



“If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live....”

Deuteronomy 30:16a

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
13th Sunday after Pentecost – September 7, 2025
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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today is God's Work Our Hands Sunday in the ELCA. Typically the Sunday after Labor Day, "this day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace, In observance of this national practice, we will use an act of service as part of our worship as we prepare blessing bags to be offered to local first responders to keep in their cars and cards thanking them for their service. During worship, you may stand or sit however you are comfortable. We begin our worship by remembering and affirming our identity as baptized children of God.

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

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:

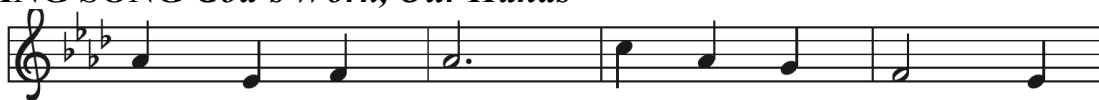
to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

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.**

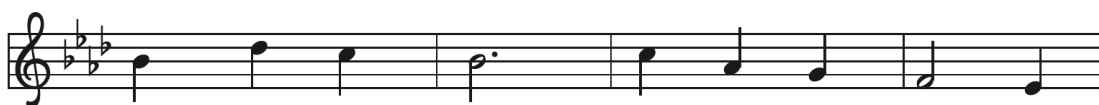
GATHERING SONG *God's Work, Our Hands*



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.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

A reading from Deuteronomy.

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

GOSPEL READING: Luke 14:25-33

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus], and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Trusting God at work in and among us, we raise our hearts and voices in prayer for the needs of the world.

For your work in the church, we give thanks. Plant and tend relationships among faith communities, both ecumenical and interfaith, that in faithful listening, speech, and action, our hands work to bear fruit for the sake of all in need. God of grace, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in creation, we give thanks. Sustain peoples and places affected by climate change, ecological devastation and natural disasters. Prosper the work of creation-care ministries locally and globally, that with our minds and hearts opened, our hands work to lovingly care for the earth. God of life, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work among the nations, we give thanks. Direct leaders in paths of honest service, that both their words and actions are carried out on behalf of those whom they serve. God of righteousness, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in places of need, we give thanks. Sustain all who are wearied by unemployment or lack of adequate food or housing, that we advocate for relief and just policy. Bring healing to all who are sick through the skillful hands and compassionate hearts of physicians, nurses, therapists and caregivers. We pray especially for Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts (*a pause for named prayers*), God of restoration, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in our neighborhoods, towns and cities, we give thanks. Guide our common life together so that children, youth and adults of all ages flourish. Teach us to listen attentively to our neighbors, that any new endeavors consider those who may be left out or underserved. God of wisdom, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in this worshiping community, we give thanks. Bless the service done on this day and throughout the year. Foster deeper connections among those who serve and a spirit of accompaniment as we work alongside those in our community. Strengthen our faith, that we trust God moving in and among us. God of love, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work among those who came before us, we give thanks. We remember those who have died and are held forever in your loving hands. Hold us in your presence now and always. God of heaven and earth, **hear us when we call.**

Receive these and all our prayers, gracious God. We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

REFLECTION

OFFERING and PREPARATION OF SERVICE

We are called to proclaim the good news:

God is at work!

This good news is not left in some history long ago or a place far away:

God is at work in the world still today!

