

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



Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 17, 2022



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 to worship with singing and loud shouts of praise (if not, we will worship in the sanctuary).

- 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.
- 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. Bradley Ross
Robin Crawford
Ted Lockmiller
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush
Vince Besednjak

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Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

As we are invited today to consider what it means to be managers (rather than owners) of all that we have, it is crucial to recognize that we are bought with a price. “Christ Jesus, himself human, . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” Apart from the generosity of God we have nothing—we are nothing. By God’s gracious favor we have everything we need.

Prelude *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me* (Shackely)

Welcome & Greetings

Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, uniting us as one family in Christ, and setting us free to serve as his disciples for the sake of the world.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who is eager to forgive
and who loves us beyond our days. **Amen!**

Dear friends, together let us acknowledge
the times when we have not loved this world as Jesus does.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
we confess our shortcomings to you and to one another.
We have harmed your good creation.
We have failed to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.
Turn us in a new direction.
Show us the path that leads to new life.
Be our refuge and strength on the journey,
through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. Amen.

Beloved of God: your sins are forgiven † and you are made whole.
God points the way to new life in Jesus Christ,
who meets us on the road.

Journey now in God's abiding love
through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**

Gathering Hymn *Take My Life, That I May Be*

ELW #583

Refrain/Estribillo



To - ma, oh Dios, mi vo - lun - tad, y haz - la tu - ya, na -
Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord,



da más; to - ma, sí, mi co - ra - zón
to thee; take my mo - ments and my days;

To stanzas | *Last time*



y tu tro - no en él ten - drás. ten - drás.
let them flow in cease - less praise. less praise.



1 Que mi vi - da en - te - ra es - té
1 Take my hands and let them move
2 Take my sil - ver and my gold,
3 Take my voice and let me sing
4 Take my will and make it thine;



con - sa - gra - da a ti, Se - ñor;
at the im - pulse of thy love;
not a mite would I with - hold;
al - ways, on - ly for my King;
it shall be no lon - ger mine;



que a mis ma - nos pue - da guiar el im -
take my feet and let them be swift and
take my in - tel - lect and use ev - 'ry
take my lips and let them be filled with
take my heart, it is thine own; it shall

Refrain/Estribillo



pul - so de tu a - mor.
beau - ti - ful for thee.
pow'r as thou shalt choose.
mes - sag - es from thee.
be thy roy - al throne.

Greeting

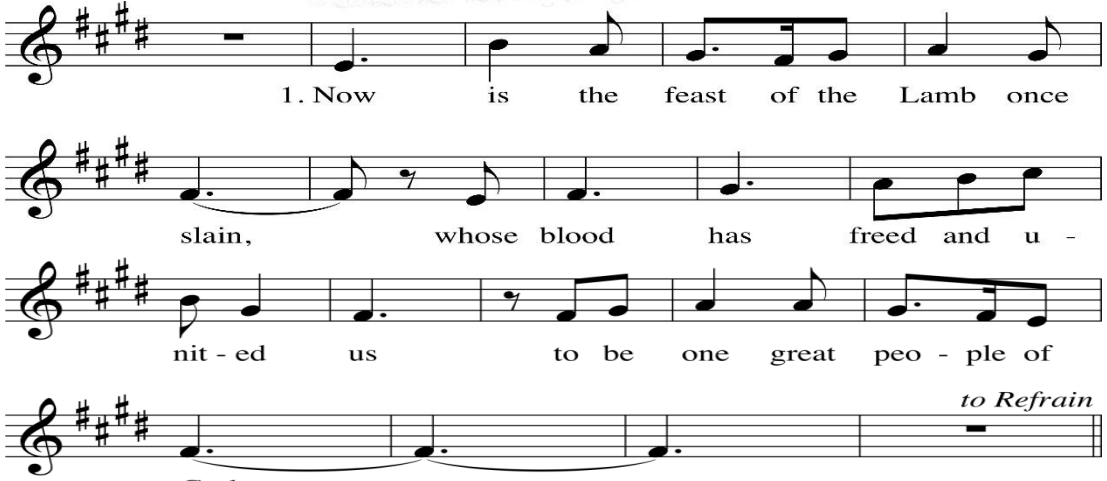
The grace of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you.**

