

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 12

July 25, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.

AS WE GATHER

The hymn insists, “God Himself is present” and “God is in His temple” (*LSB* 907). This hymn reminds us of the prophet Isaiah’s amazing vision of God in the temple when he heard the eternal song of the angels, “Holy, holy, holy,” causing the prophet to cringe, bow, and kneel at the awesome and fearful presence of God. Today, we bring ourselves with our own fears and hear how Jesus’ disciples witnessed their Lord’s real presence amid their strains and pains in a boat struggling against the wind. So today for you God is present with healing, forgiveness, and life not in the imagination but in the objective truth of His inspired Word, by your Baptism, and in the taste and touch of His body and blood given and shed for you. You cannot get any more real than that. “Let us now adore Him And with awe appear before Him.”

HYMN “Come, Thou Almighty King” *LSB* 905

1 Come, Thou almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing;
 Help us to praise;
Father all-glorious,
O’er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
 Ancient of Days.

2 Come, Thou incarnate Word,
Gird on Thy mighty sword;
 Our prayer attend.
Come and Thy people bless,
And give Thy Word success,
And let Thy righteousness
 On us descend.

3 Come, holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear
 In this glad hour!
Thou, who almighty art,
Now rule in ev’ry heart,
And ne’er from us depart,
 Spirit of pow’r.

△ 4 To Thee, great One in Three,
Eternal praises be
 Hence evermore!
Thy sov’reign majesty
May we in glory see,
And to eternity
 Love and adore.
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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE “Hallelujah, My Father” -Tim Cullen

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Hallelujah, my Father, for giving us Your Son;
Sending Him into the world to be given up for all,
Knowing we would bruise Him and smite Him from the earth.
Hallelujah, my Father, in His death is my birth.
Hallelujah, my Father, in His life is my life.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and most merciful God, the protector of all who trust in You, strengthen our faith and give us courage to believe that in Your love You will rescue us from all adversities; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Genesis 9:8–17* (The covenant of the rainbow) God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM *Psalms 136:1–9*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever; to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever; the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever; the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever;

EPISTLE *Ephesians 3:14–21* (Prayer for spiritual strength) For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Mark 6:45–56* (Jesus walks on water.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the sixth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Immediately [Jesus] made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY “Lavish Love, Abundant Beauty” –Text by Peter Ellis

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Lavish love, abundant beauty, gracious gifts for heart and hand,

Life that fills the soul and senses, all burst forth at Your command.

Lord, our Lord, Eternal Father, Great Creator, God and Friend.

Boundless power gave full expression to Your love which knows no end.

Who am I that you should love me, meet my every need from birth?
Why invest Yourself so fully in a creature made of earth?
In Your loving heart You planned me, fashioned me with greatest care;
Through my soul You breathed Your Spirit, planted Your own image there.

I am Yours. Eternal Father, all my body, mind and heart.
Take and use me to Your glory, form Yourself in every part.
Lord, Your love brings joy and gladness flowing forth within my soul.
May my very breath and being rise to You, their source and goal.

SERMON “Promise and Signs” Genesis 9:8-17

- I. Eero Saarinen
- II. Noah’s Covenant and Sign (v.8-17)
 - How many times does God reference His covenant? Why might that be the case?
 - Why might Noah and his family need the covenant and sign?
 - The covenant is...
 - B _____
 - P _____
 - G _____
- III. Our Promise and Sign
 - What is the greater sign and promise?
 - God gives us other concrete ways in which we see His mercy, grace, and love outpoured. What are they?

Eero Saarinen was a Finnish-American architect who became famous for the various monuments and buildings that he designed. Without a doubt, his most famous work would have to be the St. Louis Arch (interestingly, he also designed Fort Wayne Seminary’s campus, too). The arch in St. Louis is the world’s tallest arch, and it is the tallest man-made monument in the western hemisphere. It is as wide as it is tall (630 ft), and was flawlessly constructed. It was assembled in two pieces, and if the structure was off by 1/64th of an inch, the two parts of the arch would not have been able to connect at the top! After Disney World, Disney Land, Lenin’s Tomb, and the Eiffel Tower, the arch is the fifth most visited place in the world! The arch in St. Louis is a symbol of American engineering, and was made to be a lasting sign of America’s expansion to the West. As Noah steps out of the ark with his family, he encounters a brand new world and an enduring sign of God’s mercy and peace that towers over him and creation.

