

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



Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 12, 2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with * are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!
- Following the recommendation of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health regarding COVID-19, we ask that you wear a mask for the duration of your time in the building.

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers

Presiding Minister

Organist

Lector

Parish Administrator

Custodian

All People

The Rev. Bradley Ross

Robin Crawford

Bert Zahn

Jennifer Lasher-Dobush

Vince Besednjak

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

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Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Three weeks ago we heard Peter's confession of faith as told in John's gospel. This week we hear Mark's version, when Peter says, "You are the Messiah." In John, the stumbling block is Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh, given for the life of the world. In Mark too the scandal has to do with Jesus' words about his own coming death, and here Peter himself stumbles over Jesus' words. But Jesus is anointed (the meaning of messiah) in Mark only on the way to the cross (14:3); so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.

Prelude *Will You Come and Follow Me* (TILLEN)

Welcome & Announcements

*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,
whose teaching is life,
whose presence is sure,
and whose love is endless.

Amen!

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:

like lost sheep, we have gone astray.

We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.

We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.

We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.

Free us from our sin, gracious God.

Listen when we call out to you for help.

Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
 but the gift of grace in † Christ Jesus,
 God makes you righteous.
 Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.
Amen!

*Gathering Hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness*

#733



1 Great is thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther; there is no
 2 Sum-mer and win-ter and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon, and
 3 Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, thine own dear



shad-ow of turn-ing with thee; thou chang-est not, thy com-
 stars in their cours-es a-bove join with all na-ture in
 pres-ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to-day and bright



pas-sions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for-ev-er wilt be.
 man-i-fold wit-ness to thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy, and love.
 hope for to-mor-row, bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!

Refrain



Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Morn-ing by



morn-ing new mer-cies I see; all I have need-ed thy



hand hath pro-vid-ed; great is thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me.

Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866–1960

Music: FAITHFULNESS, William M. Runyan, 1870–1957

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*Prayer of the Day

O God, by the glory of the cross you transform our lives. Grant that for the sake of the gospel we may turn from the lure of evil, take up our cross, and follow your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The image of the servant of the Lord is one of the notable motifs in the book of Isaiah. Today's reading describes the mission of the servant, whom early Christians associated with Jesus. Like Jesus, the servant does not strike back at his detractors but trusts in God's steadfast love.

⁴The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

⁸he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.

^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

¹I love the LORD, who has ¹heard my voice,
and listened to my ¹supplication,

²**for the LORD has given ¹ear to me
whenever ¹I called.**

³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave ¹came upon me;
I came to ¹grief and sorrow.

⁴**Then I called upon the name ¹of the LORD:
“O LORD, I pray you, ¹save my life.”**

⁵Gracious is the ¹LORD and righteous;
our God is full ¹of compassion.

⁶**The LORD watches o- ¹ver the innocent;
I was brought low, ¹and God saved me.**

⁷Turn again to your rest, ¹O my soul.
for the LORD has dealt ¹well with you.

⁸**For you have rescued my ¹life from death,
my eyes from tears, and my ¹feet from stumbling;**

⁹I will walk in the presence ¹of the LORD
in the land ¹of the living.

Second Lesson

James 3:1-12

This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord

and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

*Gospel

Mark 8:27-38

This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.

The Gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord!

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

*Hymn of the Day *I Love to Tell the Story*

#661



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain



I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834–1911

Music: HANKEY, William E. Fischer, 1849–1936

*Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

Revealing God, you have made yourself known through bread and wine, water and word. Continue to nurture your whole church, that it be a place where your presence is experienced and shared. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Creating God, you brought life into being and called it good. Bring new creation to lands devastated by tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, and other disasters, including those recovering from Hurricane Ida and fires in our western states. Restore forests and curb overflowing waters. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Protecting God, you desire all people to live in peace and safety. Provide for all who are in danger. Strengthen first responders to help meet to the complex needs of others. Provide care and compassion as they face trauma themselves. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Transforming God, you announce release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed. Break chains of discrimination and injustice. Amplify voices that go unheard and inspire us to advocate for the those who are overlooked. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Forming God, you gather our Covenant family together. Shape our communal life, that in our prayer, praise, and worship, we honor you and encourage one another. Increase our joy in working together, Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Redeeming God, you accompany your people through every stage of life. We give you thanks for the saints who now rest in your embrace. 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 Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,
you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,
and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.
You sent your Son to eat with sinners
and to become food for the world.

