



St. John's of Hatboro

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Faith - Service - Community



Eighteenth Saturday after Pentecost

September 26, 2026

The Good News for Today: Maybe you missed it before, but there's still a chance today.

Thank you for worshiping with us at St. John's. Please fill out your yellow attendance card and place it in the offering plate when we collect the offering later in the service.

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 Music

STAND

Welcome & Greeting

Welcome to St. John's, where we are building a loving, accepting community centered on growing in Christ, and giving people a place to belong at any stage of their journey with God.

May 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.

Worship Song: Your Grace Is Enough – (Maher)

Verse 1

Great is Your faithfulness O God
You wrestle with the sinner's restless heart
You lead us by still waters into mercy
And nothing can keep us apart

Pre-Chorus

(So) remember Your people
Remember Your children
Remember Your promise O God

Chorus 1

Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough for me

Verse 2

Great is Your love and justice God of Jacob
You use the weak to lead the strong
You lead us in the song of Your salvation
And all Your people sing along

Chorus 2

Your grace is enough
Heaven reaches out to us
Your grace is enough for me
God I sing Your grace is enough
I'm covered in Your love
Your grace is enough for me for me

CCLI Song # 4477026

Matt Maher

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Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness

strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through † Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

Amen.

SIT

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

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.

¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² 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”? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ 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 who shall die.

²⁵ 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? ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.

²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ 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?

³⁰ 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. ³¹ 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?

³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

The Word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

Philippians 2:1-13

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.

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,

⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,

¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

STAND

Gospel Acclamation — ELW p. 151 (Red Book)

Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia.

Matthew 21:23-32

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 Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter:

Glory to you, O Lord.

²³ When he 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?” ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ 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?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ 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.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ 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. ³² 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SIT

Sermon – “Who’s on First” – Pastor Bo Bannister

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray... 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.

STAND

Hymn: Beauty for Brokenness — W&P 17 (Purple Book)

- 1 Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair:
Lord, in the suffering this is your prayer.
Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace;
Sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase.

Refrain

- God of the poor, friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray;
melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain.
Come, change our love from a spark to a flame.
- 2 Shelter from fragile lives, cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who don't speak. *Refrain*
 - 3 Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities from sanctuary, freedoms to share;
peace to the killing fields, scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain. *Refrain*
 - 4 Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams
plundered and poisoned, our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need. *Refrain*
 - 5 Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation, and bring you their praise. *Refrain*

Text and music: Graham Kendrick

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The Apostles' Creed

With the whole church let us 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

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Center your church in humility as we strive to follow in your way. Help us listen to the cries of those who have been unfairly hurt by the church and dare to name difficult truths. Show all your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You call us to care for your creation. Lead us into your promise of a better world through sustainable practices and respect for your handiwork. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Inspire all in positions of authority to act honorably. Remind them of their call to use their authority for the sake of the common good. Give them the gift of humility. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Comfort those who come before you in fear and trembling. Calm troubled hearts with your forgiveness. Help all those in need. Grant us your salvation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Change this congregation's heart when we say no to your call. Open us to courageous learning and service in our community, especially in new or challenging places. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please share a sign of peace with one another.

SIT

Announcements

Printed copies of our weekly announcements are available at the usher's stand in the narthex, and monthly newsletters are on the Hospitality Table. Please include your email address on your yellow attendance card to receive announcements electronically.

Offering

STAND

Offertory Hymn: Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow

– ELW 884 (Red Book)

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.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

Offering Prayer

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

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.

With joy we praise you, gracious God, for you created heaven and earth, made us in your image, and kept covenant with us – even when we fell into sin. We give you thanks for Jesus Christ our Lord, who by his life, death, and resurrection opened up to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of your name:

Sanctus

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven 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.**

Eucharistic Prayer

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, God, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving passion of your Son, his wondrous resurrection and ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his coming again, we thank you for this holy and living sacrifice, through whom you willed to reconcile us to yourself. Grant that we who are nourished by the body and blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit may become one body, one spirit in Christ, who taught us to pray:

The 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.

SIT

Invitation to Communion

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Distribution of the Elements

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.

STAND

Post-Communion Blessing

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you keep you in his Grace.

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of
your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

Blessing

The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding
of the Spirit.

Amen.

The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Hymn: Here I Am, Lord – ELW 574 (Red Book)

1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?"

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946

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Dismissal

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

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