In our text for today, Genesis 9, we see God continually reminding Noah and his family of His covenant. God reassures them that He will never again have all life on earth wiped out by a flood. In verses 8-11, God announces the covenant. In verses 12 to 16, God focuses on the sign of the covenant, and His remembrance of it. In verse 17, God restates what He just said. He summarizes everything in a simple sentence. All in all, God references His covenant seven times in ten verses! This is already after God just assured them in chapter eight that a flood like this wouldn’t happen a second time! So, why all the repetition? Why does God stress the covenant, and continually do so? Luther gives a helpful and insightful thought that many have echoed over the last 500 years.

He says, “The Holy Spirit is prolix....” Prolix means “using or containing too many words; tediously lengthy.” Synonyms are “long-winded”, “drawn out”, “unending”, “verbose”, and “wordy”. He says, “The Holy Spirit is prolix, but not without purpose. Therefore those who consider in what great trepidation, fear, sorrow, and danger Noah and his people have been will conclude that there was the utmost need for God to repeat and impress the same facts rather frequently.” God mentions the covenant seven times for their good and well-being. He does so because He is gracious and caring. Luther’s point is well-taken: the flood would not have been an easy experience.

Consider it from Noah’s perspective for a moment. Noah was 600 years old when the flood happened, and it was the first time that he ever saw rain in his life! Prior to the flood, the earth was watered by streams

and mists which came *from the ground up*. The flood was the first time that it rained *top down*. Can you imagine the flood being your reference point for rain showers and thunderstorms? Any rainstorm after that would be frightening! It rained for 40 days and for 40 nights. God did that because the earth was corrupt and full of violence in His sight. The intention of man's heart was only evil from youth. God was grieved that He had made humanity. The flood waters that God sent covered the world's mountains, and they covered all forms of life, killing them. Noah and his family saw the wrath of God in action and in full-effect! After 1 year and 11 days, the earth was finally dry enough for Noah and his family to embark from the ark. Given all that they went through and saw, I don't think it is far-fetched to think that Noah and his family needed some reassuring, and comfort. That is Luther's point. They just saw a potent reminder of God's wrath and displeasure of sin. A word of promise, and a sign, would be a welcomed sight.

As Noah and his family stand before God, we see God give them the covenant and a sign to strengthen and console them. He makes the covenant to impress upon them that He will never again destroy the earth by a flood. In this covenant and sign, we see God's grace, mercy, and peace in full effect.

The covenant that God makes is broad. It is given to *every living thing*: humans, birds, livestock, and every beast of the field. It is also permanent. In verse 16, God calls it "everlasting", and says that it is for all future generations. This covenant lasts to our day, and it will continue as long as earth endures. The covenant is also generous. The covenant that God gives is unconditional in every respect. He doesn't give Noah and his family conditions to fulfill; he has no requirements for us. In fact, there are no obligations given to the recipients. It is all on God. It is undeserved, too. Humanity will still sin, and still does sin. The earth is just as corrupt and full of violence as it was in Noah's day. The covenant that God makes is broad, permanent, generous, and even given a sign.

God gives a sign that they can see, that we can see. He doesn't just reassure them with words, but He also gives them something concrete, something they can point to, and observe. He gives the rainbow. The Lord says, **"I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh."** Every rainbow that follows a storm will remind human beings and creation of God's gracious promise. Whenever, and wherever, a rainbow appears, it will serve as a reminder, that despite the fact that the world deserves and has earned God's wrath and judgment, He will show restraint and mercy. The rainbow that God sets in the sky is a sign of His faithfulness. It reminds humanity that God keeps His promises, and will. It is a sign of His mercy, grace, and peace. As Noah and his family exit the ark, they receive the covenant and sign. They have their fears, trepidations, and sorrows soothed by God with His word of promise and gracious sign.

