

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

30 JULY 2023



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

HOLY COMMUNION WORSHIP SERVICE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING 10

*The liturgy is in the front of the ELW with numbers at the bottom of the pages.
The hymns begin in the middle of the ELW with numbers at the top of the pages.*

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who greets us in this and every season, whose word never fails, whose promise is sure.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of our neighbors.

P: Merciful God,

C: we confess that we have sinned. We have hurt our community. We have squandered your blessings. We have hoarded your bounty. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

P: Righteous God,

C: we confess that we have sinned. We have failed to be honest. We have lacked the courage to speak. We have spoken falsely. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and grant us your mercy.

P: God is a cup of cold water when we thirst. God offers boundless grace when we fail. Claim the gift of God's mercy: you are freed and forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

HYMN #533 "OPEN NOW THY GATES OF BEAUTY"

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

♪ **KYRIE**

♪ **Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

♪ **CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

♪ **Glory be to God in heaven; peace, goodwill to all the earth.
Mighty God of all creation, Father of surpassing worth:
we exalt you, we adore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
Saints and angels bow before you; here on earth our songs we raise.**

**Glory be to Christ forever, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
Son of God and gracious Savior, you have come from heav'n above;
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Hear our prayer; restore, forgive us; in your promise firm we stand.**

**Holy One we now acclaim you; Lord alone, to you we call;
Holy One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:
Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit, in the Father's splendor bright.
For the peace that we inherit, glory be to God on high!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...our Savior and Lord.*)

C: **Amen**

READINGS

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

♪ **Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.
Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.
Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.**

GOSPEL

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 13th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTH SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN

SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN

HYMN #793 “BE THOU MY VISION”

CONFESSION OF FAITH: APOSTLES’ CREED

P: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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

P: Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

(Each petition ends: P: Hear us, O God. C: Your mercy is great.)

P: Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...our Savior and Lord.*)

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P: It is indeed right...and join their unending hymn:

**C: ♩ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom,

**and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Holy Communion is celebrated today.

*All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are invited to receive Holy Communion
Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

♪ **O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.**

COMMUNION HYMN #686 “WE GIVE THEE BUT THINE OWN”

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST COMMUNION HYMN

♪ **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...Jesus Christ our Lord.*)

C: Amen.

BLESSING

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and
forever.

C: Amen.

HYMN #547 “SENT FORTH BY GOD’S BLESSING”

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Share the harvest.

C: Thanks be to God!

RINGING OF THE BELL / POSTLUDE

Pastor: Rev. Leah Holloway-Nilsen
Organist: Jason Bousselot or Linda Whitman
Acolyte: Eva and Rachel Burke
Lector: Deb Detlefs
Communion Assistant: Brian Bousselot
Usher: Shane Glover
Cleaners: Dan and Cindy Burke

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This Week At A Glance

Sunday 8:00 am Our Savior's Worship Service
 9:30 am Faith Worship Service - outdoors

Those to keep in prayer: the homebound: Carol Christensen, Shirley Ferguson, Ron Gasper, Delores Lahann, Myrna Kay Petersen, Rusty Porth, Betty Schau, Bus Seastrand and Vera St. John; and those serving in the military: Nick Timmerman.

Volunteers will be in the church office at Faith Monday through Friday from 9:00 - noon. Phone: 563-246-2622.

The **Bible School** registration form is available on the church website or in the church office. The completed form is due on August 15. Bible School will be a one-day event on Monday, August 28th, at Faith. Children K-5th grade will meet after school and the rest of the family will join them at 5:30 for a meal and games.

The Small Beginning

Matthew 13:31-32 13:31-32 Jesus put forward another parable to them: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, and, when it has grown, it is the greatest of herbs, and it becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches."

The mustard plant of Palestine was very different from the mustard plant which we know in this country. To be strictly accurate the mustard seed is not the smallest of seeds; the seed of the cypress tree, for instance, is still smaller; but in the east it was proverbial for smallness. For example, the Jews talked of a drop of blood as small as a mustard seed; or, if they were talking of some tiny breach of the ceremonial law, they would speak of a defilement as small as a mustard seed; and Jesus himself used the phrase in this way when he spoke of faith as a grain of mustard seed (Matthew 17:20).

In Palestine this little grain of mustard seed did grow into something very like a tree. Thomson in *The Land and the Book* writes: "I have seen this plant on the rich plain of Akkar as tall as the horse and his rider." He says, "With the help of my guide, I uprooted a veritable mustard-tree which was more than twelve feet high." In this parable there is no exaggeration at all.

Further, it was a common sight to see such mustard bushes or trees surrounded with a cloud of birds, for the birds love the little black seeds of the tree, and settle on the tree to eat them.

Jesus said that his Kingdom was like the mustard seed and its growth into a tree. The point is crystal clear. The Kingdom of Heaven starts from the smallest beginnings, but no man knows where it will end. In eastern language and in the Old Testament itself one of the commonest pictures of a great empire is the picture of a great tree, with the subject nations depicted as birds finding rest and shelter within its branches (Ezekiel 31:6). This parable

tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven begins very small but that in the end many nations will be gathered within it.

