



The 17th Sunday after Pentecost
Worship with Holy Communion
September 24, 2023

Good morning & welcome to Grace in this, the time after Pentecost.

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

As we enter the season of Autumn, people are back from vacation, school has resumed, work becomes busier for many, the church calendar picks up, and folks are generally settling back into routines. In the midst of all this, our texts in this season ask us to ponder questions such as: With what grace should I treat others? What does it look like to work together as disciples in the world?

We are glad you are with us for worship today, and to give thanks for the grace, mercy and hope offered to us in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We offer a special welcome to any guests who may be with us this morning, and to all those who are joining us via Live-Stream.

Children are welcome in worship at Grace! The voices of children only enhance worship, and they are welcome in this space! And, if needed, there is a nursery available for any family to use.

Your bulletin contains the worship service in its entirety, **and your parts are printed in bold type.**

In thanksgiving to God for the saving grace shown to all of us in the death and resurrection of Christ, we celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion each week. All are welcome at the Table. We do come forward to the front of the sanctuary for communion. The Pastor stands in the center of the aisle with the bread. Gluten free bread is available – just ask when you come forward. Finally, communion assistants are located on both sides of the sanctuary, with both **wine (red)** and **juice (white)** based on your preference. Please place your empty cup in the bowl on your way back to your seat after you commune.

For those participating from home, please have a small glass of wine or juice and a small piece of bread available for all who are planning to commune. When we come to the Meal portion of the service, please eat your bread and drink your cup as you are moved to do so.

If you have questions about our worship service, please don't hesitate to ask someone around you. For more information 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! We're glad you're here!

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

PRELUDE

"I Need Thee Every Hour"

Mark Hayes

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, † Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete. **Amen**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God, **you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen**

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen**

GATHERING HYMN

"As Saints of Old"

ELW 695

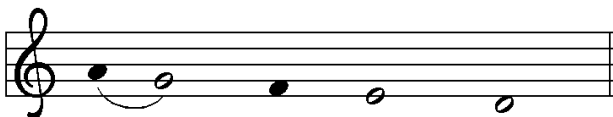
GREETING

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.**

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



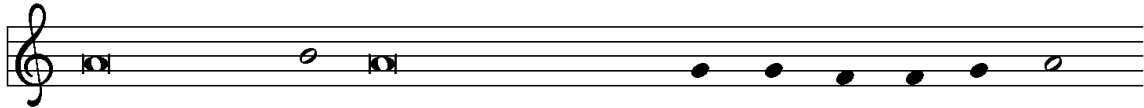
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



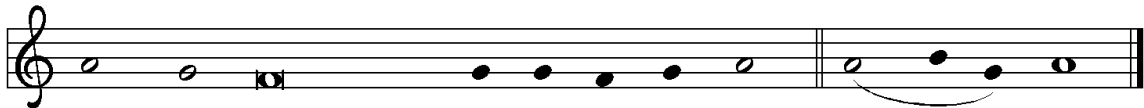
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



Assisting minister

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

MUSICAL OFFERING

"I've Got Peace Like a River"

Mark Hayes

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

FIRST READING

Jonah 3:10 – 4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites? And we read:

¹⁰When God saw what [the people of Nineveh] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

^{4:1}But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. ³And now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

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

PSALM 145:1 - 8 (read in unison)

¹I will exalt you, my God and king, and bless your name forever and ever.

²Every day will I bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

³Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised! There is no end to your greatness.

⁴One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your power.

⁵I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty and all your marvelous works.

