

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 20

September 24, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.

AS WE GATHER

When Paul wrote to his co-worker Timothy that he was “bound with chains as a criminal” (2 Timothy 2:9), he knew well the situation he was in. Acts 16 relates the time that he was thrown in jail in Philippi without benefit of a trial. He was later jailed in Jerusalem and then Caesarea and finally at Rome, where he was under a type of house arrest for two years. The final chapter of Acts finds Paul as a captive one more time, accepting this imprisonment as a prelude to his death. He writes to Timothy “the time of my departure has come” (2 Timothy 4:6). In the centuries since Paul gave his prison witness, countless Christian men and women have been imprisoned for their Gospel witness. We are encouraged to be faithful witnesses in our time by Paul, who writes to his young associate Timothy: “Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Timothy 6:11–12a). Paul’s words from prison are good instruction for every situation!

HYMN “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” *LSB* 528

- 1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
 My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and King,
 The triumphs of His grace!
- 2 My gracious Master and my God,
 Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
 The honors of Thy name.
- 3 Jesus! The name that charms our fears,
 That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
 'Tis life and health and peace.
- 4 He breaks the pow’r of canceled sin;
 He sets the pris’ner free.
His blood can make the foulest clean;
 His blood avails for me.
- 5 Look unto Him, ye nations; own
 Your God, ye fallen race.
Look and be saved through faith alone,
 Be justified by grace.
- 6 See all your sins on Jesus laid;
 The Lamb of God was slain.
His soul was once an off’ring made
 For ev’ry soul of man.
- 7 To God all glory, praise, and love
 Be now and ever giv’n
By saints below and saints above,
 The Church in earth and heav’n. Text: Public domain

INVOCATION

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

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 67:1–5, 7*

Pastor: May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us,

People: that Your way may be known on earth, Your saving power among all nations.

Pastor: Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You!

People: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.

Pastor: Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You!

People: God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: It is good and right that we should make confession of our sins and hear the words of absolution that assure us of God's forgiveness. The section on "Confession" in the Small Catechism written by Dr. Martin Luther instructs and directs us with these words:

People: Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Pastor: Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness for the sake of Christ.

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: God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

People: Amen.

Pastor: 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.

INTROIT *Psalm 116:12–13, 15–16; antiphon: v. 17*

Leader: I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord.

People: What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?

Leader: I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

People: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Leader: O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds.

People: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord.

KYRIE

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: 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.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, You are the Author of life. Direct us in our vocations that we may serve You in humble gratitude, seeking unity and peace with all people, which is ours by the blood of Christ; 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 *Isaiah 55:6–9* (The prophet encourages God’s people.)

“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

BELL CHOIR “Jubilation Fanfare” -Sandra Eithun

PSALM HYMN “The Lord Is My Light” *LSB 723*

ref The Lord is my light and my salvation,
The Lord is the stronghold of my life.
Since the Lord is my life, my strength, and my all,
Whom then shall I fear?

1 There is one thing I ask of the Lord:
To dwell in His house forever,
To gaze on the beauty of the Lord
All the days of my life. Refrain

2 Do not hide Your face, O Lord;
Ev’ry day I will seek Your face.
Though my father and mother may forsake me,
The Lord will receive me. Refrain

3 Teach me, Lord, and keep me on Your paths;
Guide me, Lord, along a level way.
I will gaze on the goodness of the Lord
In the land of all the living. Refrain

EPISTLE *Philippians 1:12–14, 19–30* (Paul writes that to live is Christ.) I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ...for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 20:1–16* (The parable of the laborers in the vineyard.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twentieth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, ‘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.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY “How Deep the Fathers Love for Us” –Stuart Townend

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1. How deep the Father’s love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss. The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory.

2. Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders.
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.

3. I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no pow'r, no wisdom.
But I will boast in Jesus Christ: His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom.

SERMON

CREED "In God We Believe" -Gregory J. Wismar, set. Richard W. Hillert

1. In God we believe: the Creator whose pow'r
In mercy has brought us for worship this hour.
He graciously grants us our years and our days
And blesses with kindness our work and our ways.

2. In Jesus, the Savior, our hope is secured.
True God and true man once the cross He endured
To grant our lives wholeness, forgiveness of sin.
With hearts freed from guilt, we know true peace within.

3. God's Spirit at work in our lives we confess;
With power and truth the Church now He does bless.
As saints, God's forgiven, one day we shall then
Be living in glory forever. Amen.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING

We offer our gifts to the Lord as we use this time in our service for contemplation and preparation for the sacrament of communion.

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, Lord our God, for You have graciously blessed us through the Word Incarnate, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who for our sake died on the cross and rose from the dead to put an end to death. Confident of His compassion for us, and rejoicing in the company of the saints on earth and those above, we laud and magnify Your holy name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS “Holy, Holy, Holy” -Gregory J. Wismar, John B. Dykes

1. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Day and night we join to praise Your love and majesty.
You alone are holy, worthy, and righteous.
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

2. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
We rejoice to join the hymns of earth and sky and sea.
Generations praise You, with saints and angels,
Holy and bless'd through all eternity.

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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord, our God, King of all creation, for You graciously invite us to call upon You with all boldness and confidence. Gathered at Your Table, grant that we receive Your body and blood, and through this sacred eating and drinking be strengthened for lives of witness and service. Unite us with thankful hearts in the unending praise of Your glory and grant us in this blessed Sacrament a foretaste of the feast to come.

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

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 “O Lamb of God, We Pray” -Dorothy Schultz, Lowell Mason

O Lamb of God, we pray:
Take all our sins away –
Our faith increase.
Have mercy on us all,
Strengthen us when we fall,
Answer our fervent call
And grant us peace.

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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.

