

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service of the Word

First Lutheran Church, Lynn, MA

July 26, 2020



As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith.
In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God:
a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands,
a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch.

**Even as we seek the riches of God's reign,
the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!**

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 weeks, but we will be back together soon. 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

Meditation on TRYGGARE KAN INGEN VARA
Anne Krentz Organ

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.
Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

God of mystery, God of life,
**we imagine that we are capable judges of power and wisdom and
goodness.**

**We trust our own standards; we separate and categorize;
we mark the performance of others.**

We fail to trust your power, hidden in all things.

We fail to watch for you, working out your purposes.

**Gracious God, hidden and manifest,
transform our hearts and imaginations
until we give over our judgments
to a love we cannot control. Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

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

Children of the Heavenly Father



1 Chil - dren of the heav'n-ly Fa-ther safe-ly in his bo - som gath - er;
2 God his own doth tend and nour-ish, in his ho - ly courts they flour-ish.
3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er from the Lord his chil-dren sev - er;
4 Though he giv - eth or he tak-eth, God his chil-dren ne'er for-sak - eth;



nest-ling bird nor star in heav - en such a ref - uge e'er was giv - en.
From all e - vil things he spares them, in his might-y arms he bears them.
un - to them his grace he show - eth, and their sor - rows all he know - eth.
his the lov - ing pur-pose sole - ly to pre-serve them pure and ho - ly.



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 the summer, our liturgy comes from Now the Feast and Celebration, a contemporary and easily singable setting by Marty Haugen.

This canticle draws from the imagery of God's victory over sin and death in the book of Revelation.



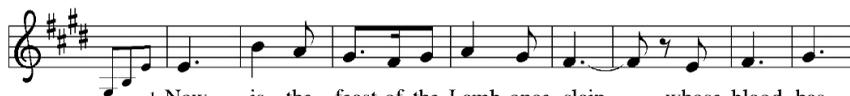
Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion



sings for joy to the God of life and love and free - dom;



praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!



1 Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has



freed and u - nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of God.



2 Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and might, all hon - or and



glo - ry to Christ for - ev - er.



3 For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo - ple of



God; to make all things new.

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

FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."

The word of the Lord.

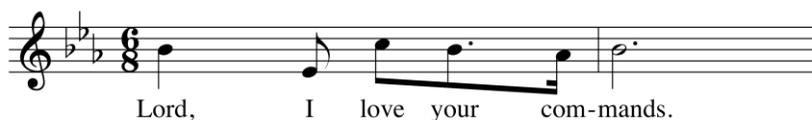
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 119

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

The cantors sing the refrain, which is repeated by the assembly. The choir sings the verses.



SECOND READING

Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

1. I have said, "O Lord, my portion is to obey your words."
The law from your mouth means more to me than large quantities of silver and gold.
2. Let your merciful love console me by your promise to your servant.
Show me compassion that I may live, for your law is my delight.
3. That is why I love your commands more than finest gold, why I rule my life by your precepts, and hate false ways.
4. Your decrees are wonderful indeed; therefore my soul obeys them.
The unfolding of your word gives light, and understanding to the simple.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

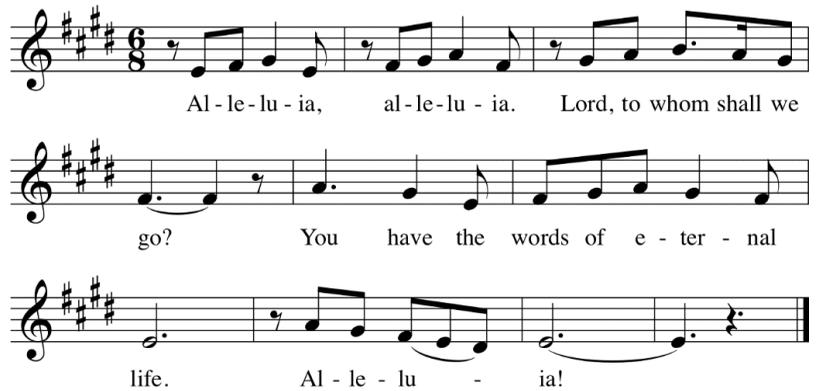
GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33,
44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ

HYMN OF THE DAY

Jesus, Priceless Treasure



1 Je - sus, price-less trea - sure, source of pur - est plea - sure,
2 In thine arm I rest me; foes who would mo - lest me
3 Hence, all fears and sad - ness, for the Lord of glad - ness,



tru - est friend to me: ah, how long I've pant - ed, and my heart has
can-not reach me here. Though the earth be shak - ing, ev - 'ry heart be
Je - sus, en - ters in. God, who dear-ly loves us, from all tri - al



faint - ed, thirst-ing, Lord, for thee! Thine I am, O spot - less Lamb;
quak - ing, Je - sus calms my fear. Light-nings flash and thun - ders crash;
saves us, gives sweet peace with-in. I have borne this world - ly scorn;



no - thing in this world can hide thee, naught I ask be - side thee.
yet, though sin and hell as - sail me, Je - sus will not fail me.
still in thee lies pur - est plea - sure: Je - sus, price-less trea - sure!



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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION and THE LORD'S PRAYER

PEACE

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.**

Throughout our prayer we sing this refrain:



Good-ness is stron-ger than e - vil; love is stron-ger than hate;



light is stron-ger than dark - ness; life is stron-ger than death; vic-t'ry is



ours, vic-t'ry is ours, through God who loves us. Vic-t'ry is



ours, vic-t'ry is ours, through God who loves us.