**⁶They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will recount your greatness.**

**⁷They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.**

**⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:21 - 30

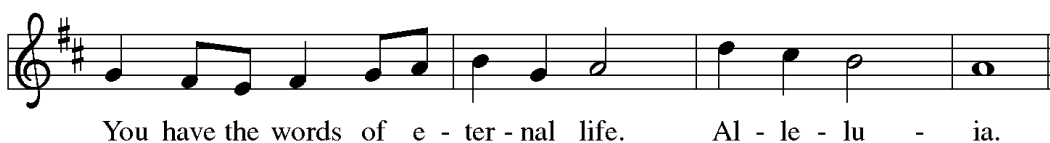
Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission. And we read:

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well – ³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



The holy gospel, according to Saint Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve. And we read:

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, 'You also, go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So, they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon, and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock, he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also, go into the vineyard.' ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³But [the landowner] replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

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

SERMON**HYMN OF THE DAY***"Lord of All Hopefulness"***ELW 765****THE 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 power of 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 & THE PEACE

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors (*a brief silence*).

God who is gracious and merciful, teach your church to invite and welcome all. Lead us to be grateful for the blessing of community. Challenge your church to choose equity and compassion over judgment. You send the wind and the sun, and you know every worm and bush by name. Help us remember that even the humblest parts of creation are precious to you, and show us how best to care for the earth and its creatures. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who is ready to relent from punishing, impart your compassionate wisdom to legislators, judges, members of the military, and law enforcement. Give them courage to serve their communities in times of uncertainty, stress, or exhaustion. We lift up to you today especially, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and the government and people of Ukraine. Be with your children in the aftermath of calamity and disaster, especially those impacted by Idalia, and the victims of the flooding in Libya, and Derna in particular. Encourage all who are in despair or pain of any kind, especially those on our prayer list, those known only to you, and all who we name before you now in our hearts. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God who is slow to anger, may we boast about the goodness of Jesus with the confidence of Paul in prison. Inspire us to find abundance in whatever vocation we are called to in the world and in service to our congregation. You abound in steadfast love for us, and for all your people, and we give thanks for the saints, especially those who have nourished our faith, who have been called to the kingdom of heaven. United with them in spirit, hold us firm as we labor in this life and look to the life to come. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

At this time, you are invited to greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL ~ God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

CHANCEL CHOIR

"Come and Be Among Us, Lord"

Lloyd Larson

OFFERING

If you would like to offer a gift, the collection plate is located at the back of the sanctuary for your convenience. Thank you for your continued support of our mission and ministry.

OFFERING RESPONSE

"We Are An Offering"

ELW 692

OFFERING PRAYER

God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (Those moved to do so may rise.)

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The presiding minister continues with the proper preface:

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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 death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen**

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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live. **Amen**

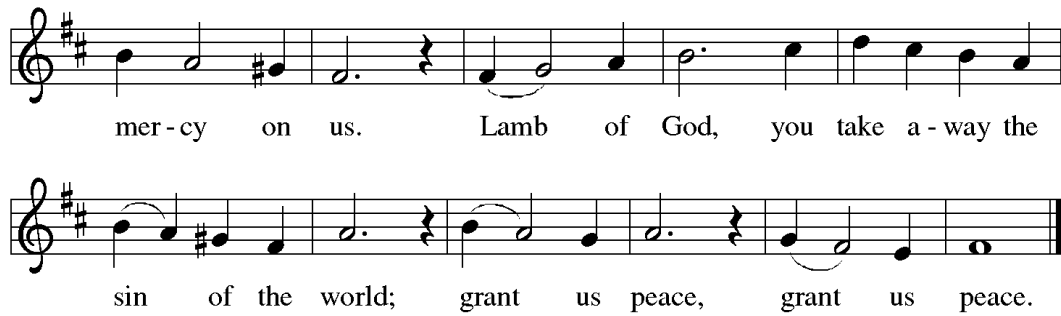
LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

“Give Me Jesus”

ELW 770

“There’s A Wideness in God’s Mercy”

ELW 466

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you, and keep you in his grace.
Amen

Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus’ name we pray. **Amen**

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

BLESSING

The God of glory, † Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. **Amen**

SENDING HYMN

“Rise Up, O Saints of God!”

ELW 669

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.
We will! Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

ELW 705

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