

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



August 29, 2021

10:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus protests against human customs being given the weight of divine law, while the essence of God's law is ignored. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. Last week Jesus told us "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Now James says God has given us birth by the word of truth. We who were washed in the word when we were born in the font return to it every Sunday to ask God to create in us clean hearts.

PRELUDE



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor (P) Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, the God of manna, the God of miracles, the God of mercy.

Congregation (C) **Amen.**

P Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

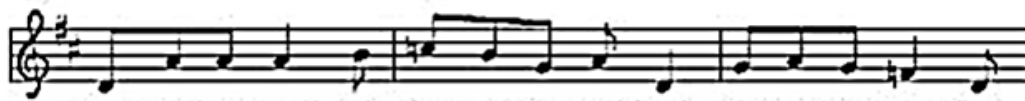
P God, our provider,

C help us. It is hard to believe there is enough to share. We question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn to our own understanding rather than trusting in you. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again to you. Where else can we turn? Share with us the words of eternal life and feed us for life in the world. Amen.

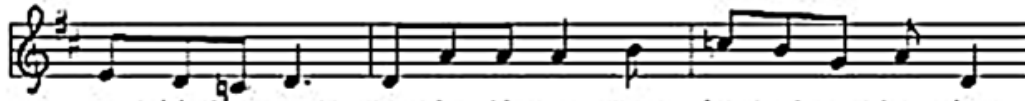
P Beloved people of God:

In Jesus, the manna from heaven, you are fed and nourished. By Jesus, the worker of miracles, there is always more than enough. Through Jesus, ✠ the bread of life, you are shown God's mercy: you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

C Amen.



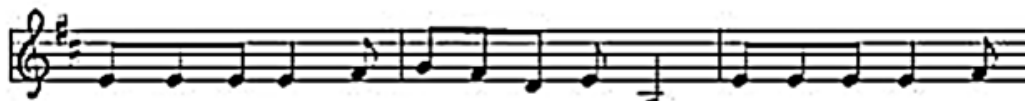
1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark-ness
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 light years a-way— here in this place the new light is shin-ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en, gath-er us in, the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er, gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en,
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
 fire . . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Trst: Marjy Hansen, b. 1950
 Music: GATHER US IN, Marjy Hansen
 Text and music © 1992 GIA Publications Inc., 7304 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60658, www.giausic.com, 800/423358
 All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.



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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.



O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.



+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

The Israelites believed the law was a divine gift that provided guidelines for living out the covenant. Moses commands the people to obey the law and to neither add to nor subtract from it. The Israelites are also to teach the law to their children and their children's children.

¶So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ¶You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you.

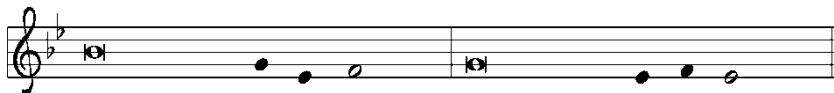
¶You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" ¶For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? ¶And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

¶But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Reader The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 15 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader ¶LORD, who may dwell in your ¶ tabernacle?
Who may abide upon your ¶ holy hill?

C ²**Those who lead a blameless life and do | what is right,
who speak the truth | from their heart;**

L ³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil | to their friends;
they do not cast discredit up- | on a neighbor.

C ⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who | fear the
LORD.**

They have sworn upon their health and do not take | back their word.

L ⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes a- | gainst
the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be | overthrown.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

C **Amen.**

SECOND READING: James 1:17-27

The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Reader 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. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: **Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.

P The holy gospel according to Mark, the seventh chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

⁶He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’ ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

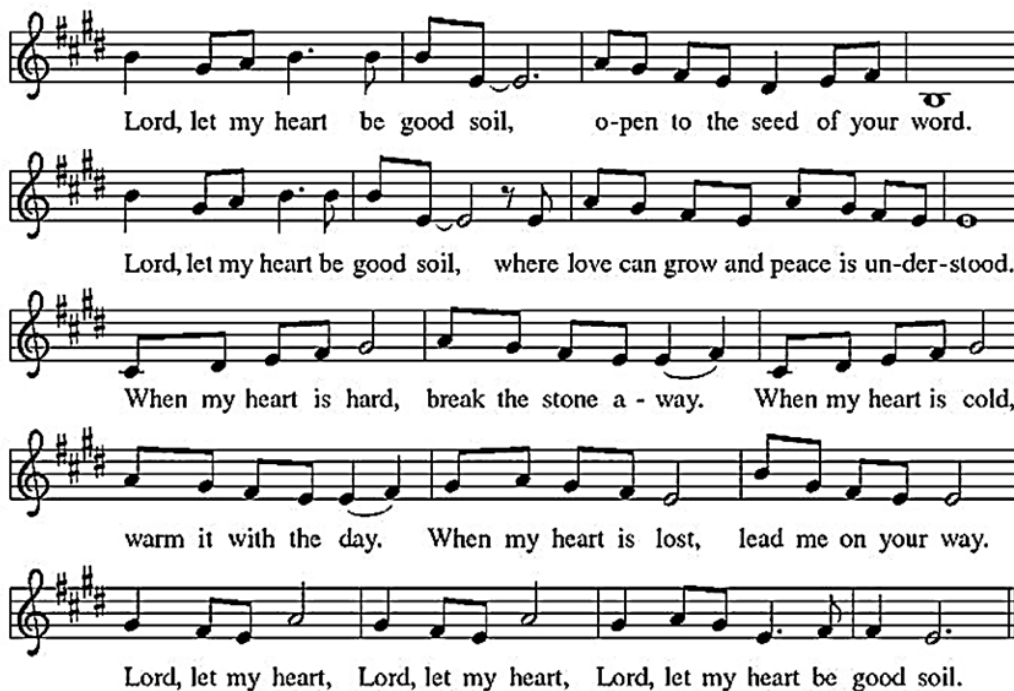
²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

