



Grace Lutheran Church

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2020

ELW Service of the Word

Good morning & Welcome to Grace!

Our mission is to invite and welcome all to the fellowship of Christ in service to our community.

We are glad you are with us for worship today.

We offer a special welcome to all those who are joining us remotely through Facebook Live or on YouTube.

THIS IS A HOUSE OF PRAISE AND PRAYER, OF WORSHIP AND REJOICING. If you have a prayer request or a thanksgiving, you may send it to the Church Office, and it will be added to the published list (if you desire) and also forwarded to our Prayer Team. Contact info for the office is at the back of the bulletin. Thanks!

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP AT GRACE! Each week, prior to the reading of scripture, a special Children's Message is offered for our young ones. While we are not having the children come forward at this time, we will still include it in the service.

YOUR BULLETIN contains the worship service in its entirety. You will notice that we currently do not have any hymns included in the service. There is still a Prelude and Postlude, as well as instrumental music. For the time being, we will not be singing as a congregation. However, as much as possible, we will try to have at least one pre-recorded vocal performance each week. We kindly ask that, if you know the song, you refrain from singing along. We realize many among you love music, and it is something you miss from worship. However, we ask this for the health and safety of everyone in attendance. Thank you.

DURING THIS EXTRAORDINARY TIME, we have prayerfully chosen to suspend physical Communion. On some Sundays, we may celebrate Spiritual Communion – where we see the Bread and the Wine, we hear the Words of Institution and give thanks for God's mercy to us. However, at this time, we will not receive the actual Bread and Wine, the Body and Blood of Christ. We know that many of you desire the Meal. Please know that we are working on ways to provide this Sacrament to you that are both holy and healthy.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS about our worship service - generally or specifically in this time of pandemic - about Baptism or Communion, about what Lutherans believe, or even about Grace Lutheran Church, please do not hesitate to reach out to our pastor.

Again, welcome to worship!

GATHERING ~ The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Bold type = Assembly

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Those moved to do so may stand.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✙ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen**

GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray,

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

MUSICAL OFFERING

Vocal Anthem

WORD ~ God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

EZEKIEL 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 25:1-9 (*Read responsively – Regular print: Men; Bold print: Women*)

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

³Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸**You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

SECOND READING

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (*Spoken in unison*)

Those moved to do so may stand.

Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

MATTHEW 21: 23-32

The holy gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 21st chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you

this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

REFLECTION ~ *“Calling A Thing What It Actually Is”* ~ by Dr. Cameron B.A. Howard

Those moved to do so may stand.

APOSTLES’ CREED

Let us affirm our faith using the words of the 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

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Each petition ends, Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

THANKSGIVING ~ We give thanks to God for all our blessings.

MUSICAL OFFERING

Piano Solo

This is normally the place in the service where we would collect the offering. We understand that this pandemic is making many people uneasy, and that finances are a concern for some among us. We ask that you please remember that our expenses continue, as well, even while we are practicing social distancing; that we still have bills to pay and the day to day costs of running a church to cover. We humbly and prayerfully ask that – if at all possible – you continue to be faithful to your financial commitment to Grace.

For those who are physically present in our worship space today, we ask that your offerings be placed in the plates at the back of the church either on your way into the service, or on your way out (please do not get up in the middle of the service, as we are trying to limit movement). For those who are participating from home, we ask that benevolence be mailed to the church office (the address is on the back page of the bulletin).

Those moved to do so may stand.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

SENDING ~ God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, remember the poor. **We will. Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Grace Lutheran Church
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MINISTERS: All the people of God

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WORSHIP LEADER FOR TODAY: Joy Becker

MUSIC PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Leslie Heffner – heffnerl@gmail.com

ORGANIST / PIANIST: Johnny Shaw, IV

A/V MANAGER:

Please remember in prayer:

Susan Brafford, Buz Elden, Karen Bradley, Theresa Hollar, Gwen Carriere, Bill Owen, Grant Gandy, Trevor Rogers, Gail Jeffrey, Pastor Bob Schaefer, Maria Eckard, Jerry Wennlund, Christopher Rosser, Joe/Jane McRory, Sallie Robinson, Kevin Robinson, Jackie Barksdale, Marilyn Price, Dan Poole, Irene Poole, Debbie, Jessica, Laura, Jose; DJ and Kathy Hartley; Mary and Dave Grant, Pastor Jenn and Rob; Pastor Marianne and her husband, Carl; John, Jenifer and children; Lisa Conti, her husband, Tommy Seal, and, their son, Dane Conti Seal; Ken and Joyce Staib and baby Mason; June Lawrence and family; the Swan family; the Dinsmore family; all those suffering with chronic pain; St. Stephen Lutheran Church and Pastor Tom Holdcraft; the Florida-Bahamas Synod and our Bishop, Pedro Suarez; the ELCA and our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton.

Please also lift up:

All military personnel and their families; all first responders; relief from the wildfires in California, Oregon, and Washington; those impacted by Hurricanes Sally, Laura & Marco and those still cleaning up after Hurricane Michael; the homeless and the hungry; all those who have lost their jobs; all those who face eviction; all those who are facing anxiety; all victims, researchers, and medical personnel affected by the Covid 19 virus, especially those on the front lines. Grace Lutheran as we face the Covid 19 virus.

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