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 life given for us
and his rising from the grave,
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

Holy Spirit, nurture and sustain us with this meal:
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of Christ.

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 *I Love to Tell The Story* (STEARNS)

*Prayer after Communion

Lord of life,
in the gift of your body and blood
you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation.
Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy,
bearing witness to the abundance of your love
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen!

*Blessing

People of God,
you are Christ's body,
bringing new life to the world.
The holy Trinity, † one God,
bless you now and forever!
Amen!



Lift high the cross, the love of Christ pro - claim till



all the world a - dore his sa - cred name.



- 1 Come, Chris - tians, fol - low where our cap - tain trod,
- 2 All new - born ser - vants of the Cru - ci - fied
- 3 O Lord, once lift - ed on the glo - rious tree,
- 4 So shall our song of tri - umph ev - er be:

Refrain



our king vic - to - rious, Christ, the Son of God.
bear on their brows the seal of him who died.
as thou hast prom - ised, draw us all to thee.
praise to the Cru - ci - fied for vic - to - ry!

Text: George W. Kitchin, 1827–1912; rev. Michael R. Newbolt, 1874–1956

Music: CRUCIFER, Sydney H. Nicholson, 1875–1947

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*Dismissal

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (PETHEL)

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, Jane Skowronski, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susanek, 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 9/5/2021: \$3056

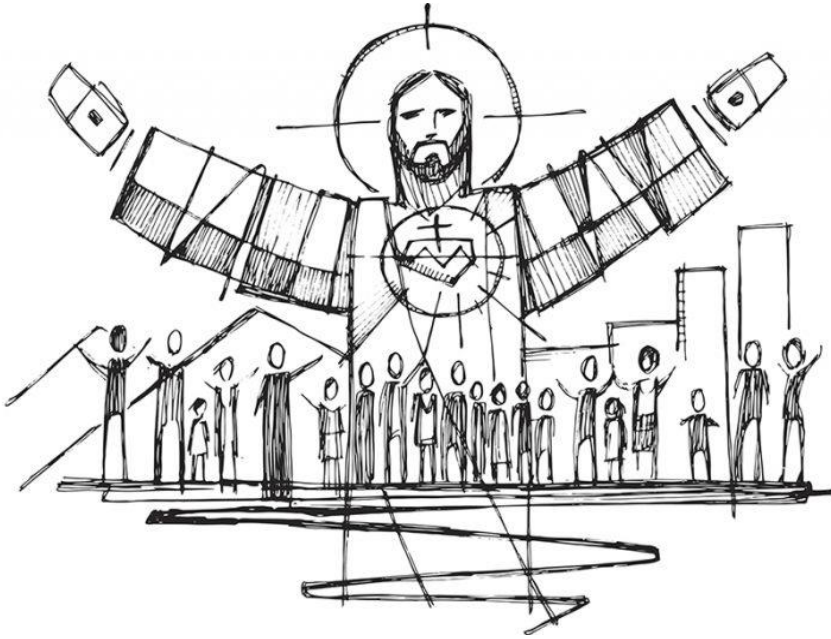


For our latest video recordings of worship, bulletins, newsletters, as well as links to daily devotions and other resources, please visit: covenantmaplehts.org.

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



Lectionary Blog: Do You Know Who You Are?



