

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Wilton, WI  
September 27, 2020  
17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
**Inviting People to Journey with Christ's  
Family in Spreading God's Love and Mercy**

*Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.*

### **Gathering**

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

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,  
who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.  
**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God,

**have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we are captive to sin  
and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace  
and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgment on one another  
before examining ourselves.**

**We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.**

**We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.**

**Make us humble, cast away our transgressions,  
and turn us again to life in you  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need,  
and through his death and resurrection,  
Christ has made us his own.

Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness  
to do God's work in the world.

**Amen.**

## Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather

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*Sekai no tomo to te o tsunagi*

*Se - ka - i no to - mo to te o tsu - na - gi,*  
 1 Here, O Lord, your ser - vants gath - er, hand we link with hand;  
 2 Man - y are the tongues we speak, scat - tered are the lands,  
 3 Na - ture's se - crets o - pen wide, chang - es nev - er cease.  
 4 Grant, O God, an age re - newed, filled with death - less love;



*Jyu - ji - ka no mo - to ni ta - tsu wa - re - ra,*  
 look - ing toward our Sav - ior's cross, joined in love we stand.  
 yet our hearts are one in God, one in love's de - mands.  
 Where, oh where, can wea - ry souls find the source of peace?  
 help us as we work and pray, send us from a - bove



*Ka - mi no mi - ku - ni o me a te to shi,*  
 As we seek the realm of God, we u - nite to pray:  
 E'en in dark - ness hope ap - pears, call - ing age and youth:  
 Un - to all those sore dis - tressed, torn by end - less strife:  
 truth and cour - age, faith and pow'r, need - ed in our strife:



*Shu Ye - su no mi - chi o su - su - mi yu - kan.*  
 Je - sus, sav - ior, guide our steps, for you are the Way.  
 Je - sus, teach - er, dwell with us, for you are the Truth.  
 Je - sus, heal - er, bring your balm, for you are the Life.  
 Je - sus, mas - ter, be our Way, be our Truth, our Life.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

## Word

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

### FIRST READING

*Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.*

#### Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup>What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? <sup>3</sup>As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. <sup>4</sup>Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

<sup>25</sup>Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? <sup>26</sup>When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. <sup>27</sup>Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. <sup>28</sup>Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. <sup>29</sup>Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

<sup>30</sup>Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. <sup>31</sup>Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

P: The word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God.**

#### Psalm 25:1-9

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD,  
I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you be put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>Show me your ways, O LORD,  
and teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

<sup>6</sup>Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,  
for they are from everlasting.

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love  
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup>You are gracious and upright, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners in your way.  
<sup>9</sup>You lead the lowly in justice  
and teach the lowly your way.

## SECOND READING

*As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.*

### Philippians 2:1-13

<sup>1</sup>If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

P: The word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God.

## Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

*After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.*

### **The gospel according to Matthew 21:23-32**

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>23</sup>When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup>But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

<sup>28</sup>"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup>He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

P: The gospel of the Lord. C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon

### **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**

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged, especially areas affected by wildfires, hurricanes and flooding, so that all of creation confesses you as Lord. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions, change our minds and teach us to trust your authority. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit, especially Katie, Dakota, Carla, Ruth, Judy, Alrita, Dick, Lisa, Pam, Curt, Deb, Lois, Tessa, Doug, Chris, Karl, Annette, and all those we name aloud and in our hearts. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community, The Wilton Food Pantry and The Creamery Winter Coats for the Community; make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Strengthen doctors, medical care workers, and caretakers and all who see to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.\*

### 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 our Lord our God.

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

P: It is indeed right.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n 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.

### THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Words of Institution

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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

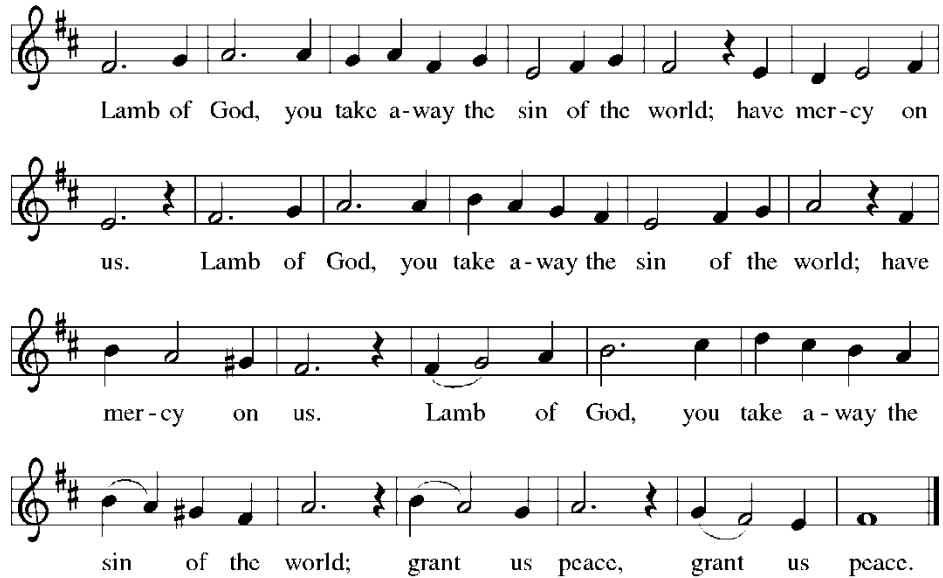
**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

P: Come to the banquet table  
where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

Distribution

“Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ’s table.”



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.

\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**We give you thanks, gracious God,  
that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare,  
the body and blood of Christ.  
Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven,  
into your beloved vineyard  
to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst,  
guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ  
and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever.  
Amen.**

**SENDING**

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

Blessing



Hymn (x3)

## Goodness Is Stronger than Evil



Good -ness is stron - ger than e - vil; love is stron - ger than hate;



light is stron-ger than dark - ness; life is stron-ger than death; vic-t'ry is



ours, vic-t'ry is ours, through God who loves us. Vic-t'ry is



ours, vic - t'ry is ours, through God who loves us.

Text: From *An African Prayer Book*. Desmond Tutu, b. 1931

Music: GOODNESS IS STRONGER. John L. Bell, b. 1949

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P: Go in peace. Remember the poor.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### IN OUR PRAYERS

Katie Wallace, Bill Collar, Dakota Holiday, Carla Von Haden, Ruth Johnson, Judy Bever, Alrita Ornes, Dick Krause, Lisa Rhodes, Pam Liefke, Curt Brueggen, Deb Paeth, Lois Reineke, Tessa Klipstein.

### IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Todd Nofsinger, Dylan Dougherty, Danelle Dougherty, Seth Tormoen, Robert Cale.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **COUNCIL MEETING**

The Church Council will meet at 10:00 AM this morning in the backyard of the parsonage, weather permitting, with masks and properly social distancing. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will take place in the basement. You are welcome to attend.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL and WORSHIP GOING FORWARD**

You will be notified, either in letterform or through email, the decision of the Council with regard to returning to the sanctuary for services, Sunday School in the basement, or to maintain the status quo.

### **PRAY FOR THE CHILDREN**

We urge you to remember the children of our church, as well as children throughout the world, in your prayers.

Lord, Jesus Christ, I bring to you:

Jada, Myles, & Conner Garske; Britain Hahn, Gracie & Kaden Brandau; Katie Pagel, Amara Brandau; Chase Brandau; Avery Brueggen; Riley Brueggen; Nolan & Logan Buchholz; Thadyn & Ayawyn Conner; Vanessa & Elliott Ornes; Lailah Eckes; Lena Ornes; Porter Sorenson; Kennedy & Josie Ornes; Brooklyn, Madelyn, Kaylin, Emma, Bryce, Marah, Bria, Ava, Katie, & Benjamin Gruen; Brady Zimmerman; Braylee Zimmerman; MaKenzie & Cooper Powell; Wesson Mayne; Vanessa, Mia, & Brek Anderson; Tyler & Jaden Bever; Carlee, Collin, & Camden Neidfeldt; Morgan Speicher; Avery & August Arndt; Krista & Sierra Cook; Tyler Brandau; Franklin & Douglas Wildes; Sophia, Derek & Deacon Erdman; Kody Tormoen; Angel Brueggen; Robert Cale; Callie Fleming; Miranda, Daphne & Linus Arndt; Natalie, Brodie & Fynlie Stanek; Emma Elder; Bryson Lamb; Alaina & Braxton Holthaus; Jada Leis; David, Sam & Zachary Ross; Gannon Tormoen; Jase & Margo Picha.

