

15th Sunday After Pentecost

September 13, 2020



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Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! 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.

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

SERVICE OF THE WORD

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Worship Leader: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

Congregation: Amen.

Worship Leader: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Worship Leader: Faithful God,

Congregation: have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Worship Leader: God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: God forgives you of all of your sins. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

Congregation: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore: Tú has venido a la orilla verse 1 in Spanish & English



1 Tú has ve - ni - do a la o - ri - lla, no has bus -
1 You have come down to the lake - shore seek - ing



ca - do ni a sa - bios ni a ri - cos; tan só - lo
nei - ther the wise nor the wealth - y, but on - ly



quie - res que yo te si - ga.
ask - ing for me to fol - low.

Refrain / Estribillo



Se - ñor, me has mi - ra - do a los o - jos; son - ri - en - do,
Sweet Lord, you have looked in - to my eyes; kind - ly smil - ing,



has di - cho mi nom - bre. En la a - re - na he de - ja - do mi
you've called out my name. . . . On the sand I have a - ban - doned my



bar - ca; jun - to a ti bus - ca - ré o - tro mar.
small boat; now with you, I will seek oth - er seas.

Text: Cesáreo Gabaráin, 1936–1991; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946
Music: PESCADOR DE HOMBRES, Cesáreo Gabaráin

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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: O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING

Genesis 50:15-21

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: 15Realizing 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?" 16So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 17'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. 18Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." 19But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? 20Even 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. 21So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 103:8-13

The psalm for the day is read responsively.

Reader: ⁸**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

⁹you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.

¹⁰**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

¹²**As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

¹³As a father has compassion for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

SECOND READING Romans 14:1-12

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: [Paul writes:] 1Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. 2Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 3Those 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. 4Who 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.

5Some 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. 6Those 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.

7We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8If 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. 9For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

10Why 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. 11For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

12So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 18:21-35

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

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 18th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: 21Peter 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?” 22Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

23“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; 25and, 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. 26So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 28But 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.’ 29Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 31When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 32Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ 34And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 35So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Deep Waters of Forgiveness

Churches have different practices around baptism. In some churches, a small bowl holds just enough water to trickle a few drops over the head. In others, the bowl is wider and the water is splashed with the whole hand. In yet other churches, the person is fully immersed in a font large enough for them to go all the way underwater. Sometimes the water stays in the bowl, sometimes a bit splashes out, and sometimes the whole area around the font gets wet. But no matter the amount of water used, there’s always more where it comes from. God’s waters of forgiveness run deeper than we will ever know.

The waters of baptism are so deep that even a few sprinkles cover a lifetime of falling short. We are forgiven time and again for a myriad of sins. And because the weight of sin has been lifted from us, we are free to extend such forgiveness to others.

In fact, our faith depends on it. In the Lord’s Prayer, our petition for forgiveness is directly tied to our own willingness to forgive others: “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” Thankfully, we are not expected to conjure up such forgiveness on our own. We draw from the endless supply of divine reserves. Where we, and Peter, might have difficulty forgiving a mere seven times, Jesus reminds us that his kind of forgiveness can be measured on an exponential scale.

While our capacity for forgiveness may be limited, Jesus' well of forgiveness is deep enough for all people and all matters of sin. When we find ourselves struggling to extend forgiveness to others, we return to the baptismal font. This is an overflowing well of love. Drawing from this water, we draw from the limitless supply of forgiveness.

Remembering our baptism, we are reminded not only that we are forgiven, but that we, too, are agents of forgiveness in the world.

SERMON

Pastor Lydia Villanueva

HYMN OF THE DAY

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee vs. 1 & 3



- 1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
- 2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
- 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1922

Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

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: You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. We pray for healing (*especially for* 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 & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez & family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne & Larry Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including COVID-19, Hurricane Laura, and California wildfires], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 190,000+ people in the US & the 893,000+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Prayer Leader: Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you (especially John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, whom we commemorate today and those within our Memorial Garden.

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 (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.***



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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OFFERTORY

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: Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

Congregation: we give you thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

Congregation: we give you thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

Congregation: we give you thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need.

Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; 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.

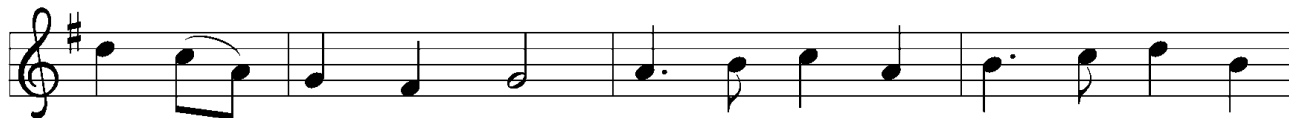
Congregation: Amen.



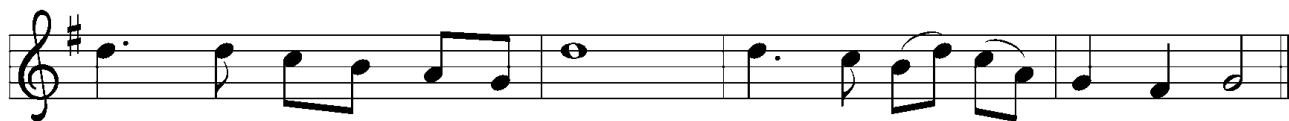
1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing
3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me
wa - ters flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
fears sub - side; death of death and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with your pow'r - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - 'rer, strong de - liv - 'rer,
safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs and prais - es, songs and prais - es



feed me now and ev - er - more, feed me now and ev - er - more.
shield me with your might - y arm, shield me with your might - y arm.
I will raise for - ev - er - more, I will raise for - ev - er - more.

Text: William Williams, 1717–1791; tr. William Williams and Peter Williams, 1722–1796, alt.
Music: CWM RHONDDA, John Hughes, 1873–1932

SENDING SONG

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer vs. 1 & 2

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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