Canticle of Praise *Now the Feast*

Refrain

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

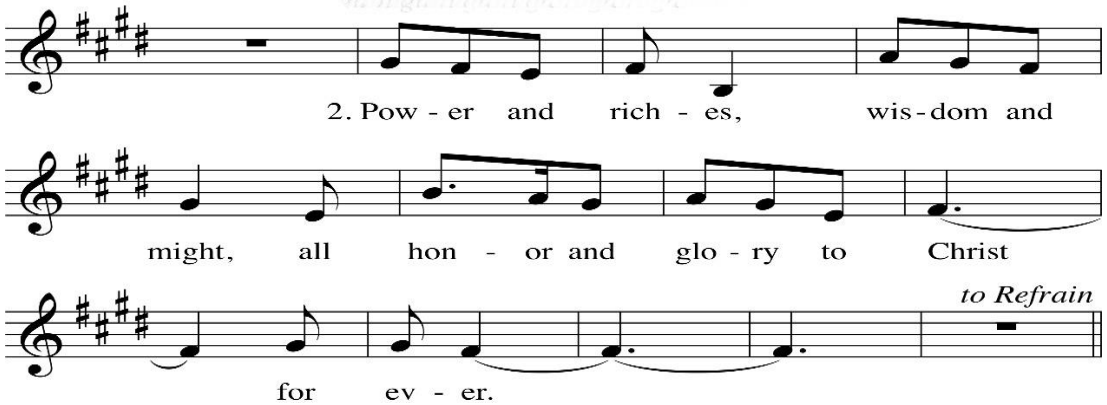
Verse 1



1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once
slain, whose blood has freed and u -
nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of
God.

to Refrain

Verse 2



2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ
for ev - er.

to Refrain

Verse 3



3. For God has come to dwell with us, to
make us peo - ple of God; to make
all things new.

to Refrain

Prayer of the Day

God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Open our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Amos 8:4-7

Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.

⁴Hear this, you that trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
⁵saying, “When will the new moon be over
so that we may sell grain;
and the sabbath,
so that we may offer wheat for sale?
We will make the ephah small and the shekel great,
and practice deceit with false balances,
⁶buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”
⁷The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

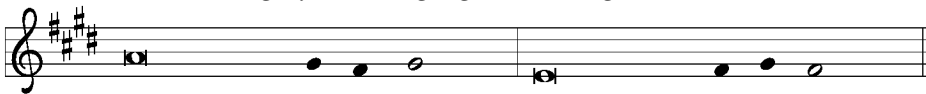
Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

Psalm

Psalm 113

The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below



Antiphon: *The LORD lifts up the poor from the ashes.* (Ps. 113:7)

¹Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants ¹ of the LORD;
praise the name ¹ of the LORD.

**²Let the name of the | LORD be blessed,
from this time forth for- | evermore.**

³From the rising of the sun to its | going down
let the name of the | LORD be praised.

**⁴The LORD is high a- | bove all nations;
God's glory a- | bove the heavens. *Antiphon***

⁵Who is like the | LORD our God,
who sits en- | throned on high,

**⁶but stoops | to behold
the heavens | and the earth?**

⁷The LORD takes up the weak out | of the dust
and lifts up the poor | from the ashes,

**⁸enthroning them | with the rulers,
with the rulers | of the people.**

⁹The LORD makes the woman of a | childless house
to be a joyful mother of children. | Hallelujah! *Antiphon*

Second Lesson

1 Timothy 2:1-7

The pastoral epistles offer insight into how early Christians understood many practical matters, such as church administration and worship. The church's focused prayer for others is an expression of the single-minded passion God has toward us in Jesus.

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,

⁶who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time. ⁷For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

Gospel Verse

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

Gospel

Luke 16:1-13

Jesus tells the curious story of a dishonest manager who cheats his employer and then is commended by him for having acted so shrewdly. Jesus wonders why his own followers are less creative and diligent in their stewardship given that they are managers of a far more valuable household.

