

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



*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
*August 29, 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  
Lector  
Parish Administrator  
Custodian

All People  
The Rev. Maria Bernardo  
Robin Crawford  
Ted Lockmiller  
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush  
Vince Besednjak

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## Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

*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 *Now That Daylight Fills the Sky* (GERIKE)

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    *Gather Us In*

#532



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark - ness  
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old who  
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the  
 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  
 yearn for your face; we have been sung through - out all of his - t'ry,  
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh - ters,  
 light years a - way— here in this place the new light is shin - ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.  
 called to be light to the whole hu - man race.  
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth.  
 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, the rich and the haugh - ty, gath - er us in, the  
 Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat 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,  
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly,  
 bread that is you; nour - ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion  
 make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.  
 give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.  
 lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.  
 fire . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: GATHER US IN, Marty Haugen

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## Prayer of the Day

O God our strength, with you we experience hope and new life. Protect us from all dangers, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be made whole, yet again, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

## First Lesson

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.*

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>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!" <sup>7</sup>For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup>And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup>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.

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

## Psalm

Psalm 15

<sup>1</sup>LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your holy hill?

<sup>2</sup>**Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,  
who speak the truth from their heart;**

<sup>3</sup>they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;  
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

<sup>4</sup>**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.**

<sup>5</sup>They 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.

## Second Lesson

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.*

<sup>17</sup>Every 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. <sup>18</sup>In 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.

<sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore 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.

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. <sup>25</sup>But 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.

<sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion 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.

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**

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.*

The Gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord!**

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], <sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; <sup>4</sup>and 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.) <sup>5</sup>So 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?” <sup>6</sup>He 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;

<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,

teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

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

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

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

**Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil* (sing twice)

#512





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

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## Prayers of Intercession

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

Holy God, watch over your whole church, that it be a safe haven for all who seek your presence. Fill it with pastors, deacons, and leaders who echo your expansive and generous welcome. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Still-creating God, continue to tend to your entire creation, that plants and animals have the habitat and resources to thrive and flourish. Inspire us to protect threatened habitats and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of justice, give wisdom to individuals in authority. Raise up wise and discerning leaders in federal, state, and local governments, and guide them to seek the benefit of every person. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Compassionate God, we lift up all who are in any need. Support and encourage those who are unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing poverty. Bring food, shelter, clothes, and stability for daily life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of new life, empower teachers and school administrators for a new academic year. Guide students in their learning and development. Accompany parents, foster parents, and caregivers who provide encouragement and love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful departed who showed us how to honor God with our heart. Inspire us by their example and renew our faith, trusting that we will be united with them in glory. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; 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 *Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil* (HANSEN)

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 *For the Beauty of the Earth*

#879



- 1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
- 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
- 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
- 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
- 5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:  
hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:  
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:  
friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:  
for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

*Refrain*



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Text: Follitt S. Pierpoint, 1835–1917, alt.

Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

Dismissal

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ!

**Thanks be to God!**

Postlude *For The Beauty of the Earth* (LARSON)

## 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, Judy Jones, Matt Jones, Tammie Keller, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Andrea Lanzalaca, Heather Lasher, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, 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.

*To the glory of God, an in loving memory of Greta Krause, a memorial was given by Karen & Ray Zack.*

### LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 8/22/2021: \$1681



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

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





*We greatly appreciate Pastor Bernardo for leading us in worship this morning! Thank you, Pastor Bernardo!*

### ***Lectionary Blog: It's the Relationships, Not the Rules***

In our gospel reading, Jesus confronts people who focus on obeying the rules while ignoring the relationships for which the rules exist. This is sometimes true of us as well. We make religious rules that are intended to help us live together as people of God. Then, over time, we forget that the rules are there to help us, not to hurt us; to bring us together, not push us apart. What really matters are our relationships with each other as a sacred community, as the body of Christ—not strict adherence to rules.

There used to be a 1918 Dodge Touring Car on display in the Car Collectors Museum in Nashville, Tenn. Its little placard told an interesting story. “In 1918, the father of Albert Hillyard bought this car for \$785. In 1921, Albert and his brother got into an argument over who got to drive the car into town on Saturday night. Their father drove the car into the garage and shut the door. There the car remained until found 38 years later, covered with dirt and chicken manure, with only 1800 miles on the odometer.”

I've thought about Mr. Hillyard and his Dodge Touring Car many times over the years. Dad attempted to heal the breach between his children by making a rule. “OK, neither one of you gets to drive it!” I'm willing to bet that the boys just went on to argue about something else, and then about something else, and then about something else. The car wasn't the problem. The problem was the jealousy and strife that lived in that family and in those brother's hearts. They didn't need rules and judgment— they needed reconciliation. So it is with all of us. Because our problem lies within our hearts, our healing must start there as well. Jesus calls us to understand that it's not about the rules; it's about the relationships—the relationship between us and God and the relationships between us and others.

After I left the family farm, my first real job was as a daycare worker. Besides supervising the playground and changing diapers and serving lunch, I had the great pleasure of watching *Sesame Street* every afternoon from 4 to 5 o'clock. Seriously, it was a great pleasure; I really liked it. One night recently I saw a documentary on the making of *Sesame Street*. Someone asked the producer about the reaction of the child actors to working with the Muppets, who are, after all, puppets with a human being crouched on the floor holding them up with one arm. The producer said the kids don't pay any attention to the humans; they just talk to the Muppets. In fact, he said, there was one child who saw Big Bird take off his top half and an actor step out. The child stared and then yelled to his mother, "Mom, Mom. Do you think Big Bird knows he has a man inside?"

The purpose of the law is to remind us that we have a human being inside, inside our heart, inside our soul, in our center of being—in that part of us that makes us something other than a thinking animal. The law also reminds us that everyone else has that hidden humanity, that heart and soul, that center that belongs to God. In today's lesson, Jesus invites us to remember that communal broken center in our dealings with each other. Jesus invites us to remember that we are called to transcend the rules in the name of love.

That's why Jesus says, "*there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.*" (Mark 7:15). And also, "*for it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come*" (7:21) Blaise Pascal said in his *Pensees*, "*There is a hole in the heart of everyone that only God can fill.*" And St. Augustine prayed, "*Our hearts are restless, O Lord, until they rest in thee.*"

No rules or regulations or guidelines can change our hearts. Only God can do that. Only God's Spirit can move us in that way. Only the Cross of Christ, only the broken body and spilt blood of Jesus can break our hearts enough that we will let the love of God flow in to change and reshape us. Amen and amen.

*Originally published August 27, 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.*