After each petition:

Turn to us, O God:
be gracious to us.

OFFERTORY

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

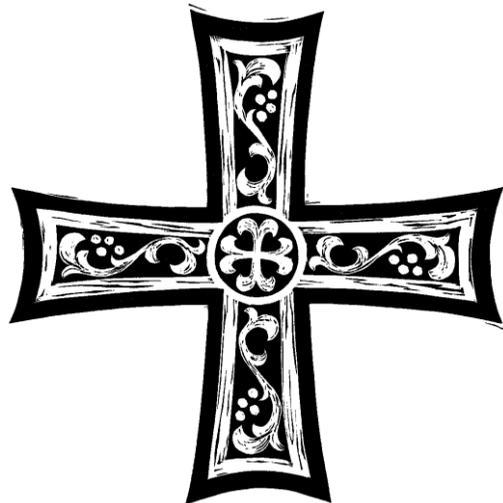
So Art Thou To Me
K. Lee Scott

As the bridegroom to his chosen, as the king unto the realm,
As the keep unto the castle, as the pilot to the helm,
So art thou, Lord, to me, so art thou, dear Lord, to me.

As the fountain in the garden, as the candle in the dark,
As the treasure in the coffer, as the manna in the ark,
So art thou, Lord, to me, so art thou, dear Lord, to me.

As the music at the banquet, as the stamp unto the seal,
As the med'cine to the fainting, as the wine cup at the meal,
So art thou, Lord, to me, so art thou, dear Lord, to me.

As the ruby in the setting, as the honey in the comb,
As the light within the lantern, as the father in the home.
As the sunshine in the heaven, as the image in the glass,
As the fruit unto the fig tree, as the dew upon the grass,
So art thou, Lord, to me, so art thou, dear Lord, to me.



SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission for the world

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Be Thou My Vision



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

DISMISSAL

Be at peace. Christ is with you.

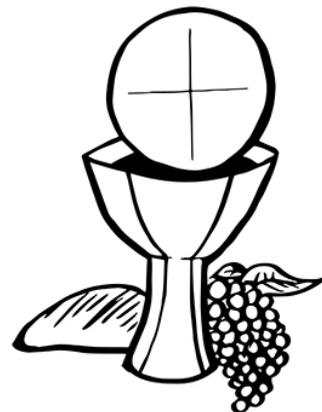
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Voluntary in D Major
William Croft

Outdoor Holy Communion and Fellowship Today at 12:00 PM

Many of you (thank you!) took part in a recent survey around your comfort level in returning to some sort of in-person worship gathering, bearing in mind that any such gathering would not look or feel exactly as it did before, at least for the time being. Restrictions on where and how we gather will remain in place so long as this virus is part of our reality. About 2/3 of you indicated a desire to have in-person worship, even with those restrictions, while about 1/3 are more comfortable continuing to worship from home. There are also some of you who very much want to come back to church, but are not able to because of age or underlying health conditions.



Our goal as church leaders is to make worship available to everyone, whether we are gathered physically or virtually. Because of the progress being made in Massachusetts with regard to the coronavirus, and with the commonwealth now in Phase 3 of re-opening, we will begin offering an opportunity to gather outdoors for worship beginning today.

Our online Service of the Word will continue unchanged. All of you are invited to participate in this service on YouTube on Sunday morning. Then, at 12:00 Noon, you are invited to come to the fenced-in outdoor area near the driveway at church for the Holy Communion liturgy lasting about 15 minutes. You should bring your own lawn chair for this service, and space yourself at least six feet from other households. You must also wear a mask or face covering at all times, except when receiving communion. Special precautions will be in place for a safer preparation and distribution of the bread and cup, including only a single set of gloved hands coming into contact with them. After the service, you will be able to enjoy fellowship time with the others gathered, again remaining outside and maintaining physical distance of six feet.

We ask that you sign up at www.flc-lynn.org/gather you plan to attend this service – both as a way of ensuring a safe crowd size, and for the purpose of contact tracing in the event that anyone does become sick.

And as always, if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, have been in contact with someone who has in the last 14 days, or if you yourself are at a greater risk for complications, you are urged to stay home for the safety of your church family.

We hope that this temporary solution will help alleviate two of the most urgent needs of the congregation right now: to see each other in person, and to receive communion, while also allowing those who cannot physically gather to still participate online.

Music notes

The prelude for today was written by Anne Krentz Organ, a contemporary American composer, and is based on the melody of our gathering hymn, *Children of the Heavenly Father*. In this setting, she combines the familiar melody of our hymn with the melody for the hymn *Baptized and Set Free* (453 in our hymnal), a hymn that shares both thematic and melodic elements with our hymn. The postlude was written by William Croft (1678 – 1727), an English composer who became the organist of Westminster Abbey (the most prestigious organ position in England) in 1708, a position he held for the remainder of his life.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

280 Broadway, Lynn, MA 01904

Church: 781-598-0481 Parsonage: 781-584-6631

<http://www.flc-lynn.org> | [facebook.com/flclynn](https://www.facebook.com/flclynn)

The Rev. Jon Niketh, *Pastor*
David Greatrix, *Director of Music Ministry*
Jack King and Patrice Cunningham, *Sextons*
Karin Butterworth, *Council President*

pastor@flclynn.org
music@flclynn.org
pjfamily5@verizon.net
karinbutterworth1@gmail.com



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

Liturgical material from Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under OneLicense Annual License #A-734385. New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.