

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”



Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 30, 2020



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

Prelude *O God Beyond All Praising* (ROBBINS)

Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we take time to recognize our shortcomings, while also remembering God's relentless grace.

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 *You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore* (FABER)

#817



1 Tú has ve - ni - do_a la_o - ri - lla, no_has bus -
 1 You have come down to the lake - shore seek - ing
 2 You know full well what I have, Lord: nei - ther
 3 You need my hands, my ex - haus - tion, work - ing
 4 You who have fished oth - er wa - ters; you, the



ca - do ni_a sa - bios ni_a ri - cos; tan só - lo
 nei - ther the wise nor the wealth - y, but on - ly
 trea - sure nor wea - pons for con - quest, just these my
 love for the rest of the wea - ry— a love that's
 long - ing of souls that are yearn - ing: O lov - ing



quie - res que yo te si - ga.
 ask - ing for me to fol - low.
 fish nets and will for work - ing.
 will - ing to go on lov - ing.
 Friend, you have come to call me.

Refrain / Estribillo



Se - ñor, me_has mi - ra - do_a los o - jos; son - ri - en - do,
 Sweet Lord, you have looked in - to my eyes; kind - ly smil - ing,



has di - cho mi nom - bre. En la_a - re - na he de - ja - do mi
 you've called out my name. . . . On the sand I have a - ban - doned my



bar - ca; jun - to_a ti bus - ca - ré o - tro mar.
 small boat; now with you, I will seek oth - er seas.

Prayer of the Day

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Jeremiah 15:15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the Lord is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

¹⁵O Lord, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.

¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart;
for I am called by your name,
O Lord, God of hosts.

¹⁷I did not sit in the company of merrymakers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

¹⁹Therefore thus says the Lord:
If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.

It is they who will turn to you,

not you who will turn to them.

²⁰And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,
says the Lord.

²¹I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

The word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Psalm

Psalm 26:1-8

¹Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity;
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.

²**Test me, O Lord, and try me;
examine my heart and my mind.**

³For your steadfast love is before my eyes;
I have walked faithfully with you.

⁴**I have not sat with the worthless,
nor do I consort with the deceitful. R**

⁵I have hated the company of evildoers;
I will not sit down with the wicked.

⁶**I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord,
that I may go in procession round your altar,**

⁷singing aloud a song of thanksgiving
and recounting all your wonderful deeds.

⁸**Lord, I love the house in which you dwell
and the place where your glory abides.**

Second Lesson

Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be

ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

Gospel

Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”

²¹From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!
Sermon

Praise to you, O Christ!

1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found;
 2 With grate - ful joy and ho - ly fear, God's char - i - ty we learn;
 3 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells Christ, God's ho - ly Son;
 4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; let all con - ten - tions cease.
 5 Let us for - give each oth - er's faults as we our own con - fess,

brought here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
 let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in re - turn.
 as mem - bers of each bod - y joined, in him we are made one.
 Be God's the glo - ry that we seek; be his our on - ly peace.
 that we may love each oth - er well in Chris - tian gen - tle - ness.

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

As we gather together in the Spirit, let us pray for the needs of the world, responding to each petition with the words, “In your steadfast love, receive our prayer.”

A brief silence.

Caring for the church around the world, we hope for a spirit of ecumenical cooperation, for the health of all congregations during this difficult time, for all leaders of the church. Hear us, God our Savior: **in your steadfast love, receive our prayer.**

Seeing before us your good creation, we hope for the repair of what we have harmed, for polar ice, for lands dealing with oppressive heat, for fields ravaged by storms and fires, including in California. Hear us, God our Creator: **in your steadfast love, receive our prayer.**

Facing so many international discord, we hope for the strengthening of democracies, for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, for the people of Belarus, Lebanon, and Yemen, for researchers seeking a vaccine, for racial justice within our nation, for our legislators to assist the lives of the poor. Hear us, God our mighty Fortress: **in your steadfast love, receive our prayer.**

Surrounded by people with great and hidden need we pray for families frightened by the uncertain future, for those whose homes have burned down, for students deprived of effective education, for refugees and for prisoners. Hear us, God our Hope: **in your steadfast love, receive our prayer.**

Mindful of all who have gone before us in the faith, we offer our thanks for all the saints famous and forgotten, for medical workers who have died of the virus, for friends and family we have loved, for the promise of everlasting life with you. Hear us, God our Homeland: **in your steadfast love, receive our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

Thanksgiving at the Table

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!

Holy God,

our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,

in the harmonious world of your creation,

the plants and animals,

the seas and stars

were whole and well in your praise.

When sin had scarred the world,

you sent your Son to heal our ills

and to form us again into one.

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.

Remembering, therefore,

his acts of healing,

his body given up,

and his victory over death,

we await that day when all the peoples of the earth

will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

Holy Spirit, be immersed in this meal:
as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,
so let your church be gathered from the ends of the earth,
that all may be fed with the Bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever.

Amen!

**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.**

Communion

Music Interlude *Will You Come and Follow Me* (TILLEN)

Please, use this time to meditate or pray for those dear to your heart.