Wouldn't that be nice? Don't we want that, too? Don't we want that for our spiritual fears? That God will still be faithful, even though we haven't been. That God will still be good to us, even though we don't recognize all His blessings, or haven't thanked Him? That He will still forgive, even though we have done that same sin again and again and again? Don't we want that for fears in our life? When we have fears for others, ourselves, or world? Wouldn't a Word of promise and sign be nice? Let's go back to that Luther quote for just a moment. Remember what he said about the Holy Spirit? He said the Holy Spirit is prolix, but not without purpose. He shows us how God dealt with Noah and his family, by giving them a word of promise and sign, repeatedly. Fortunately, God continues that practice today. He gives us a greater sign of His mercy, a greater sign of His faithfulness that calms our hearts and soothes our fears. He gives us a wonderful sign that He keeps His promises, and is indeed, loving, gracious, and forgiving. We find this sign in a peculiar place. It is not found in heaven above, but on earth below.

On the fields of Bethlehem, many centuries after Noah, some shepherds are tending their flocks. As they do, an angel of the Lord appears, and the glory of the Lord shines around them. The shepherds are filled with fear, and the angel tells them, **"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."**

For centuries, God promised His people salvation from sin, and He promised them eternal life. He promised a Savior, a Deliverer. He said that He would keep His promises. He said He cared, and would provide. He said that He would be faithful. He gave them His Word, and He gave them a sign; He gives us a

sign. As the angel says, Jesus is the *sign of this*. He is the sign that God is not mad with you, but forgiving. His wrath has been satisfied by Jesus' death and resurrection. He has forgiven you, pardoned your sin, and made you right with God. He has defeated death by His own. Jesus is the sign that God is loving and good because He gave you His most precious possession. If God was willing to do that, let's see what else He will do. Jesus is the sign that God is truly caring. Since He took care of our greatest and most pressing need, our sin, will He really ignore our smaller ones? Will He really turn a deaf ear to our prayers and pleas? Jesus is the sign that God is faithful, faithful to you, faithful to me, even when we have not been. He will keep His promises, and will never break them. He is the greatest sign of God's mercy, grace, and peace.

And what is more, God gives us other concrete ways in which we see His mercy, grace, and love outpoured. The sacraments of baptism and communion are where we see His words of promise attached with visible elements: water, bread, and wine. They are things we can see, touch, hold, and feel, as He gives us His promises in Jesus (that we are....). As Noah and his family stepped out of the ark that day, they received an enduring promise and sign of God's mercy and peace that towered over them. In Jesus, we have received the same.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING

PREFACE 2 Timothy 4:22

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

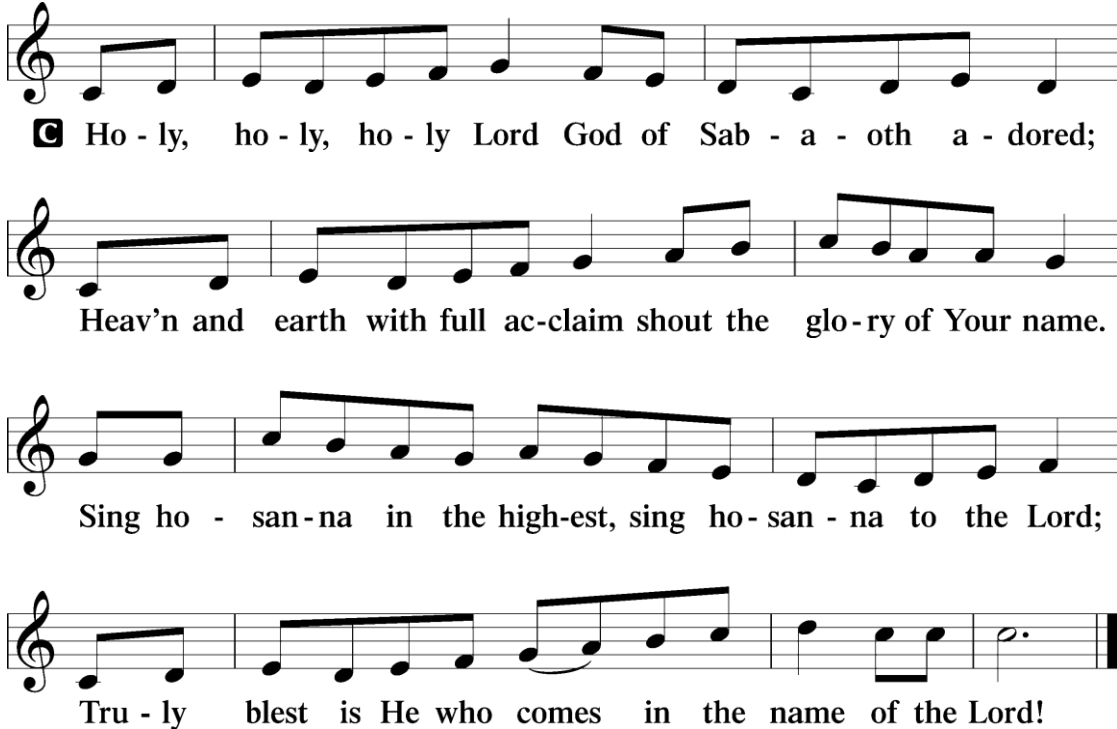
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. By His Word, He has caused us to receive saving faith, and by His death and resurrection, He has given us the sure hope that because He lives we will live also for eternity. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;

Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.

Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;

Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

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.

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;
O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

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You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN "Just as I Am" -Charlotte Elliott, Travis Cottrell, Sue C. Smith, David Moffitt, William Batchelder Bradbury

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1. Just as I am without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2. Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot.
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Chorus: I come broken to be mended. I come wounded to be healed.
I come desperate to be rescued. I come empty to be filled.
I come guilty to be pardoned by the blood of Christ, the Lamb.
And I'm welcomed with open arms, praise God, just as I am.

3. Just as I am I would be lost,
But mercy and grace my freedom bought.
And new to glory in Your cross,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come. *Chorus*

BLESSING

Pastor: May our Lord's body and blood strengthen and preserve you in true faith to life everlasting. Depart in peace and with joy.

People: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

HYMN "Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise" *LSB 917*

1 Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
Once more we bless Thee ere our worship cease,
Then, lowly bending, wait Thy word of peace.

2 Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way;
With Thee began, with Thee shall end, the day.
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
That in this house have called upon Thy name.

3 Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the coming night;
Turn Thou for us its darkness into light.
From harm and danger keep Thy children free;
For dark and light are both alike to Thee.

4 Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *Ephesians 3:20* – “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think ...” We often shortchange God by failing to remember what Paul says here: God can do far more than what we can think or ask. His power, and His love, are without bound and without measure. So why do we fear to follow His word? Isn’t it in fact fear that keeps us back from a life of joyous generosity and open-handedness? But God is able to do far more abundantly! So let us not be afraid to take the Lord at his Word and live according to it.

VBS: We will be having a Vacation Bible School this August. Families, please mark your calendars for August 11, 12 & 13 from 5:30 – 7 p.m. We will be learning about some amazing women of the Bible. If you think you will be attending, please let Nicole P. know. If you would like to help in some way please also reach out to Nicole. We could use people in helping tell the stories, crafts, playing games, decorating, etc.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY: Wednesdays we will have a prayer and Bible Study group. Please check with Pastor Kooi for the current start time. Each week, we will gather together to pray and study a text. We will be meeting in-person and virtually. For those that attend virtually, we will have you join us via Zoom (contact Pastor Kooi for the link). Please contact Pastor Kooi for more details.

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “Blowing in the Wind” Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour: Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus. “Archives August” begins with a classic message from Pastor Ken Klaus in which he contrasts popularly-held urban legends with the unchanging truth of God’s Word. (Ephesians 4:14-16)

THANK YOU for an AMAZING five years, and we look forward to many more!

As this July rolled around, I had an opportunity to reflect a bit on my time at Emmaus. I have to say that I have a lot to be thankful for. When I received my call five years ago, I did not know what to expect. Dawn and I had never been to Minnesota before, much less driven through it. We knew no one here, and, honestly speaking, weren’t quite exactly sure where St. Paul was. All I knew was that it had a hockey team that played my favorite one. After five years, I know what it is: home. We have been blessed to call Emmaus and her members home, and also, family. Thank you for all the love, support, and encouragement that you have given me and my family over the last five years. Thank you for the wonderful celebration, and for all the thoughtful cards and gifts. We are truly blessed beyond belief here, and we look forward to many more years together.

In Christ’s love,
The Kooi Family
Pastor Nick, Dawn, and Mia