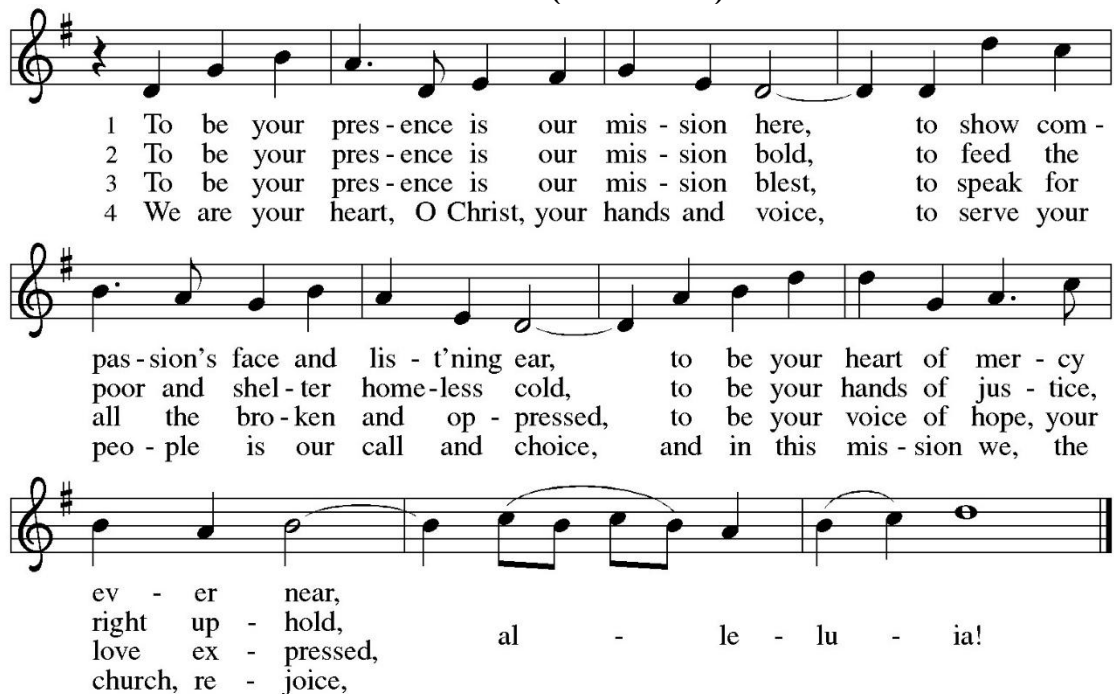
In us and through us, God is glorified in our work. When we offer a helping hand, God is praised. When we share of our abundance, God is known in the world.

God is at work in us!

In our service today and in our daily lives, let us live out what God has called us to in baptism.

God is at work through our hands!

OFFERTORY HYMN *To Be Your Presence* (ELW 546) *rise on verse 4*



1 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion here, to show com -
2 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion bold, to feed the
3 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion blest, to speak for
4 We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve your

pas - sion's face and lis - t'ning ear, to be your heart of mer - cy
poor and shel - ter home - less cold, to be your hands of jus - tice,
all the bro - ken and op - pressed, to be your voice of hope, your
peo - ple is our call and choice, and in this mis - sion we, the

ev - er near,
right up - hold,
love ex - pressed, al - le - lu - ia!
church, re - joice,

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and 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.**

Honor, praise, glory and thanksgiving to you, God, our loving Creator.

In the beginning you reached your hands into the earth and formed humanity in your own image. You breathed into us your own breath of love and gave us hearts and hands and voices to live your loving purpose in the world.

Throughout the history of your people, you never abandoned us, but brought us into community with one another and with you, and guided us through your prophets. With endless patience and love, you called to us time and again to return to life with you.

In the fulfillment of all things, you came to us in Jesus, born into a human family, raised in a hometown, who gathered around himself a community formed by your love, and yearned to gather all people under the loving wings of a mother hen.

Sitting at dinner with friends and knowing one among them would break the bonds of love, 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.

In the same way 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 sins. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Trusting in his promise to be among us whenever we gather in his name, we proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Send your Spirit upon this meal, the body and blood of Jesus, that we overflow with your selfless love. Turn us to face our neighbors, that by us and through us your love may be known in the world.

All honor and praise and glory to you, God of creative, dirty hands, God of holy, wounded hands, God who strengthens and guides our hands, 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

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 SONG *Lamb of God*

Cor - de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

ten pie-dad de no - so-tros, ten pie-dad de no - so-tros.
have . . mer-cy up - on us, have . . mer-cy up - on us.