Thad Eure was secretary of state in North Carolina for over 50 years, from the 1930s into the 1980s. He was an entertaining and informative speaker who usually referred to himself as “the oldest rat in the Democrat barn.” He liked to tell a story about a politician at a big campaign rally where they were having a fried-chicken dinner out under a tent. The candidate had spent several hours passing out campaign buttons, shaking hands and kissing babies. After he made his speech, he wandered over to the food tent. As he went through the line he was handed a plate with potato salad, green beans, a biscuit and a chicken leg. He leaned over the table and said, “May I have another piece of chicken?” The woman replied, “One piece per person.” He tried again, “I’m a big guy and I’m pretty hungry and this is just a little bitty leg.” She said, “One piece per person.” Finally, the man lost his temper a bit and tried to pull rank, “Look, do you know who I am?” She said, “No sir, but I know who I am. I’m the chicken lady, and it’s one piece per person.”

Our Gospel lesson turns on questions of identity. Jesus asked the disciples, “*Who do people say that I am?*” (Mark 8:27). They responded with several interesting theories—John the Baptist, who had recently died; Elijah, who had ascended to heaven without dying and whose return was thought by some to be the first sign of the coming of the Messiah; or perhaps one of the other prophets returned from the dead. Without commenting on the various identities the public had given him, Jesus made the question more personal—asking the disciples, “*Who do you say that I am?*” (Mark 8:29). As usual, Peter jumped in and spoke first, “*You are the Messiah*” (Mark 8:29). Good answer. But when Jesus began to explain what being the Messiah meant, trouble started. “*Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.*” (Mark 8:31). Peter apparently stopped listening at the “be killed” part—“Suffer?! Be rejected?! Be killed?! No! That can’t be right.”

Peter took Jesus aside to rebuke him. The Greek word here means to “prevent someone from doing wrong.” We might say to “set them straight.” Peter had his own ideas about what being the Messiah meant; he wanted the strong person Jesus, the conquering Jesus, the majestic rescuer Jesus, the riding in at the last moment with trumpets blaring, flags flying, sabers glinting in the sun—the Romans are routed and all is well. That’s the Jesus, the Messiah, Peter was looking for. All this suffering, rejection and dying did not fit with Peter’s understanding of Jesus’ identity. And it did not fit with Peter’s understanding of his own identity, a point Jesus picked up on immediately. “*If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me*” (Mark 8:34).

This question of identity isn’t just about Jesus; it’s not just about Peter and the disciples—it’s also about us. If Jesus is the Christ, destined for the awfulness of the cross instead of the glory of earthly honor and kingship, then who are we? What exactly does it mean to call ourselves Christians, “Little Christs to one another,” in Luther’s phrase? According to Jesus, it means suffering, rejection and death. And, like Peter, most of us would rather not. We are willing to follow Jesus, to “get behind” the Messiah but not too close behind. Not close enough to get in harm’s way.

So this language about “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” is difficult, very difficult, for most of us. Our desire to be good people, to serve the Lord, to follow Jesus comes into conflict with a basic human instinct for self-preservation,

particularly if we hear and understand it in a borderline literal manner as calling us to physical death in pursuit of our faith.

If we think that to deny self and take up a cross, to lose our lives for others, means to make some huge and heroic sacrifice on behalf of Christ and the world, then most of us fail miserably in the “following Jesus” department. Instead, we live perfectly ordinary, pedestrian lives hardly distinguishable from the lives of our unbelieving neighbors.

Except for this: If we know who we are as beloved and baptized children of God, marked with the cross of Christ forever, then every day is alive with possibilities, rife with opportunities to die a little to self and to live a bit for someone else.

Do you know who you are? The server in the tent knew who she was. She was “the chicken lady,” and her job was giving out chicken, one piece at a time.

Do you know who you are? Jesus knew who he was. He was the Messiah and his job was to preach, teach, heal and go to the cross.

Do you know who you are? We are invited this day to remember that we are baptized and beloved children of God, marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Amen and amen.

Originally published September 10, 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.