HYMN OF THE DAY 512 *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil*



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold, warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950
Music: GOOD SOIL, Handt Hanson
Text and music © 1985 Prince of Peace Publishing, Changing Church, Inc., admin. Augsburg Fortress.

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C 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

Each petition ends: Lord, in your mercy,

Congregational response: hear our prayer.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.



Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000
 Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958
 Text © 1930 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
 Outside USA: Arr. from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, ✝ be upon you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING HYMN 836 *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (vs. 1 & 2)*

1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry. Lord of love!
 2 All thy works with joy sur-round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,

Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
 stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
 well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
 Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;

Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
 chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee.
 teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

DISMISSAL

- P We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:
- C **to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.**
- P Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

+ + +

*Sundays and Seasons v.20200805.1416
Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved*



**FLOWERS ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD
BY JAN HARRISON AND IN HONOR OF HER
HUSBAND JERRY'S BIRTHDAY AND IN
MEMORY OF HER MOTHER ELSIE'S BIRTHDAY,
BOTH ON AUGUST 24.**

Calendar for August 29 - September 5

Aug.	29	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
			11:30 am	The Five Wishes advance directive discussion
Sept.	01	Wed.	noon	Bible study (online)
	05	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship with communion, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

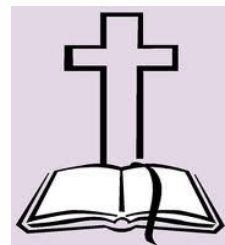
Next Sunday's Readings, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

[Isaiah 35:4-7a](#)

[Psalm 146](#)

[James 2:1-10 \[11-13\] 14-17](#)

[Mark 7:24-37](#)



Serving	August 29	September 5
Presiding	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Preaching	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Assisting Minister	Beth Alexander	Colleen Holdcraft
Lector	Jen Reece	Gladys Kane
Cantors	Susan Hehn Cassandra White	Rita Ford Susan Hehn
Altar Guild	Rita Ford Susan Warren	Beth Alexander
Counters	Margaret Bowers Susan Warren	Audrey Post Billie Reardon
Announcements	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom

PRAYER REQUESTS

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor), being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Gerhard Hofer (brother-in-law of Ridy Hofer).

In treatment for cancer: Stephanie Barber; Cathie Nitti (niece of Sharon Simmons); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Maggie Soff (friend of Sandy Sampson); James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Isabell Cintron (friend of Sharon Simmons); Sarah Lucas (friend of Cassandra White); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Chris Dickman (synod council member), child of Pr. Katrina Foster (friend of Cheryl).

For health and protection: For all affected by coronavirus: those experiencing mental health difficulties due to isolation; those with the disease struggling to recover; those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs, the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the US, including those “unaccounted for”.

For prisoners: Femi and Eddie; all those on death row.

Other concerns: Karen Olson; Blanche White (Melissa Barton).

Church concerns: St. Stephen's Congregational Council; The Florida-Bahamas Synod Council, all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all recovering in the Florida Panhandle from Hurricane Michael, including Messiah Lutheran Church; the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands continuing to recover from hurricanes; migrants fleeing violence in Central America; all those migrants and asylum seekers imprisoned by the US government; the people of Venezuela (birthplace of Bp. Suarez) and Hong Kong; for the Supreme Court as it considers cases involving the LGBTQ community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS: Now that we are back to in-person worship service, we are in need of more worship assistants, mainly Cup Ministers. If you are interested, please contact Lori in the office.

FLOWER CHART FOR 2021: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service and signing up for the 2021 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$35, and you can place that in the offering plate.

RSVP FOR NEXT WEEK: Remember to use the Sign-up Genius to reserve your spot for worship service (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c45a4a62ea7fbc16-sunday>). The deadline is noon on the Friday before worship. The calendar has dates available throughout the summer.