

Triune Lutheran Church

I am convinced that
NOTHING
can ever separate us
from God's **LOVE**

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

*We thank you for joining us here
at Triune Lutheran Church, a
family united by our Risen Lord,
Jesus Christ!*



In order to make you feel more at home, here are a few notes about the service. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We hope to make your time here as meaningful as possible!



- We are taking extra precautions to ensure your safety and health as we worship together, including asking you to please, **please** wear a mask the entire time you are in the building.
- Everything is printed in the bulletin (no hymnals will be used). Based on many published scientific studies, we are asking you to refrain from singing. Instead, please use the included text to the hymns in the bulletin as a prayer to God.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected during worship. If you wish to do so today, you may place your offering in the offering plate at the back.
- The Communion elements are placed by your chair in small containers with lids. We ask you leave them as is until we reach the celebration of holy Communion during worship, when you will be asked to remove the lids and consume the bread (wafer), then the wine. If you need a gluten-free wafer, please let the pastor know before worship. We believe the body and blood of Christ is meant for everyone, regardless of your church affiliation, and so feel free to participate, if you feel so moved.
- Bathrooms are available in the hallway. Please wash your hands, and use a paper towel to open the bathroom door to exit.
- The pastor will not be standing for a receiving line after worship.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CONFESSON & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.
Amen!

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,
we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.

We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

By your grace, forgive us;
through your love, renew us;
and, as the Holy Spirit, lead us;
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen!

Beloved of God,
by the radical abundance of divine mercy
we have peace with God through + Christ Jesus,
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.
Our sins are forgiven.
Let us live now in hope.
For hope does not disappoint,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

"God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens"

ELW 771

- 1 God, who stretched the spangled heavens infinite in time and place, flung the suns in burning radiance through the silent fields of space: we, your children in your likeness, share inventive pow'rs with you; great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.

- 2 We have ventured worlds undreamed of
since the childhood of our race;
known the ecstasy of winging
through untraveled realms of space;
probed the secrets of the atom,
yielding unimagined pow'r,
facing us with life's destruction
or our most triumphant hour.
- 3 As each far horizon beckons,
may it challenge us anew:
children of creative purpose,
serving others, hon'ring you.
May our dreams prove rich with promise;
each endeavor well begun;
great Creator, give us guidance
till our goals and yours are one.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. As the Holy Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” ⁶And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.”

¹²⁹Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰When your word is opened it gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.

¹³¹I open my mouth and pant
because I long for your commandments.

¹³²Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as you always do to those who love your name.

¹³³Order my footsteps in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴Rescue me from those who oppress me,
and I will keep your commandments.

¹³⁵Let your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶My eyes shed streams of tears,
because people do not keep your teaching.

SECOND READING

Romans :26-39

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵²And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Thine Is the Glory”

ELW 376

1 Thine is the glory,
risen, conqu’ring Son;
endless is the vict’ry
thou o’er death hast won!
Angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where thy body lay.

Refrain

Thine is the glory,
risen, conqu’ring Son;
endless is the vict’ry
thou o’er death hast won!

2 Lo, Jesus meets thee,
risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets thee,
scatters fear and gloom;
let his church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth;
death hath lost its sting! *Refrain*

3 No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee;
aid us in our strife;
make us more than conqu'rors,
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above. *Refrain*

*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Held in one body by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Open your life-giving word to all your precious children. Reveal yourself to us in ways both traditional and surprising, in places old and new. Bless church leaders throughout the world, as they face their challenging tasks. Be gracious to us, O God.

Give us the will to seek your wisdom. Guide the many churches in their uses of technology, and show us during this time ways to study your word. Be gracious to us, O God.

Give to plants and animals the water and land they require. Form us into grateful and healing caretakers of your earth. Bless the efforts of scientists and researchers, especially those seeking a vaccine. Lead all people to honor the scientific discoveries that you grant to humankind. Be gracious to us, O God.

Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and to resist the ways of violence. Stifle the lust for conquest. Bring peace to the Middle East. Watch over all the people of Hong Kong. Move us away from racist attitudes and policies. Form our national, state and local leaders to speak with honesty, to strive for justice, and to work to alleviate the nation's needs. Be gracious to us, O God.

Heal the sick. Feed the hungry. House the refugee. Comfort the countless thousands who are dealing with the coronavirus. Accompany those living with anxiety or despair, including Bev Deitrick, Hazel Schwab, Martha Wasson, Mardell Weiss, Dave & Clara Wilcox, Cathy Gallagher, John & Jean Kurtz, Matthew Loede, Mary Phillips, George Tomaselli, Karen Schroedel and all those we name in our hearts...Form us to be your arms of mercy. Be gracious to us, O God.

