

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

3 SEPTEMBER 2023



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

HOLY COMMUNION WORSHIP SERVICE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING 10

*The **liturgy** is in the front of the ELW starting on page 203.*

*The **hymns** begin in the middle of the ELW with numbers at the top of the pages.*

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be God, the one who forms us, Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

C: Amen.

P: Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sins.

P: Steadfast and faithful God,

C: 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.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

HYMN #681 "WE PLOW THE FIELDS AND SCATTER"

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

♪ KYRIE (PAGE 203)

**♪ Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

♪ CANTICLE OF PRAISE (PAGE 204)

**♪ Glory be to God in heaven; peace, goodwill to all the earth.
Mighty God of all creation, Father of surpassing worth:
we exalt you, we adore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
Saints and angels bow before you; here on earth our songs we raise.**

**Glory be to Christ forever, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
Son of God and gracious Savior, you have come from heav'n above;
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Hear our prayer; restore, forgive us; in your promise firm we stand.**

**Holy One we now acclaim you; Lord alone, to you we call;
Holy One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:
Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit, in the Father's splendor bright.
For the peace that we inherit, glory be to God on high!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...our Savior and Lord.*)

C: Amen

READINGS

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (PAGE 205)

**♪ Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.
Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.
Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.**

GOSPEL

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 16th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY – DAN BURKE

HYMN #879 “FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH”

CONFESSION OF FAITH: APOSTLES’ CREED

P: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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

P: Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray
for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

(Each petition ends: P: Merciful God, C: receive our prayer.)

P: 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.

C: Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...Jesus Christ, our Savior.*)

C: Amen.

HYMN #729 “THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN EVERY AGE”

LORD’S PRAYER

**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.**

BLESSING

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

HYMN #820 “O SAVIOR, PRECIOUS SAVIOR”

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. God is at work in you.

C: Thanks be to God!

RINGING OF THE BELL

POSTLUDE

Pastor: Rev. Leah Holloway-Nilsen
Organist: Jason Bousselot or Linda Whitman
Acolyte: David Burke
Lector: Joyce McCutcheon
Communion Assistant: Deb Detlefs
Usher: Joe Morehead
Cleaners: Shane and Amy Glover

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This Week At A Glance

Wednesday	6:00 pm 6:30 pm	Confirmation students/parents at Faith ELCA Youth Gathering meeting Faith
Sunday	8:00 am 9:25 am 10:30 am	Worship service at Faith Sunday School at Our Savior's Worship service at Our Savior's

Those to keep in prayer: the homebound: Carol Christensen, Shirley Ferguson, Ron Gasper, Delores Lahann, Myrna Kay Petersen, Rusty Porth, Betty Schau, Bus Seastrand and Vera St. John; and those serving in the military: Nick Timmerman.

Volunteers will be in the church office at Faith Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00 am – noon.

The fall worship schedule will begin on Sunday, September 10th.
8:00 am worship at Faith, 9:25 am Sunday School at Our Savior's,
10:30 am worship at Our Savior's.

The first day of **Sunday School** will be Sunday, September 10th at Our Savior's starting at 9:25 am. There are classes for all ages.

Confirmand/Parent meeting on September 6th at Faith at 6:00 pm.

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering meeting with parents on September 6th at Faith at 6:30 pm.

Naomi Circle will meet Wednesday, September 13th at 10:00 am at Marsha Witte's home

Confirmation begins September 13th at Faith at 6:00 pm.

Bible Jam (open to all in 7th – 12th grade) begins September 13th at Faith at 7:00 pm.

Education committee will meet September 13th at Faith at 7:00 pm.

Outreach committee (6:00 pm), Worship committee (6:30 pm) and Church Councils (7:00 pm) will meet on September 14th at Faith.

The **noisy offering** will be collected on, Sunday, September 17th.

Pastor Leah will be having Communion Instruction Classes and acolyte training in October. Please see Pastor Leah if you are interested. An official date and time will be determined by what works best for those interested. Acolyte instruction is for 5th graders and anyone who would like a refresher. Communion instruction is recommended for 4th grade and up, but all ages (adults too!) are welcome.

The Great Challenge

Matthew 16:24-26 Then Jesus said to his disciples: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and let him follow me. For whoever wishes to keep his life safe, will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it. For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world at the penalty of the price of his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?"

Here we have one of the dominant and ever-recurring themes of Jesus' teaching. These are things which Jesus said to men again and again (Matthew 10:37-39; Mark 8:34-37; Luke 9:23-27; Luke 14:25-27; Luke 17:33; John 12:25). Again and again he confronted them with the challenge of the Christian life. There are three things which a man must be prepared to do, if he is to live the Christian life.

(i) He must deny himself. Ordinarily we use the word self-denial in a restricted sense. We use it to mean giving up something. For instance, a week of self-denial may be a week when we do without certain pleasures or luxuries in order to contribute to some good cause. But that is only a very small part of what Jesus meant by self-denial. To deny oneself means in every moment of life to say no to self and yes to God. To deny oneself means once, finally and for all to dethrone self and to enthrone God. To deny oneself means to obliterate self as the dominant principle of life, and to make God the ruling principle, more, the ruling passion, of life. The life of constant self-denial is the life of constant assent to God.