Cor-de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

ten pie-dad de no - so-tros, ten pie-dad de no - so-tros.
have . . mer-cy up - on us, have . . mer-cy up - on us.

Cor-de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

da - nos tu paz, da - nos tu paz.
grant us your peace, grant us your peace.

COMMUNION HYMN *United at the Table* (ELW 498)

Refrain / Estribillo

U - ni - dos en la fies - ta, la_a - le - grí - a
U - nit - ed at the ta - ble: all our joy is

se ha - ce can - ción. U - ni - dos en la fe,
joined in song. U - nit - ed in the faith:

la_a - le - grí - a se ha - ce_o - ra - ción.
all our joy to God be - longs.

1 Can - ta - re - mos al Se - ñor
1 We will praise God, we will sing
2 We will praise God, we will feast
3 We will praise God, we will play

a - le - lu - yas con him - nos y sal - mos,
al - le - lu - ias with hymns and with psalm - o - dy;
at the boun - ti - ful ta - ble of life and grace;
al - le - lu - ias with rhy - thm and in - stru - ments;

por - que gran - de es el a - mor
we will praise God for the love
we will praise God and give thanks
we will praise God for the love

Refrain / Estribillo

que en no - so - tros por siem - pre mos - tró.
that sus - tains us e - ter - nal - ly.
for com - mu - nion with ev - 'ry race.
that in - vites all cre - a - tion to dance.

COMMUNION HYMN *HERE IS BREAD* (ELW 483)

1. Here is bread, here is wine
Christ is with us, he is with us
Break the bread, drink the wine
Christ is with us here

Refrain:

*In this bread there is healing
In this cup there's life forever
In this moment, by the Spirit
Christ is with us here*

2. Here is grace, here is peace
Christ is with us, he is with us
Know his grace, find his peace
Feast on Jesus here

Refrain

3. Here we are, joined in one
Christ is with us, he is with us
We'll proclaim, till he comes
Jesus crucified

Refrain

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REFLECTION

BLESSING OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SPACE AND LEADERS

As we prepare to move into our Rally Day celebration of the new Sunday School year, let us offer blessing and prayers for our Sunday School program, the space we are blessed in which to have it, and the teachers and leaders who offer of themselves to this ministry.

Lord, thank you for this space. Thank you for the people who create and maintain it. Thank you for the children who will use it. Bless this space, O Lord, which this community has made. May it be a place where the children come to you and find welcome and a home. May this be a space where all can come to learn and play and grow in love for you. May this be a place where all can be open to the awe and wonder, the joy and creativity of your Word and your Creation, becoming as little children so we may know you better. Amen.

I now invite forward the people who are volunteering their time and energy to the work of Christian Education in this space.

You have volunteered your time, your energy, and your gifts to the children, youth, and family ministries of this congregation. Will you offer your giftedness to this ministry in the confidence that it comes from God? If so, please reply “I will, and I ask God to help me.”

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you carry out this ministry centered in Christ’s call, striving to trust God as your guide and inspiration? If so, please reply “I will, and I ask God to help me.”

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you trust in God’s care, seek to grow in love for those you serve, strive for excellence in your skills, and honor the gospel with a faithful life? If so, please reply “I will, and I ask God to help me.” **Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

People of St. John: Will you claim these gifted people as those called by God to help carry out our congregation’s ministry to children, youth, and families? Will you support them and enthusiastically celebrate the work they do?

Will you pray for these leaders and the young people they serve, celebrating our children and youth as the ones Jesus blessed and welcomed? If so, please reply “We will, and we ask God to help us.” **We will, and we ask God to help us.**

Let us pray. Gracious God, for Jesus’ sake, empower these ministers to care for the young ones in our family of faith. Help them to teach faithfully, lead patiently, and guide confidently. Stir up in these servants the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever. **Amen.**

On behalf of St. John, we now commission you for ministry, grateful for your gifts and your willingness to serve.