That your spirit will dwell with them according to your will. That they will grow in the knowledge of you and know that they are dearly loved by you. I pray that you will protect them from deception by the evil one and all his darts that would lead them astray. May they do well in school, learning and discerning what direction you have in mind for them. I also pray for all children everywhere, that you would keep them in your care.

In Jesus' name I pray.  
Amen

### **CHRIST IN OUR HOME**

The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter edition of Christ in Our Home is available in small or large print format. Please let Nalani know if you wish to receive one, and she will arrange to either deliver or mail one to you.

### **ELCA WORLD HUNGER**

**ELCA World Hunger**, like many organizations that work to end hunger, has experienced a decline in donations because churches are not operating in their normal capacity. Yet, due to the pandemic, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people that are experiencing food insecurity and acute hunger. **To help support ELCA World Hunger, a virtual benefit for ELCA World Hunger entitled "Hunger in the Time of Covid-19; Life for Today & Hope for Tomorrow" will be held on September 24th at 7 pm.** This will be led by ELCA Presiding Bishop Eaton, Rick Steves, and Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee. We encourage you to participate in this event.. Register at: <https://community.elca.org/online-registration/sept-24-rick-steves-virtual-hunger-event>

### **LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF SCHOOL KITS**

We are sending 224 school kits to Lutheran World Relief. Thank you to all who donated to this worthy cause.

### **SAMARITAN'S PURSE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**

We will have shoeboxes available in the next couple of weeks for those who wish to participate in Operation Christmas Child. In the meantime, you can be putting together items such as; toy cars, jump ropes, yo-yos, toothbrushes, bar soap, washcloths, combs, school supplies, socks, sunglasses, doll, stuffed animal. The list can really go on and on. Of course, the most important gift the child will receive is printed material, in their language, about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This week, I received a video clip on my cell phone from some family friends. The video features their two-year-old son sitting on a large, overstuffed chair, holding one of his favorite books. His head is visible above the opened book, and the soles of his shoes are visible beneath the book.

The title of the video is, "Two-Year Old Story Time." He is there with his "nana," telling her about this children's book that she has often read to him. He quickly flips through the pages while narrating. He stops now and then to point out favorite pictures. He also (rather loudly) says the words that he recalls from that page. Then he returns to flipping through the pages until he gets to another picture, and repeats the process.

The video reminds me of the joy that comes to us during special times with our family members. It also reminds me of the importance of spending time reading to our children, grandchildren, g-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other young persons we know. Instilling a love of reading helps them with their readiness for school, increases their memorization skills, and encourages them to be lifelong readers.

Recently, we gave our Sunday school children a Story Bible. The Story Bible helps them to learn about the people in the Old and New Testaments in ways that are appropriate for their developmental levels. When they get older, we hope that the foundations or "building blocks" of these Bible stories, will remain with them. When they receive a Children's Bible, they can add more names, and more details, that are not necessary for them to know when they are younger.

Like the little boy in the video, we hope that the Sunday school children will be able to tell us stories about the people in the Bible. We hope they will stop to look at the pictures, and share the names of the characters, and what is happening with us. We hope that they will think of their Story Bible as a special book, because, it is! It is a foundation, it is a "building block," for a lifetime of reading and understanding the Bible.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy

## CONTACTS DURING CORONAVIRUS CLOSURE

In case of emergency, contact Pastor Cathleen, via text, 608-865-1074, Justin Arndt (608-435-6336) (414-587-6642) or Nalani Bever (608-387-2311).

To activate the prayer chain, please contact Nalani or Louise Buchholz (608-435-6435).

Additional Contact Information:

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\*The Sunday Assembly, Lorraine S. Brugh, Gordon W. Lathrop, Augsburg Fortress, 2008

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