(ii) He must take up his cross. That is to say, he must take up the burden of sacrifice. The Christian life is the life of sacrificial service. The Christian may have to abandon personal ambition to serve Christ; it may be that he will discover that the place where he can render the greatest service to Jesus Christ is somewhere where the reward will be small and the prestige non-existent. He will certainly have to sacrifice time and leisure and pleasure in order to serve God through the service of his fellow-men.

To put it quite simply, the comfort of the fireside, the pleasure of a visit to a place of entertainment, may well have to be sacrificed for the duties of the eldership, the calls of the youth club, the visit to the home of some sad or lonely soul. He may well have to sacrifice certain things he could well afford to possess in order to give more away. The Christian life is the sacrificial life.

Luke, with a flash of sheer insight, adds one word to this command of Jesus: "Let him take up his cross daily." The really important thing is not the great moments of sacrifice, but a life lived in the constant hourly awareness of the demands of God and the need of others. The Christian life is a life which is always concerned with others more than it is concerned with itself.

(iii) He must follow Jesus Christ. That is to say, he must render to Jesus Christ a perfect obedience. When we were young we used to play a game called "Follow my Leader." Everything the leader did, however difficult, and, in the case of the game, however ridiculous, we had to copy. The Christian life is a constant following of our leader, a constant obedience in thought and word and action to Jesus Christ. The Christian walks in the footsteps of Christ, wherever he may lead.

Losing and Finding Life

There is all the difference in the world between existing and living. To exist is simply to have the lungs breathing and the heart beating; to live is to be alive in a world where everything is worth while, where there is peace in the soul, joy in the heart, and a thrill in every moment. Jesus here gives us the recipe for life as distinct from existence.

(i) The man who plays for safety loses life. Matthew was writing somewhere between A.D. 80 and 90. He was therefore writing in some of the bitterest days of persecution. He was saying: "The time may well come when you can save your life by abandoning your faith; but if you do, so far from saving life, in the real sense of the term you are losing life." The man who is faithful may die but he

dies to live; the man who abandons his faith for safety may live, but he lives to die.

In our day and generation it is not likely to be a question of martyrdom, but it still remains a fact that, if we meet life in the constant search for safety, security, ease and comfort, if every decision is taken from worldly-wise and prudential motives, we are losing all that makes life worth while. Life becomes a soft and flabby thing, when it might have been an adventure. Life becomes a selfish thing, when it might have been radiant with service. Life becomes an earthbound thing when it might have been reaching for the stars. Someone once wrote a bitter epitaph on a man: "He was born a man and died a grocer." Any trade or profession might be substituted for the word grocer. The man who plays for safety ceases to be a man, for man is made in the image of God.

(ii) The man who risks all--and maybe looks as if he had lost all--for Christ, finds life. It is the simple lesson of history that it has always been the adventurous souls, bidding farewell to security and safety, who wrote their names on history and greatly helped the world of men. Unless there had been those prepared to take risks, many a medical cure would not exist. Unless there had been those prepared to take risks, many of the machines which make life easier would never have been invented. Unless there were mothers prepared to take risks, no child would ever be born. It is the man who is prepared "to bet his life that there is a God" who in the end finds life.

(iii) Then Jesus speaks with warning: "Suppose a man plays for safety; suppose he gains the whole world; then suppose that he finds that life is not worth living, what can he give to get life back again?" And the grim truth is that he cannot get life back again. In every decision of life we are doing something to ourselves; we are making ourselves a certain kind of person; we are building up steadily and inevitably a certain kind of character; we are making ourselves able to do certain things and quite unable to do others. It is perfectly possible for a man to gain all the things he set his heart upon, and then to awaken one morning to find that he has missed the most important things of all.

The world stands for material things as opposed to God; and of all material things there are three things to be said. (a) No one can take them with him at the end; he can take only himself; and if he degraded himself in order to get them, his regret will be bitter. (b) They cannot help a man in the shattering days of life. Material things will never mend a broken heart or cheer a lonely soul. (c) If by any chance a man gained his material possessions in a way that is dishonourable, there will come a day when conscience will speak, and he will know hell on this side of the grave.

The world is full of voices crying out that he is a fool who sells real life for material things.

(iv) Finally Jesus asks: "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The Greek is, "What antallagma will a man give for his soul?" Antallagma is an interesting word. In the book of Ecclesiasticus we read: "There is no antallagma for a faithful friend," and, "There is no antallagma for a disciplined soul" (Ecc 6:15; Ecc 26:14). It means that there is no price which will buy a faithful friend or a disciplined soul. So then this final saying of Jesus can mean two things.

(a) It can mean: Once a man has lost his real life, because of his desire for security and for material things, there is no price that he can pay to get it back again. He has done something to himself which cannot ever be fully obliterated.

(b) It can mean: A man owes himself and everything else to Jesus Christ; and there is nothing that a man can give to Christ in place of his life. It is quite possible for a man to try to give his money to Christ and to withhold his life. It is still more possible for a man to give lip-service to Christ and to withhold his life. Many a person gives his weekly freewill offering to the Church, but does not attend; obviously that does not satisfy the demands of church membership. The only possible gift to the Church is ourselves; and the only possible gift to Christ is our whole life. There is no substitute for it. Nothing less will do.