The Gospel according to Luke, 16th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord!

¹Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ²So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ ³Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ ⁵So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ ⁷Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ ⁸And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

ELW #631



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,
ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

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 scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's good creation.

A brief silence.

God our Savior, you keep your whole church in faith and truth. Accompany those preparing for baptism or affirmation of baptism. Enlighten preachers, teachers, seminarians, and all those who share your good news with the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Divine teacher, you instruct your children to be responsible stewards of your creation. Show us how best to care for the earth and its resources, and guide those who work to develop sustainable practices. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the nations, you direct those in authority. Give leaders wisdom and compassion so that all may live in peace. Inspire public servants to follow the example of courageous leaders and safeguard the dignity of each person. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Helper of the needy, you lift up those who are oppressed. Breathe justice into economic and social systems that perpetuate poverty and hunger. Sustain food ministries, clothing banks, and emergency shelters. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Sustainer and giver of life, you bless our Covenant family with abundance. Instruct us in the proper and faithful use of wealth and resources, that we share generously. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, you gather your saints around your throne. Keep us thankful for the witness of those who have gone before us, and bring us with them to the heavenly feast that has no end. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen!**

Great Thanksgiving

The score consists of four staves of music in a single system, written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The music is a simple melody with lyrics underneath. The first staff is split between 'Presider:' and 'Congregation:'. The second staff is also split, with 'Presider:' singing the first part and 'Congregation:' singing the second. The third and fourth staves are also split between 'Presider:' and 'Congregation:'.

Presider: *Congregation:*
The Lord be with you. **And** al-so with you.

Presider: *Congregation:*
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Presider: *Congregation:*
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is**
right to give God thanks and praise.

It is our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ who calls us to follow his way of humble service and love. And so, with the church on earth and the host of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and
might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!
Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

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 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.**

Invitation to Communion

Christ invites you to this table of grace.
Taste and see that the Lord is good!
Thanks be to God!

Communion

Music Interlude *Jesus Love Me* (Waltz)

Prayer after Communion

God of the abundant table,
you have refreshed our hearts in this meal
with bread for the journey.
Give us your grace on the road
that we might serve our neighbors with joy;
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen!**

Blessing

God, who gives life to all
and frees us from despair,
bless you with truth and peace.
And may the holy Trinity, † one God,
guide you always in faith, hope, and love.
Amen!



1 God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from your rich and end - less store:
 2 Skills and time are ours for press - ing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
 3 Trea - sure, too, you have en - trust - ed, gain through pow'rs your grace con - ferred;



na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom, cost - ly cross, grave's shat - tered door,
 all at peace in health and free - dom, rac - es joined, the church made one.
 ours to use for home and kin - dred, and to spread the gos - pel word.



gift - ed by you, we turn to you, of - f'ring up our - selves in praise;
 Now di - rect our dai - ly la - bor, lest we strive for self a - lone;
 O - pen wide our hands in shar - ing, as we heed Christ's age - less call,



thank - ful song shall rise for - ev - er, gra - cious do - nor of our days.
 born with tal - ents, make us ser - vants fit to an - swer at your throne.
 heal - ing, teach - ing, and re - claim - ing, serv - ing you by lov - ing all.

Text: Robert L. Edwards, 1915–2006

Music: RUSTINGTON, C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848–1918

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Dismissal

Go in peace with Christ always beside you!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *God of Righteousness* (Paxton)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Sheena Cameron, Joan Clarke, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Clare Hanusz, Alex Hohenstein, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Mary Ann Noll, Sam Reddig, Steve Senderak, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susanek, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, 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.

General Fund receipts for week ending 9/11/2022: \$2015



We are delighted that 2022 marks 75 years of ministry as a Covenant family! And so, we will boldly celebrate on Reformation Sunday (October 30) with worship in the sanctuary at 9am and a catered brunch following the worship in our fellowship hall. Bishop Emeritus Abraham Allende will preach, and we will also have our ecumenical handbell choir and the Wolf Creek brass quintet join us to make the day all the more special as we give thanks to God for the honor to be part

of this wonderful body of Christ. We only ask that if you do plan on joining us, to RSVP to Jen Lasher-Dobush by Sunday, October 16, as we need a head-count for the meal. We hope to see you here!