Give to the youth of afflicted nations an inspiring dream of what their future might be. Give them patience to await a time of safety. Direct all schools from daycare through graduate school to find an acceptable way forward. Be gracious to us, O God.

In gratitude for the lives of our beloved dead, we pray that nothing, neither death nor life, will separate us from your love. At the end, gather us with all your saints in light everlasting. Be gracious to us, O God.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

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.

***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.

COMMUNION

MUSIC INTERLUDE (use for meditation and prayer)

COMMUNION PRAYER

God of the welcome table,
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness
and have been united by your presence among us.
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. Amen.

BLESSING

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ
Jesus.

God, the creator, + Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love. Amen.

SENDING HYMN

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

ELW 547

1 Sent forth by God's blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

Verse 2 (next page)

2 With praise and thanksgiving
to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us,
with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you! Thanks be to God!

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Discerning the Parables



It's parable Sunday! This week we read five short parables all about the kingdom of heaven. What is God's kingdom like? What does it do? How is it unlike other kingdoms? Jesus answers all of these questions—but does so indirectly by giving similes to describe what the kingdom is like. If we are wise, we approach these parables carefully

and respectfully, recognizing that they were difficult to understand even for those who studied with Jesus full time and lived immersed in the context in which he taught (Matthew 13:24-36). We should seek to imitate King Solomon, who asked God for discernment (from the root יִדָּר “to distinguish [between]”), in order for the Spirit to guide us in understanding Jesus' parables about the kingdom.

First, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed and yeast (Matthew 13:31-33). These two images are powerful because they have small beginnings but have quick takeover potential. Mustard plants never become tall or impressive trees like the mighty cedars (even if they do provide habitats for birds). The shrub stays low/humble and reproduces quickly. In fact, the plants reproduce so quickly that the sages banned the planting of mustard because it would quickly spread and contaminate other fields (M. *Kilayim* 3:2).

The kingdom of heaven is also like yeast that a woman hid in three measures (probably an overwhelming 40ish liters/10ish gallons) of flour. The yeast leavens the whole batch. In other words, Jesus is saying that the kingdom is small and modest. It works not by making grand displays or being impressive, but by spreading uncontrollably.

Then Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. A man finds it, but instead of stealing the treasure, he reburies it. Then he joyfully sells everything he has to legally acquire the field and the treasure therein (Matthew 13:44). In so saying, Jesus describes humans' different interests in the kingdom of heaven. One person happens upon the treasure by chance, and he decides to sell everything else in his life to joyously invest in the whole field that contains the treasure. Implicit in this description is another human who owns the field but has no knowledge or care for the treasure contained within. This person gives up the field and the right to the treasure within. With Jesus' postscript about people who cherish the law *and* the kingdom of heaven being like masters who have old *and* new treasures (Matthew 13:51-52), we can deduce that the

field in this parable stands for Scripture, in which the promise of the kingdom waits to be discovered.

The last two parables move the subject from humans to the kingdom itself. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When the merchant finds a precious pearl, he sells all that he has and buys it (Matthew 13:45-46). Like the human in the previous parable, the kingdom, embodied by Jesus, is also willing to give up everything else to acquire its/his goal—humankind as a pearl of great value. We must pay attention to the reversal in agency here. The kingdom of heaven is **not** the pearl—it is the merchant. Jesus is teaching about the lengths that he will go to rescue humans from sin and death. He will give up everything and empty himself (Philippians 2:7)—as a good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11).

Jesus' last parable for this week says the kingdom is like a dragnet that is tossed into the sea and then pulled to the shore, indiscriminately catching everything in its path (Matthew 13:47-48). This image is comforting to me in troubling moments in history. Eventually God's reign of love and justice will capture us all up in it, inescapably. In describing the sorting of the fish that the net catches, Jesus presents another example of an eschatological selection based on what kind of fruit we produce—evil or righteousness (Matthew 13:48-50).

Jesus painted for his discerning listeners several images of what his kingdom is like. The kingdom spreads quickly like mustard and yeast. The kingdom is exciting good news to some and not of interest to others, like a field with hidden treasure. The Prince of the kingdom is excited about acquiring his goal—us—and willing to give up everything to purchase us from sin and death. And then lastly, the kingdom comes with a promise of eventual judgment, again based on what kind of fruit—or in this case, fish—we produce. This is all good news, to which we say: “Your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven!”



Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.