

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

Jesus
*had **compassion** on*
them...

Matthew 20:34

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
July 18, 2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! As long as the weather cooperates, we gather outside in God's Creation so that we may more safely come together and worship with singing and loud shouts of praise.

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the side driveway. Please keep in mind potential wind that may affect your Communion cups.
- You may stay in your vehicle or setup a chair anywhere you like. Speakers will be set up front by the worship leaders so that everyone can hear and participate from their respective spots.
- It is your choice whether you wear a mask or not, as well as how much distance you wish to keep from others. We are mindful of everyone's varying comfort levels with what we hope to be improving circumstances with COVID-19.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- You will not be asked to stand during the worship, so feel free to remain seated throughout.
- An offering basket is placed up-front by the podium.

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers
Presiding Minister
Pianist
Flute
Lector
Parish Administrator
Custodian

All People
The Rev. Richard Israel
Robin Crawford
Ann Droste
Harry Werner
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush
Vince Besednjak

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Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Mark's gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.

Prelude *Now the Green Blade Rises* (SHEHI)

Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at our baptism, remembering our everlasting bond with our Risen Lord.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen!

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,

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.**

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

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.
Amen!

Gathering Hymn *The Church's One Foundation*

#654



1 The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;
2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der this world sees her op - pressed,
4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion and tu - mult of her war,
5 Yet she on earth has u - nion with God, the Three in One,



she is his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word.
her char - ter of sal - va - tion one Lord, one faith, one birth;
by schisms . . rent a - sund - er, by her - e - sies dis - tressed,
she waits the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for - ev - er - more;
and mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion with those whose rest is won.



From heav'n he came and sought her to be his ho - ly bride;
one ho - ly name she bless - es, par - takes one ho - ly food,
yet saints their watch are keep - ing; their cry goes up: "How long?"
till with the vi - sion glo - rious her long - ing eyes are blest,
Oh, bless - ed heav'n-ly cho - rus! Lord, save us by your grace,



with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.
and to one hope she press - es with ev - 'ry grace en - dued.
and soon the night of weep - ing shall be the morn of song.
and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
that we, like saints be - fore us, may see you face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900
Music: AURELIA, Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876

Prayer of the Day

O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the “flock” of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David’s line to save Israel and Judah.

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. ²Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

Psalms

Psalms 23

¹The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

²**The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O Lord,
and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

Second Lesson

Ephesians 2:11-22

The author of this letter reminds his audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, however, they are included in God's household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.

¹¹Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

Gospel

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ's desire to be among those in need.

The Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord!

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Build A Longer Table*

All Creation Sings #1062



1 Build a long - er ta - ble, not a high - er wall,
 2 Build a saf - er ref - uge, not a larg - er jail;
 3 Build a broad - er door - way, not a long - er fence.
 4 When we lived as ex - iles, ref - u - gees a - broad,



feed - ing those who hun - ger, mak - ing room for all.
 where the weak find shel - ter, mer - cy will not fail.
 Love pro - tects all peo - ple, spar - ing no ex - pense.
 Christ be - came our door - way to the reign of God.



Feast - ing to - geth - er, strang - er turns to friend,
 For an - y place where jus - tice is de - nied,
 When we em - brace com - pas - sion more than fear,
 So must our ta - bles wel - come those who roam.



Christ breaks walls to piec - es; false di - vi - sions end.
 Christ will breach the jail wall, free - ing all in - side.
 Christ tears down our fenc - es; all are wel - come here.
 None can be ex - clud - ed; all must find a home.