FREE
community
MEAL

This Thursday, September 22 (5-6pm) downstairs in our fellowship hall, where we invite you to have a seat and enjoy a FREE meal with our neighbors!

Lectionary Blog: Unrighteous Wealth

In a stunning contrast to previous weeks, Jesus teaches about the right way to pursue comfort in this week's lectionary reading. Of course, the comfort that Jesus tries to draw his hearers to is eternal dwellings rather than passing wealth. Indeed, he insists that people should rid themselves of unrighteous wealth in order to follow God more faithfully.

To begin the lectionary reading, Jesus tells a frequently misunderstood parable. A manager has been accused of mismanaging his master's assets. Before he is removed completely from his post, the manager goes to each of his master's debtors and, depending on your reading, either drastically slashes what they owe or gives them credit for fictitious payments. Either way, the manager has made friends of the debtors and has even impressed his boss with his shrewdness. Please note: Jesus is not telling his followers to cheat on their bills. Far from it!

After Jesus tells the parable, he makes a wry observation: The children of this age are shrewder when dealing with their generation than the children of light (Luke 16:8). People outside the kingdom of heaven know how to use money to win friends and influence people. People in the kingdom of heaven aren't so clever with the use of money. If ordinary folks know how to use unrighteous mammon (9, 11), or wealth/greed personified, in order to build up resources for themselves in this life, why don't the citizens of the kingdom of heaven know this skill? After all, Jesus' followers, as we have been reading this summer, are to seek to divest themselves of their wealth. One cannot seek to build up wealth for themselves and at the same time follow God (13). It's simply not possible. Mammon is an alternative lord, who is served by acquisitiveness and wealth accumulation.

Of course, Jesus isn't the first one to point out this simple binary choice between serving God and acquiring wealth. One of the fieriest prophets in Israel's history, Amos, observed the situation in the prosperous Northern Kingdom: the rich trampled the needy and caused the deaths of the humble. The rich couldn't wait for the Sabbath to be over so they could again use fraudulent weights and measures to cheat their customers. They plotted to reduce the price of humans so they could enslave people for less cost and greater profit. They even plotted to sell chaff as if it were grain, literally selling worthlessness as if it were life-giving food (Amos 8:4-6). The pursuit of wealth has

always led some humans to abuse others—whenever they can and for whatever profit. Maximizing wealth at the cost of others’ well-being was as incompatible with the worship of God in the eighth century as it was in Jesus’ day and in the 21st century too.

Jesus calls his followers to be trustworthy and faithful in using the wealth of unrighteousness for building up the kingdom, rather than themselves (Luke 16:10-11). He calls us to turn our backs on greed and wealth, and to get rid of money in such a way that it will be a blessing to God and others. Using resources, not just money but time and talents as well, to undo injustice is a great start.

Sarah Driver (my spouse) wrote a helpful primer on practical ways to reject mammon and be richly involved in justice work. Another easy way that we can follow Jesus in his calling is through ethical investing. The Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment is a great first step toward making sure that our resources aren’t involved in stocks or companies that perform evil in the world. If you are involved in Thrivent, its financial counselors can help you invest ethically as well, to ensure that your resources help others rather than hurt them.

In the modern world, with scary news all around, it’s all too natural to want to build up a nest egg as a hedge of security against very real financial threats. Jesus says that impulse is itself a threat to our ability to follow God. Instead, Jesus insists, we must be at least as shrewd as others in this world to find ways to use the resources that we have to bless God and our neighbor. These will then welcome us into eternal dwellings (Luke 16:9).

This Lectionary Blog, and other resources for the journey of faith, available at LivingLutheran.org.



*Cory Driver is an ELCA missionary serving as the director of graduate studies at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo (Egypt). His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*