Communion is offered in two ways: the individual cup and the common cup. If you would like the individual cup, please partake as the assistant minister passes by after Pastor gives the bread. If you would like the common cup, let the assistant minister pass by, and Pastor will give you the common cup. When he serves it to you, you are welcome to grab the chalice from the bottom while he holds it from the top. He will rotate and wipe the chalice between people.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)” –John Newton, Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio ©2006 worshiptogether.com songs. Used by permission. CCLI

1. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I’m found,
Was blind but now I see.

2. ’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.

Chorus: My chains are gone. I’ve been set free,
My God, my Savior has ransomed me.
And like a flood His mercy reigns,
Unending love, amazing grace.

3. The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Chorus (twice)

4. The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine.
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine,
Will be forever mine.
You are forever mine.

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 THANKSGIVING

Pastor: We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have had compassion upon us and abundantly pardoned our sins in this Sacrament. Keep us steadfast in the true faith throughout our lives, that we may not grow weary of doing good, but ever serve You in humility and fidelity; 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 “Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing” *LSB 924*

1 Lord, dismiss us with Your blessing,
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, Your love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace.
O refresh us; O refresh us,
Trav'ling through this wilderness.

2 Thanks we give and adoration
For Your Gospel's joyful sound.
May the fruits of Your salvation
In our hearts and lives abound.
Ever faithful, ever faithful
To Your truth may we be found.

3 Savior, when Your love shall call us
From our struggling pilgrim way,
Let not fear of death appall us,
Glad Your summons to obey.
May we ever, may we ever
Reign with You in endless day.
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Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series A, Quarter 4.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *Matthew 20:9* – “*And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius.*” Behold the generosity of God! He gives out of His grace, not what we deserve to receive. Living a godly life means living in imitation of God — and surely one of the foundations of God's being is His generosity.

LWML MITES will be collected on Sunday, October 15. Please bring in your coins!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Emmaus will have a congregational meeting on Sunday, October 15.

75th ANNIVERSARY RSVP: Please turn in your RSVP and payment for the 75th Anniversary meal by October 9. Invitations and RSVP cards were sent out to each Emmaus household. They are also available in the office.

AN OFFERING UPDATE: The First Article of the Creed in Luther's Small Catechism states that God gives us "clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life." In accord with our Lutheran heritage and its rich liturgy, we present our offerings to the Lord, as a church, with thanksgiving and praise. We do this in response to His provisions for our daily needs and for His free gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. This September, Emmaus will resume passing the offering plate through the pews and present it at the altar during the Offertory. Online giving will still be continued. Whichever way is chosen to support the work of the church, we do so as the body of Christ. Thanks be to God!

LWML: The St. Paul Metro zone will be the hosts for the Capitol Conference Fall Rally on Saturday, October 14 at Gathering Place Lutheran Ministries 3245 New Brighton Road, Arden Hills. 9:00 am registration, 9:30 - 11:30 program followed by lunch, "A Taste of SE Asia." The presenter will be Pastor Yia Lor—"Mission Impossible: The Upside-Down Mission to the Lost in the Mountains of Southeast Asia." Registration \$10. Collections will be taken for offering, and Gifts from the Heart: items for homeless shelters/homeless. Join us for food, fellowship, singing, Bible study, convention recap and LWML news.

HEAR "THE LUTHERAN HOUR" on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week's broadcast: "The Way Through the Maze" Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Dean Nadasdy. When life becomes a bewildering maze, Jesus is our way through and our way out. (Psalm 25:4-5)

NEW CHOIR MEMBERS WELCOME: Choir rehearsals resume on Thursday, September 28 at 6:30 p.m. This fall the choir will focus on music for the 75th Anniversary celebration and Christmas before taking a winter break. If you miss singing in a choir and are interested in trying it out, join us on Thursday evenings to rehearse and be part of these special events. Questions? Contact Jim Glynn at emmaus.lutheran.choir@gmail.com.

WOW! What an incredible response to the Silent Auction. The 75th anniversary committee thanks everyone for their support and generosity. We hope you had a good time, enjoyed a treat or two and had a chance to connect with fellow members. We raised over \$1400. Again, thank you so much!

PINECONES NEEDED: Yes, you read that correctly. The 75th anniversary committee is looking for nice pine cones of all sizes for decorations. If you have pine trees that are dropping their cones and are willing to collect a few, we would appreciate it. Let Pam U, Marilyn P or Dawn K know if you have any questions. These are not needed until mid-October.

CONCORDIA ACADEMY HOMECOMING: You're invited to celebrate "Beacon Power" at Concordia Academy's homecoming on Friday night, October 6. An alumni tailgate party starts at 5:15, followed by a free outdoor family carnival at 5:30 and the football game vs. St. Croix Lutheran at 7:00. Admission to the football game is \$7, but children (8th grade and younger) and CA alumni are admitted at no charge. Get all the details at www.concordiaacademy.com/homecoming.

Winter Coat Drive October 14

The St. Paul Outreach Center is hosting a giveaway event on Saturday, October 14, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Jehovah Lutheran Church (1566 Thomas Avenue, St. Paul). This new ministry, a partnership of the St. Paul Circuit LCMS churches sponsored by the MN South District, had a great start on September 8 with 100 people present for the kick-off International Potluck.

We are looking for donations of winter wear (coats, hats, scarves, gloves, mittens) in clean, good condition. Donations can be dropped off at Jehovah every Friday 9-11 a.m. or at our own site for later delivery. We also need volunteers at Jehovah for set-up, help that day, and take down. Here's the link and a QR code to the form to sign up donations and volunteer slots:

<https://forms.gle/dHeEMMhV5bajb25Y7>

For more information please email spoc@jehovahlutheran.org or call David Mennicke, coordinator, at 651-636-3271. Thanks for your partnership in this exciting new sharing of the Gospel!