

# FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service of the Word

First Lutheran Church, Lynn, MA

September 13, 2020



In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another,  
since we all stand before the judgment of God.

Yet we do sin against one another,  
and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times  
reveals God's boundless mercy.

**When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross,  
we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.**

## Welcome to worship!

**Yes, *this is worship!*** It is not the way any of us *want* it to be, but God is alive and present in this virtual gathering. God's work will still speak to us through the Holy Spirit, and we are still the Body of Christ, joined together in a fellowship of love, even if it is not in person.

## Create a sacred space in your home.

Light a candle. Pour yourself a warm beverage. Welcome the presence of God into your dwelling. Set aside this time for worship as if you were in church. Put away the cell phone (unless you are watching on your cell phone!) Adopt a posture of prayer that works for you.

## We will get through this.

This is temporary. This is not the "new normal." This may last several months, but we will be back together one day. We are blessed to be living in a time with technology that allows us to gather in this way. For that we can rejoice!

## GATHERING

### The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

#### PRELUDE

*Voluntary in A Minor*  
Anonymous

#### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

As loving parents have compassion for their children, God has compassion for us. Confident in God's love, let us confess our sins.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving God,  
**we confess that we have failed to live in harmony with one another.**  
**We have been self-righteous in our attitudes,**  
**closed-minded in our beliefs,**  
**and judgmental in our opinions.**  
**We have shunned those whose ways we do not understand,**  
**and we have despised those who do not endorse our convictions.**  
**Forgive our sins, and heal our divisiveness.**  
**Help us to be charitable in our regard for others**  
**that we may dwell in peace with Christ, who is Lord of all.**  
**Amen.**

# GATHERING HYMN

The minister announces God's forgiveness, to which the assembly responds:  
**Amen.**

## Heaven Is Singing for Joy, Alleluia



*El cie - lo can - ta a - le - grí - a, ¡a - le - lu - ya!,*  
1 Heav - en is sing - ing for joy, al - le - lu - ia,  
2 Heav - en is sing - ing for joy, al - le - lu - ia,  
3 Heav - en is sing - ing for joy, al - le - lu - ia,



*por - que en tu vi - da y la mí - a bri - lla la glo - ria de Dios.*  
for in your life and mine is shin - ing the glo - ry of God.  
for your life and mine u - nite in the love of our God.  
for your life and mine will al - ways bear wit - ness to God.

*Refrain / Estribillo*



*¡A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya! ¡A - le -*  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -



*lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya!*  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



## 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.**

## CANTICLE OF PRAISE

*In autumn, our liturgy comes from Setting One in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, our red hymnal. Traditional yet bright and fresh, it was composed in 2005 and has become quickly beloved because of its beauty and ease of singing.*

Glo - ry to God in the high -  
est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.  
Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - mighty God and  
Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we  
praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus  
Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the  
right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a -

lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High,

Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of

God the Fa - ther. A - - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high -

est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**



## God speaks to us in scripture readings, preaching, and song

### FIRST READING

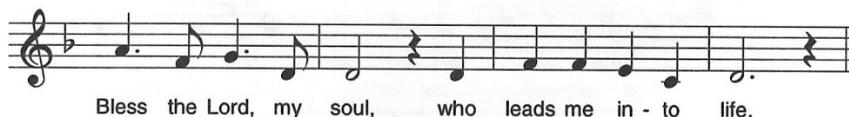
Genesis 50:15-21

*After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.*

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



### PSALM

Psalms 103

*The psalms were the original prayer book of God's people and capture the full gamut of human emotion.*

1. It is God who forgives all your guilt, who heals ev'ry one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion.
2. The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. God does not treat us according to your sins nor repay us according to our faults.
3. As a Father has compassion on his children, the Lord has pity on those who fear him; for he knows of what we are made, he remembers that we are dust.~

## SECOND READING

Romans 14:1-12

*This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*We stand to welcome Christ, the living word of God, in the gospel reading.*

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verse: We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous;  
your sins are forgiven on account of his name. (1 John 2:1, 12)

## GOSPEL

Matthew 18:21-35

*When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven."

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

**CHILDREN'S  
MESSAGE**

**SERMON**

## HYMN OF THE DAY

### *Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive*



1 "For - give our sins as we for - give," you taught us, Lord, to pray;  
2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart  
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:  
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.  
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?  
how tri - fling oth - ers' debts to us; how great our debt to you!  
then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

## APOSTLES CREED

*The word "creed" comes from the Latin credo which simply means "I believe."*

*By professing our faith with these ecumenical words, we are one with Christians all around the world, no matter what else might divide us.*

With the whole church let us 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 and  
THE LORD'S  
PRAYER**

*Throughout our prayer we sing this refrain:*



If we live, we live to the Lord. If we die, we die to the Lord. So then, wheth-er we live or wheth-er we die, we are the Lord's.

*After each petition:*

O God, you are full of compassion;  
**receive our prayer.**

**PEACE**

**OFFERTORY**

*You are invited to make your offering online at [www.flc-lynn.org/give](http://www.flc-lynn.org/give) or by mail. Please continue to give during this time to support the ongoing ministry of our congregation.*

*Lord, For Thy Tender Mercy's Sake*  
Richard Farrant

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge.  
But forgive that is past, and give us grace to amend our sinful lives.  
To decline from sin, and incline to virtue,  
That we may walk in a perfect heart before thee now and evermore.  
Amen.

# SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission for the world

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

*Rise, Shine, You People*



1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered  
2 See how he sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;  
3 Come, cel - e - brate; your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,  
4 Tell how the Fa - ther sent the Son to save us.



our hu - man sto - ry; God in him is cen - tered. He comes to  
he brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing. All men and  
your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark - ness hurl - ing. To all the  
Tell of the Son, who life and free - dom gave us. Tell how the



us, by death and sin sur - round - ed, with grace un - bound - ed.  
wom - en, who by guilt are driv - en, now are for - giv - en.  
world go out and tell the sto - ry of Je - sus' glo - ry.  
Spir - it calls from ev - 'ry na - tion God's new cre - a - tion.

DISMISSAL

Be at peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

*Präludium in G minor*  
Georg Böhm

## Join us for virtual coffee hour!

Following worship at 11:30 AM, you are invited to grab a cup of coffee and a snack and join us on Zoom for a virtual coffee hour! If your computer has a camera and you'd like to use video chat, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484060366> and follow the instructions. You may need to install a free piece of software. If you would like to call in on your phone, dial **(929) 205-6099** and enter meeting ID **884 8406 0366**. It won't be as good as the Fireside Room, but it will allow us to check in!

## Music notes

The prelude was written by an unknown English composer, first appearing in a volume of music published during the latter part of the 18th century. It is in the form of a Voluntary, a generic English term referring to a piece of moderate length in two parts – a slower shorter section serving to introduce the key of the piece, and a second, longer and faster section in the form of a fugue. While this piece was originally composed for the organ, English organs of that time period did not have pedals, so the music composed for them works equally well on the piano. The postlude for today was written by Georg Böhm (1661 – 1733), a German organist and composer who taught (briefly) and influenced a young J.S. Bach ((1685 – 1750). Böhm's music is similar to Bach's in many ways, though it is less disciplined (more likely to break the "rules" of the day) and much more rustic and unpolished. Also, because Böhm was writing before the pedals of the organ began to be used extensively, much of his music (like the prelude) can be played either on the harpsichord or the organ, or in this case, the piano.

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*We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation,  
welcoming and serving all people.*

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