It is the fact of history that the greatest things must always begin with the smallest beginnings.

(i) An idea which may well change civilization begins with one man. In the British Empire it was William Wilberforce who was responsible for the freeing of the slaves. The idea of that liberation came to him when he read an exposure of the slave trade by Thomas Clarkson. He was a close friend of Pitt, then Prime Minister, and one day he was sitting with him and George Grenville in Pitt's garden at Holwood. It was a scene of beauty, with the Vale of Keston opening out before them, but the thoughts of Wilberforce were not on that but on the blots of the world. Suddenly Pitt turned to him: "Wilberforce," he said, "why don't you give a notice of a motion on the slave-trade?" An idea was sown in the mind of one man, and that idea changed life for hundreds of thousands of people. An idea must find a man willing to be possessed by it; but when it finds such a man an unstoppable tide begins to flow.

(ii) A witness must begin with one man. Cecil Northcott tells in one of his books that a group of young people from many nations were discussing how the Christian gospel might be spread. They talked of propaganda, of literature, of all the ways of disseminating the gospel in the twentieth century. Then the girl from Africa spoke. "When we want to take Christianity to one of our villages," she said, "we don't send them books. We take a Christian family and send them to live in the village and they make the village Christian by living there." In a group or society, or school or factory, or shop or office, again and again it is the witness of one individual which brings in Christianity. The one man or woman set on fire for Christ is the person who kindles others.

(iii) A reformation begins with one person. One of the great stories of the Christian Church is the story of Telemachus. He was a hermit of the desert, but something told him--the call of God--that he must go to Rome. He went. Rome was nominally Christian, but

even in Christian Rome the gladiatorial games went on, in which men fought with each other, and crowds roared with the lust for blood. Telemachus found his way to the games. Eighty thousand people were there to spectate. He was horrified. Were these men slaughtering each other not also children of God? He leaped from his seat, right into the arena, and stood between the gladiators. He was tossed aside. He came back. The crowd were angry; they began to stone him. Still he struggled back between the gladiators. The prefect's command rang out; a sword flashed in the sunlight, and Telemachus was dead. Suddenly there was a hush; suddenly the crowd realized what had happened; a holy man lay dead. Something happened that day to Rome, for there were never again any gladiatorial games. By his death one man had let loose something that cleansed an empire. Someone must begin a reformation; he need not begin it in a nation; he may begin it in his home or where he works. If he begins it no man knows where it will end.

(iv) But this was one of the most personal parables Jesus ever spoke. Sometimes his disciples must have despaired. Their little band was so small and the world was so wide. How could they ever win and change it. Yet with Jesus an invincible force entered the world. Hugh Martin quotes H. G. Wets as saying, "His is easily the dominant figure in history.... A historian without any theological bias whatever should find that he simply cannot portray the progress of humanity honestly without giving a foremost place to a penniless teacher from Nazareth." In this parable Jesus is saying to his disciples, and to his followers today, that there must be no discouragement, that they must serve and witness each in his place, that each one must be the small beginning from which the Kingdom grows until the kingdoms of the earth finally become the Kingdom of God

"Though few and small and weak your bands,
Strong in your Captain's strength,
Go to the conquest of all lands;
All must be His at length."

Old Gifts Used In a New Way

Matthew 13:51-52 13:51-52 Jesus said, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him: "Yes." He said to them: "That is why every scribe, who has been instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven, is like a householder who brings out of his treasure-house things new and old."

When Jesus had finished speaking about the Kingdom, he asked his disciples if they had understood. And they had understood, at least in part. Then Jesus goes on to speak about the scribe, instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven, bringing out of his treasure-house things old and new. What Jesus is in effect saying is this: "You are able to understand, because you came to me with a fine heritage. You came with all the teaching of the law and the prophets. A scribe comes to me with a lifetime of study of the law and of all its commandments. That background helps you to understand. But after you have been instructed by me, you have the knowledge, not only of the things you used to know, but of things you never knew before, and even the knowledge which you had before is illuminated by what I have told to you."

There is something very suggestive here. For it means that Jesus never desired or intended that any man should forget all he knew when he came to him; but that he should see his knowledge in a new light and use it in a new service. When he does that, what he knew before becomes a greater treasure than ever it was.

Every man comes to Jesus Christ with some gift and with some ability. Jesus does not ask that he should give up his gift. So many people think that when a man declares for Christ he must give things up and concentrate upon the so-called religious things. But a scholar does not give up his scholarship when he becomes a Christian; rather he uses it for Christ. A business man need not give up his business; rather he should run it as a Christian would. One who can sing, or dance, or act, or paint need not give up his art, but must use his art as a Christian would. The sportsman need not give

up his sport, but must play as a Christian would. Jesus did not come to empty life but to fill it, not to impoverish life but to enrich it. Here we see Jesus telling men, not to abandon their gifts, but to use them even more wonderfully in the light of the knowledge which he has given them.

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