

# *8th Sunday After Pentecost*

## *July 26, 2020*



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Welcome! 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!

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com)

# SERVICE OF THE WORD

## **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Worship Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Worship Leader: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

Worship Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

**Congregation: We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.**

## GATHERING SONG

### *Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us*

vs. 1 & 2



1 Sav - ior like a shep - herd lead us; much we need your ten - der care.  
2 We are yours; in love be - friend us, be the guard - ian of our way;  
3 You have prom - ised to re - ceive us, poor and sin - ful though we be;  
4 Ear - ly let us seek your fa - vor, ear - ly let us do your will;



In your pleas - ant pas - tures feed us, for our use your fold pre - pare.  
keep your flock, from sin de - fend us, seek us when we go a - stray.  
you have mer - cy to re - lieve us, grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.  
bless - ed Lord and on - ly Sav - ior, with your love our spir - its fill.



Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have bought us; we are yours.  
Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, hear us chil - dren when we pray.  
Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, ear - ly let us turn to you.  
Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have loved us, love us still.



Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have bought us; we are yours.  
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Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, ear - ly let us turn to you.  
Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, you have loved us, love us still.

Text: attr. Dorothy A. Thrupp, 1779–1847  
Music: BRADBURY, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

## APOSTOLIC GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

**Congregation: Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**FIRST READING**

**1 Kings 3:5-12**

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: <sup>5</sup>At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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?”

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>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, <sup>12</sup>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.”

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 119:129-136**

*The psalm for the day is read responsively.*

Reader: <sup>129</sup>Your decrees are wonderful;  
therefore I obey them with all my heart.

<sup>130</sup>**When your word is opened it gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.**

<sup>131</sup>I open my mouth and pant  
because I long for your commandments.

<sup>132</sup>**Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as you always do to those who love your name.**

<sup>133</sup>Order my footsteps in your word;  
let no iniquity have dominion over me.

<sup>134</sup>**Rescue me from those who oppress me,  
and I will keep your commandments.**

<sup>135</sup>Let your face shine upon your servant  
and teach me your statutes.

<sup>136</sup>**My eyes shed streams of tears,  
because people do not keep your teaching.**

## **SECOND READING                      Romans 8:26-39**

Introduction to the Lesson: *For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.*

Reader: [Paul writes:] 26The 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. 27And 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.

28We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29For 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. 30And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

31What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32He 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? 33Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34Who 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. 35Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor 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.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

## **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

Introduction to the Gospel: *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.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 13th chapter.

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

Worship Leader: 31[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32it 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."

33He 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."

44"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.

45"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.

47"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." 52And 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."

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

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

## GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

### The Divine Ordinary

As we make our way through Matthew’s gospel, we often hear Jesus say, “The kingdom of heaven is like . . .” He uses everyday items and experiences to give us a glimpse of God’s realm. Today as you stand for the reading of the gospel, God will use the voice of someone you know (your pastor, perhaps) to proclaim some comparisons Jesus made to the kingdom of heaven: a mustard seed, yeast, a merchant in search of fine pearls.

Our Lord says the kingdom of heaven is like things we already know and understand. It’s like someone giving a wedding banquet (Matt. 22:2), a fishing net (Matt. 13:47), a gardener sowing seeds (Matt. 13:3). Instead of saying the kingdom is divine and far beyond our understanding, Jesus offers stories of ordinary things, pointing to how God’s will is revealed in them.

Look around your worship space before the service. Whom or what has God brought you today that is like the kingdom of heaven? Is a retired man teaching a middle-schooler how to carry the top-heavy cross down the aisle? Are there people who use walkers alongside young ones who skip everywhere they go? Perhaps a newly widowed woman has new seatmates who don’t want her sitting alone. Did someone bring a gluten-free dish to the potluck even though he is not gluten-sensitive?

Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to ordinary things because we live most often in ordinary moments and spaces. Again and again, he invites us to find the divine in the day-to-day, to glimpse the eternal in the temporal, and to recognize God’s image in a stranger’s face.

As worship begins, let yourself notice the altogether ordinary things God is using to reveal the kingdom in this place: human voices, handshakes and hugs, music, musicians, books, water, wine, bread. In the coming week, what might God use to reveal the kingdom in your home, your workplace, your school, or other spaces you inhabit?

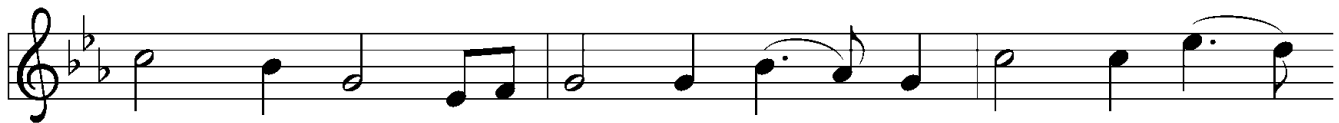
## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY

*Just As I Am, without One Plea vs. 1 & 2*



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but that thy blood was  
2 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y\_a con - flict,  
3 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt wel - come, par - don,  
4 Just as I am; thy love un - known has bro - ken ev - 'ry



shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
man - y\_a doubt, fight - ings and fears with - in, with - out,  
cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise I be - lieve,  
bar - rier down; now to be thine, yea, thine a - lone,



O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1789–1871

Music: WOODWORTH, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Prayer Leader: Merciful God, your reign is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a fishing net. Help your church witness to the surprising yet common ways you encounter us in daily life. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of your creation; guide the work of scientists and researchers. Treasuring the earth, may we live as grateful and healing caretakers of our home. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations of the world into the welcoming shade of your merciful reign. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and walk in the way of peace. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Your Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for the saints according to your will. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice to those who are oppressed, and healing to the sick (*especially* Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia and family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy



Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vici Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa and Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez and family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, those suffering from natural disasters (including COVID-19 and the flooding across the United States), violence, & terror, and the family and friends of the over 140,000 people in the United States & the 500,000 people worldwide who have died from COVID-19 including Anka Pink's grandmother. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: You show steadfast love and direct us to ask of you what we need. Help this congregation ask boldly for what is most needed. Refresh us with new dreams of being your people in this place and time. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Prayer Leader: In you our lives are never lost. Strengthen us by the inspiring witness of your people in all times and places. Embolden our witness now and one day gather us with all your saints in light. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## OFFERING

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the "Donate" button), or by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. **You can also fill out your attendance form on our website.***

## OFFERTORY



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right  
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take



not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of  
 your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923  
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### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities & in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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.**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

Worship Leader: 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. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less vs. 1 & 2*



- 1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je-sus' blood and righ-teous-ness;
- 2 Whendark-ness veils his love-ly face, I rest on his un - chang-ing grace;
- 3 His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood sus - tain me in the rag - ing flood;
- 4 When he shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,



no mer-it of my own I claim, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.  
in ev - 'ry high and storm - y gale my an - chor holds with-in the veil.  
when all sup-ports are washed a-way, he then is all my hope and stay.  
clothed in his righ-teous-ness a-alone, re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!

#### *Refrain*



On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; all oth - er ground is



sink - ing sand, all oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

Text: Edward Mote, 1797–1874, alt.

Music: THE SOLID ROCK, William B. Bradbury, 1816–1868

## DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

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