

# EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 OCTOBER 2023



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

# **SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION**

## ***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 #517 "LORD, KEEP US STEADFAST IN YOUR WORD"**

### **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 21<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **YOUTH SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN**

### **SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN**

### **HYMN #617 “WE COME TO YOU FOR HEALING, LORD”**

### **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...our Savior and Lord.*)

**C: Amen.**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **PREFACE** [PAGE 207]

P: It is indeed right...and join their unending hymn:

**C:       ♪ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
              heav'n and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **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.**

## ***Holy Communion is celebrated today.***

*All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are invited to receive Holy Communion  
Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

♪ **O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.**

### **HYMN #812 “FAITH OF OUR FATHERS”**

#### **POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and  
keep you in his grace.

**C: Amen**

#### **POST COMMUNION HYMN**

♪ **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heav’nly host;  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

#### **POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

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

**C: Amen.**

#### **BLESSING**

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

**C: Amen.**

### **HYMN #870 “WE PRAISE YOU, O GOD”**

#### **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:** Faith Will  
**Lector:** Marcia Edens  
**Communion Assistant:** Cindy Burke  
**Usher:** Dan Burke  
**Cleaners:** Ray and Deb Detlefs

### **Contact Information:**

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### **This Week At A Glance**

Wednesday	6:00 pm	Confirmation at Faith
	7:00 pm	Bible Jam at Faith
Sunday	8:00 am	Worship service at Faith
	9:25 am	Sunday School at Our Savior's
	10:30 am	Worship service at Our Savior's

**Those to keep in prayer:** Mallory Bousselot; 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.

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

**Bible Jam** (open to all in 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) is held Wednesday at Faith at 7:00 pm following confirmation class. The youth meet for food, fellowship and fun.

**Meals** are served on Wednesdays to the youth attending confirmation and Bible Jam. If you would be willing to prepare and serve a meal, please contact Heather Grau at 563.424.0507.

You can become a stockholder to support the youth who plan to attend the **2024 ELCA Youth Gathering**. **Stockholders** will receive mail from the youth while in New Orleans and an exclusive invitation to a “Dine & Share” event when they return from the Gathering. Shares cost \$50 each. Fill out and follow the directions on a “Shares Request” form. Contact Heather Grau at 563.424.0507 if you have questions.

Pastor Leah will be having a **Communion Instruction Class** on Monday, October 9, at 6:00 pm at Faith. Please contact Pastor Leah if you are interested. Communion instruction is recommended for children who have not yet received communion. The children should attend with their parents. All ages (adults too!) are welcome to come to class for a refresher on the meaning of communion.



# The Expedient Ignorance

*Matthew 21:23-27 When Jesus had come into the Temple precincts, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?" Jesus answered them, "I will ask you one question, and if you give me an answer to it, I too will tell you by what authority I do these things. Whence was the baptism of John? Was it from heaven? Or, was it from men?" They debated within themselves. "If," they said, "we say 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe in him?' But, if we say, 'From men,' we fear the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." So he too said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."*

When we think of the extraordinary things Jesus had been doing, we cannot be surprised that the Jewish authorities asked him what right he had to do them. At the moment Jesus was not prepared to give them the direct answer that his authority came from the fact that he was the Son of God. To do so would have been to precipitate the end. There were actions still to be done and teaching still to be given. It sometimes takes more courage to bide one's time and to await the necessary moment, than it does to throw oneself on the enemy and invite the end. For Jesus everything had to be done in God's time; and the time for the final crisis had not yet come.

So he countered the question of the Jewish authorities with a question of his own, one which placed them in a dilemma. He asked them whether John's ministry came from heaven or from men, whether it was divine or merely human in its origin. Were those who went out to be baptized at the Jordan responding to a merely human impulse or were they in fact answering a divine challenge? The dilemma of the Jewish authorities was this. If they said that the ministry of John was from God, then they had no alternative to admitting that Jesus was the Messiah, for John had

borne definite and unmistakable witness to that fact. On the other hand, if they denied that John's ministry came from God, then they would have to bear the anger of the people, who were convinced that he was the messenger of God.

For a moment the Jewish chief priests and elders were silent. Then they gave the lamest of all lame answers. They said, "We do not know." If ever men stood self-condemned, they did. They ought to have known; it was part of the duty of the Sanhedrin, of which they were members, to distinguish between true and false prophets; and they were saying that they were unable to make that distinction. Their dilemma drove them into a shameful self-humiliation.

There is a grim warning here. There is such a thing as the deliberately assumed ignorance of cowardice. If a man consults expediency rather than principle, his first question will be, not, "What is the truth?" but, "What is it safe to say?" Again and again his worship of expediency will drive him to a cowardly silence. He will lamely say, "I do not know the answer," when he well knows the answer, but is afraid to give it. The true question is not: "What is it safe to say?" but, "What is it right to say?"

The deliberately assumed ignorance of fear, the cowardly silence of expediency are shameful things. If a man knows the truth, he is under obligation to tell it, though the heavens should fall.

## **The Better Of Two Bad Sons**

*Matthew 28-32 Jesus said: "What do you think? A man had two children, He went to the first and said, 'Child, go and work in my vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not.' But afterwards he changed his mind and went. He went to the second and spoke to him in the same way. He answered, 'Certainly, sir.' And he did not go. Which of these two did the will of his father?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them: "This is the truth I tell you--the tax-collectors and harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.*

*For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe in him; but the tax-gatherers and harlots did believe in him. And when you saw this, you did not even then change your minds, and so come to believe in him."*

The meaning of this parable is crystal clear. The Jewish leaders are the people who said they would obey God and then did not. The tax-gatherers and the harlots are those who said that they would go their own way and then took God's way.

The key to the correct understanding of this parable is that it is not really praising anyone. It is setting before us a picture of two very imperfect sets of people, of whom one set were none the less better than the other. Neither son in the story was the kind of son to bring full joy to his father. Both were unsatisfactory; but the one who in the end obeyed was incalculably better than the other. The ideal son would be the son who accepted the father's orders with obedience and with respect and who unquestioningly and fully carried them out. But there are truths in this parable which go far beyond the situation in which it was first spoken.

It tells us that there are two very common classes of people in this world. First, there are the people whose profession is much better than their practice. They will promise anything; they make great protestations of piety and fidelity; but their practice lags far behind. Second, there are those whose practice is far better than their profession. They claim to be tough, hardheaded materialists, but somehow they are found out doing kindly and generous things, almost in secret, as if they were ashamed of it. They profess to have no interest in the Church and in religion, and yet, when it comes to the bit, they live more Christian lives than many professing Christians.

We have all of us met these people, those whose practice is far away from the almost sanctimonious piety of their profession, and those whose practice is far ahead of the sometimes cynical, and sometimes almost irreligious, profession which they make. The real point of the parable is that, while the second class are infinitely to be preferred to the first, neither is anything like

perfect. The really good man is the man in whom profession and practice meet and match.

Further, this parable teaches us that promises can never take the place of performance, and fine words are never a substitute for fine deeds. The son who said he would go, and did not, had all the outward marks of courtesy. In his answer he called his father "Sir" with all respect. But a courtesy which never gets beyond words is a totally illusory thing. True courtesy is obedience, willingly and graciously given. On the other hand the parable teaches us that a man can easily spoil a good thing by the way he does it. He can do a fine thing with a lack of graciousness and a lack of winsomeness which spoil the whole deed. Here we learn that the Christian way is in performance and not promise, and that the mark of a Christian is obedience graciously and courteously given.

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