Prayer after Communion

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 *Will You Come and Follow Me* (BELL)

#798



1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call
 2 "Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call
 4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call
 5 Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call



your name? Will you go where you don't
 your name? Will you care for cruel and
 your name? Will you set the pris - 'ners
 your name? Will you quell the fear in -
 my name. Let me turn and fol - low



know and nev - er be the same?
 kind and nev - er be the same?
 free and nev - er be the same?
 side and nev - er be the same?
 you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, will you let my
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare, should your life at -
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as
 Will you use the faith you've found to re - shape the
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and



name be known, will you let my life be
 tract or scare? Will you let me an - swer
 this un - seen, and ad - mit to what I
 world a - round, through my sight and touch and
 foot - steps show. Thus I'll move and live and



grown in you and you in me?"
 pray'r in you and you in me?"
 mean in you and you in me?"
 sound in you and you in me?"
 grow in you and you in me.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *How Beautiful* (PARIS)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Alexis Carr, Joan Clarke, Steve Dobush, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Tom Juhasz, Ralph Kane, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, George Lautanen, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr., Norm Schuetter, Arlene Stoltz, Tim Susaneck, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 8/23/2020: \$914

Lectionary Blog: Live Self-Sacrificially

Do you ever have the feeling that something makes little sense but works out so well that it must be from God? As an example, after I finished university undergrad, absolutely none of my plans worked, so I joined the Peace Corps. The skills and languages I learned there have paved the way for the rest of my career. And then after I finished the Peace Corps, I foolishly moved to a town where I knew almost no one and had few prospects. But, while walking around in a lonely funk, I stumbled into an ELCA church (for the first time!). There I met my future sister-in-law, who would introduce me to my partner.

God used less than ideal situations, which I thought were going horribly, to bring tremendous blessing and to move my life forward. I think that is what is going on with Peter and Jesus this week in the Gospel of Matthew.

The context of the region of Caesarea Philippi, the site of a cultic shrine at one of the many “Gates of Hades” in the ancient world, is phenomenally important for understanding the exchange between Jesus and his chief disciple. Last week we talked about how, at Caesarea Philippi, people were engaged in physically degrading worship, begging their temporarily dead gods to return from the underworld to prolong their lives. Peter confessed that Jesus was the anointed one, the “Son of the Living God,” to remind

himself, the other disciples and Jesus that the Jewish messiah had nothing to do with this counterfeit worship of dying Greco-Canaanite gods who needed to be awakened from their deathly slumber. In response, Jesus told Peter that his community would be advancing against the Gates of Hades to mount a raid into the lands of death to free people from the bonds of death.

The people worshiping at Paneas prayed only to be spared death for another year. Jesus promised to raise those who have already died! The disciples must have been thrilled with Jesus' promise. But as we will see, Peter was disgusted by how Jesus would carry out that promise.

We must be willing to sacrifice personally in order to love God and love others.

Immediately after Jesus told his disciples that his community would be built on the rock above Caesarea Philippi and that they would successfully raid the Gates of Hades, he began telling them how he would go to Jerusalem, be killed and be raised on the third day. Peter, standing close to where people worshiped gods who temporarily sojourned into the lands of the dead, took Jesus aside and rebuked him. Of course, Peter loved Jesus and didn't want him to die. But the private rebuking, I think, had everything to do with Peter being offended at how closely what Jesus was describing sounded like what the pagans were doing.

Jesus, of course, saw the greatest difference. He would raid sin and death to rescue humans—not make his followers beg for their lives from a god they could not be sure was alive or dead. Peter was truly thinking about human things—perverse worship of other gods—rather than what God was doing (Matthew 16:23).

To make his point, Jesus immediately contrasted the worship at Paneas with the kingdom of heaven in the hearing of his disciples (Matthew 16:24) and the crowd worshiping at Paneas (Mark 8:34). Jesus said that those who would follow him need to be willing to lose their lives—indeed, to take up their Roman crosses and assist in their own demise (24). Being occupied with preservation of one's own way of life and comfort is antithetical to what Jesus proposes here. We must be willing to sacrifice personally in order to love God and love others.

Jesus went even further and laid down a stark challenge to those screaming and begging for their lives with faulty worship: some of those standing there (his disciples) wouldn't taste death before they saw the Human One coming with the kingdom (Matthew 16:28). For people who were begging temporarily dead gods for a bit more life, Jesus' words were especially good news.

In this scene, charged with anxiety about how to avoid death, Jesus says the people were after the wrong thing. Even if one gains the whole world, she is still going to die.

However, instead of seeking after that which makes us feel safe, Jesus says we should follow him and be willing to live self-sacrificially. In giving up our lives to love God and love our neighbors, we find that Jesus has already saved us from death's curse.

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.

God's Love

L	E	G	R	A	C	E	V	L	F	Y	L	O	H
P	U	P	I	Y	A	T	R	U	T	H	I	S	E
F	F	M	Y	P	F	R	E	E	D	O	M	U	H
E	E	F	R	V	V	C	E	A	L	T	E	S	L
S	A	I	O	E	V	N	A	E	U	C	F	E	G
N	N	E	H	R	R	E	E	L	N	U	Y	J	E
H	T	I	A	F	G	L	H	A	E	E	O	E	T
C	T	I	E	N	V	I	T	E	H	F	J	L	E
A	E	N	E	E	H	N	V	A	A	I	V	F	R
A	L	I	F	E	E	E	A	E	F	V	U	V	N
F	E	S	G	P	G	I	L	G	N	E	E	H	A
Y	R	E	E	N	E	L	M	H	A	E	A	N	L
N	E	R	R	D	D	H	H	O	G	P	S	N	A
T	F	C	E	I	T	H	G	I	L	O	E	S	V

FORGIVENESS
 HOLY
 FREEDOM
 FAITH
 JESUS
 HEAVEN
 REPENTANCE
 AGAPE
 LIFE
 GRACE
 ETERNAL
 TRUTH
 JOY
 LIGHT