Text: David Bjorlin, b. 1984

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

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Prayers of Intercession

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Tend your whole church, O God. Encourage bishops, pastors, and deacons in their proclamation of the gospel. Raise up new leaders and encourage those pursuing a call to ministry. Embolden all the baptized to embody your love and justice. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Restore your entire creation, O God. Sustain croplands and pastures and safeguard all farm animals and livestock. Preserve lakes, rivers, and streams that offer refreshment. Revive lands recovering from natural disasters and protect coastlands threatened by rising oceans. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Reconcile the nations, O God. Break down the dividing walls that make us strangers to one another and unite us as one human family. Equip leaders to deal wisely with conflict and guide diplomats who seek peaceful solutions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heal your people, O God. Look with compassion on immigrants, exiles, and all who are afraid or feel lost. Give rest to those who are weary, comfort to those who are grieving, and recovery to those who are ill. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nourish our entire Covenant family, O God. Prepare a table where we receive food for our hungering spirits. Renew our commitment to provide for one another and revitalize our ministries of nurturing hungry neighbors. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You lead us home, O God. We give thanks for all who have died, now rest in your care. As you have received them into your heavenly home, so welcome all of us to dwell in your house forever. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen!**

Thanksgiving at the Table

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, bless us through 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 *Sonata in F Major: Adagio* (PEPUSCH)

Prayer after Communion

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray.
Amen!

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever!
Amen!

Sending Hymn *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

#789



1 Sav - ior like a shep - herd lead us; much we need your ten - der care.
 2 We are yours; in love be - friend us, be the guard - ian of our way;
 3 You have prom - ised to re - ceive us, poor and sin - ful though we be;
 4 Ear - ly let us seek your fa - vor, ear - ly let us do your will;



In your pleas - ant pas - tures feed us, for our use your fold pre - pare.
 keep your flock, from sin de - fend us, seek us when we go a - stray.
 you have mer - cy to re - lieve us, grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.
 bless - ed Lord and on - ly Sav - ior, with your love our spir - its fill.



Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have bought us; we are yours.
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, hear us chil - dren when we pray.
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, ear - ly let us turn to you.
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have loved us, love us still.



Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have bought us; we are yours.
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, hear us chil - dren when we pray.
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, ear - ly let us turn to you.
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have loved us, love us still.

Text: attr. Dorothy A. Thrupp, 1779–1847
 Music: BRADBURY, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

Dismissal

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *Stepping in the Light* (JONES)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Bob Buettner, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Clare Hanusz, Judy Jones, Matt Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Heather Lasher, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Bernice Novak, Don Rusher Jr, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, 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 7/11/2021: \$1777

****FREE Community Drive-Thru Meal here this
Thursday, July 22, 4:30-6PM****



**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE**

For our latest video recordings of worship, bulletins, newsletters, as well as links to daily devotions and other resources, please visit:
covenantmaplehts.org.

Check us out on Facebook for the latest updates for community activities and a dose of Good News on your news feed!



facebook



We greatly appreciate Pastor Israel for returning to Covenant and leading us in worship this morning! Thank you, Pastor Israel!

Lectionary Blog: It's About Compassion

For many years, Dr. Harold Park taught at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. He peppered his classroom presentations with true stories of actual congregational situations, always disguising the identity of the folk involved by introducing his stories with the words, “There was a congregation not a thousand miles from here”

In the spirit of Dr. Park, let me tell you a story. There was a congregation not a thousand miles from here, that not a hundred years ago was barely getting by. Their church building was tiny, just the worship space and two little rooms behind the altar. When they had a congregational dinner, they pushed the pews up against the wall and made a table down the center aisle with sawhorses and plywood. The lay pastor was a teacher from a town 50 miles away. She drove out on Sunday mornings for service, ate a bag lunch in her car, visited the sick, and then headed home by late afternoon. This went on for many years.

There was a man in the congregation who grew worried about the health of the church's nearest neighbors. Most of the members no longer lived close by. They had grown up there but had moved because of jobs, or marriage or just because. Many of the folk who lived near the church were elderly, or poor or both. The man talked to a nurse about his concern, and they came up with the idea of a once-a-month health clinic—simple stuff like blood pressure screening, etc. They were stunned by the size of the turnout. One of the things they realized was that many of the folk were food deprived and fell through the cracks of the state's assistance program.

