on more tightly, afraid of what will happen to our comfort, success, and identity if we let go. Those things we hold onto then become, like Peter, stumbling blocks along the way of self-giving love.

But while “saving one’s life” sounds sensible, those things also stand in the way of the new life into which Jesus beckons us to follow him. Perhaps Peter’s problem is that he sees only the suffering and death, without grasping the new life that comes through it. In times when we too are tempted by worldly ways of comfort and success, convinced that *surely* God must have an easier way than the way of self-giving love, this gospel reminds us that resurrection and life await on the other side of suffering and death.

This is the way of our God who becomes human in Jesus: emptying himself of power and dignity, losing his very own life for the sake of the world’s life. Seen through the lens of resurrection just ahead on the journey, what other way could there be?

Today’s Music

Dearest Jesus, at Your Word. Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619–1684, sts. 1–3; Gesangbuch, Berlin, 1707, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, adapt., Music: Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673. Public Domain.

Spirit, Open My Heart. Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947, Music: Irish melody; adapt. Alfred V. Fedak, b. 1953. Pilgrim Press/United Church Press.

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Next Week’s Readings

Exodus 12:1-14 *The passover of the Lord*

Psalms 149 *Sing the Lord’s praise in the assembly of the faithful. (Ps. 149:1)*

Romans 13:8-14 *Live honorably as in the day*

Matthew 18:15-20 *Reconciliation in the community of faith*