BENEDICTION

God who sets forth the law of love, Jesus who fulfills the law for you,
and the Spirit through whom you are called to love, + bless you this day,
that you may be God's hands and heart and voice at work in the world.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *Blessed Be the Name* (ELW 797)



1 He - ri ni ji - na, he - ri ni ji - na, he - ri ni ji - na la Ye - su.
2 Twe-nde kwa Ye - su, twe-nde kwa Ye - su, twe-nde kwa Ye - su mbi-ngu-ni.
1 Bless-ed be the name, bless-ed be the name, bless-ed be the name, Je-sus' name.
2 Let us go to Je-sus, let us go to Je-sus, let us go to Je - sus in heav'n.



He - ri ni ji - na, he - ri ni ji - na, he - ri ni ji - na la Ye - su. A-mi-ni!
Twe-nde kwa Ye - su, twe-nde kwa Ye - su, twe-nde kwa Ye - su mbi-ngu-ni.
Bless-ed be the name, bless-ed be the name, bless-ed be the name, Je-sus' name.
Let us go to Je-sus, let us go to Je-sus, let us go to Je - sus in heav'n. Be-lieve!



Al - le - lu-ya, al - le - lu-ya. He - ri ni ji - na la Ye - su. A - mi - ni!
Al - le - lu-ya, al - le - lu-ya. Twe-nde kwa Ye - su mbi-ngu - ni.
Al - le - lu-ia, al - le - lu-ia. Bless - ed be the name, Je-sus' name. Be-lieve!
Al - le - lu-ia, al - le - lu-ia. Let us go to Je - sus in heav'n.



Al - le - lu-ya, al - le - lu-ya. He - ri ni ji - na la Ye - su.
Al - le - lu-ya, al - le - lu-ya. Twe-nde kwa Ye - su mbi-ngu - ni.
Al - le - lu-ia, al - le - lu-ia. Bless - ed be the name, Je-sus' name.
Al - le - lu-ia, al - le - lu-ia. Let us go to Je - sus in heav'n.

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

Today's altar flowers are supplied by Jeff and Deb Martin in celebration of each of their daughters' wedding anniversaries.

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Valerie C

Acolyte: Cate S

Usher:

Greeters: Ruth Ann T

Offering: Ava N and Ella N

Notes for the day's texts:

The Revised Common Lectionary readings for Sunday, Sept. 7, describe the joys and challenges of life with God. Ultimately, God's sustaining grace makes possible permits a life of fullness and flourishing — a life of love for God and neighbor. In Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Moses addresses the people as they prepare to enter the land God promised to their ancestors. Within a larger conversation about covenant and God's faithfulness, Moses urges the people to choose the way of God, which is the way of life and prosperity. This is what God intends for God's people, and it is characterized by love for God (which is intertwined with love for neighbor), obedience to God's laws and connection to God, "holding fast to him" (v. 20). This text reminds us that God's law is a gift that guides our life together and orients our relationships with God and with one another. Actions have consequences, and a way of life that disregards God's laws — in which we turn away from God and neighbor, devoting ourselves to other gods (v. 17) — cannot bring about the fullness of life and prosperity that God intends.

Today's Music

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

To Be Your Presence. Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939, Music: Charles V. Stanford, 1852–1924. GIA Publications, Inc. / Public Domain.

United at the Table. Text: Joaquín Madurga; tr. Angel Mattos, b. 1947, and Gerhard M. Cartford, b. 1923

Music: Joaquín Madurga. OCP (Oregon Catholic Press).

Here Is Bread. Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950, Music: Graham Kendrick. Make Way Music.

Blessed Be the Name. Text: East African traditional, as taught by Deorgratia Mahamba, Music: East African traditional; arr. hymnal version. Augsburg Fortress.

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Next Week's Readings

Exodus 32:7-14 *Moses begs the Lord to turn from anger against the Hebrews*

Psalms 51:1-10 *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love*

1 Timothy 1:12-17 *Christ Jesus came for sinners*

Luke 15:1-10 *Looking for the lost sheep, silver coin: Jesus eating with sinners*