After church one Sunday, they had a council meeting, which meant they had a congregational meeting, because they were so small everybody was on the council. It didn't happen overnight, but they turned one of those backrooms into a kitchen and the other into a food pantry. They served several meals a week on that plywood table in the center aisle, and they gave away bags of food to anyone who asked. And they did it all without any sermons or testimonies or asking folk to come to church. And eventually, they looked around and realized there were more people in church on Sundays.

“Imagine that,” they thought, “I wonder how that happened?” They wondered because they had done all that they had done with the purest of motives. They were “Israelite(s) in whom there was no guile.” They didn't think, “If we do nice stuff for the people in the neighborhood, maybe they'll start coming to church.” No, they thought, “These people are in need, maybe we can help.” That was pretty much it. Like Jesus, they *“had compassion.”*

To understand what is happening in today's Gospel lesson, you have to know what took place earlier. Jesus had sent the twelve out two by two on a mission of mercy. *“He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ... They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them”* (Mark 6:7,13).

As our text begins, Jesus welcomes them back and hears their stories. Apparently, their acts of kindness and healing have created quite a stir—while they're talking, a crowd gathers—such a large and active crowd that they don't even have room or time to eat. Jesus suggests they all go on a little retreat to recharge their batteries. But, it was not to be—people spotted where they were headed and got there ahead of them, still seeking attention and healing. Jesus got out of the boat and looked at them and said, *“Do you people have an appointment? Don't you know this is our day off?”* or *“For crying out loud people, can't we get a FEW minutes to ourselves. What's wrong with y'all!”* No! That's not what he said! It may have been what he felt, but it's not what he said, and turning the people away was not what he did. Instead, *“As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd ...”* (Mark 6:34).

Rodney Stark is the codirector of the Institute for Studies of Religion at Baylor University. His book *The Triumph of Christianity* (HarperOne, 2011) has a chapter called “Misery and Mercy” in which he makes the case that “in the pagan world, and especially

among philosophers, mercy was regarded as a character defect and pity as a pathological emotion; because mercy involves providing *unearned* help or relief, it is contrary to justice. ... This was the moral climate in which Christianity taught that mercy is one of the primary virtues—that a merciful God requires humans to be merciful ... the truly revolutionary principle was that Christian love and charity must extend beyond the boundaries of family and even those of faith, to all in need” (pp. 112-113). It is Stark’s well-documented thesis that, “in the midst of the squalor, misery, illness, and anonymity of ancient cities, Christianity provided an island of mercy and security” (p.112).

Our Gospel reading then skips over a very important thing—the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:35-44). This is more than a simple miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes. It shows Jesus the Christ, God incarnate, having compassion for hungry people. It has echoes of the Upper Room, where he distributes food: “this is my body,” “this is my blood;” of the cross where his body is broken, and his blood is shed; and of the eternal feast in heaven, where all people are gathered, all hunger is filled, all tears are dried, and all pain ceases. Yes, “*he had compassion,*” indeed! It is in compassion, in caring, in self-giving for others that Jesus is most clearly shown forth as the Christ, and we are most clearly shown forth as the church.

Oh, and that little church not a thousand miles from here? Well it never became a mega-church, or even a regular-size church. It got a little bigger and did a few more things in response to needs in the neighborhood, but, as one of the members told me, “Young man, I have lived long enough that I have stopped hiding my age and started bragging about it. At my age, the most important things are loving others and feeling useful. That’s all we’re trying to do.” And they had compassion. And it was enough. Amen and amen.

Originally published July 16, 2018, on LivingLutheran.org.



Delmer Chilton is originally from North Carolina and received his education at the University of North Carolina, Duke Divinity School and the Graduate Theological Foundation. He received his Lutheran training at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S.C. Ordained in 1977, Delmer has served parishes in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.