

16th Sunday After Pentecost

September 17, 2023



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026

office@GraceCLW.com

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.

Some practical things for you to know:

Children: All children, even those who are noisy, upset, or otherwise discombobulated, are always welcome here!

Restrooms are located to the left out of the doors you entered in to the narthex or lobby; ushers can further direct you.

Holy Communion: All baptized Christians are welcome to the Lord's Table. Our ushers will guide you.

THE ORDER OF OUR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

We stand as we are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be God, the one who forms us, ✠ Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete. **Congregation: Amen.**

Pastor: Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Pastor: Steadfast and faithful God,

Congregation: you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Pastor: Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Congregation: Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN *All Creatures, Worship God Most High!* ELW 835 vs. 1, 4, & 6

GREETING

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.**

KYRIE

Leader

In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Assembly

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have

For the reign of God, and for

mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

peace through-out the world, for the u-ni-ty of all, let us pray to the

Lord. For your

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

peo - ple here who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your

word, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have

Help, save, and de - fend us, O God.

mer - cy. A - men.

Text: *Lutheran Book of Worship*, adapt. Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: *Now the Feast and Celebration*, Marty Haugen

Text and music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. 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. **Congregation: Amen.**

We sit.

FIRST READING

Genesis 50:15-21

Page 42

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.

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.

The reading is concluded:

The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Romans 14:1-12

Page 923

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.

[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."

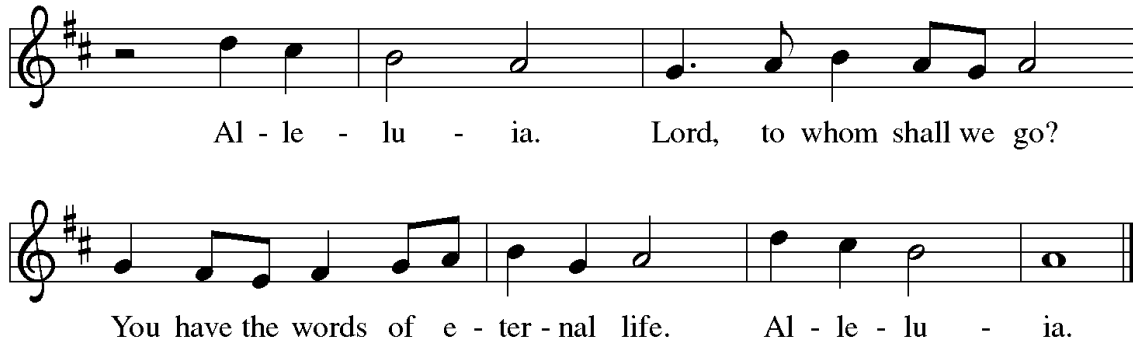
¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The reading is concluded:

The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

We stand.

ALLELUIA VERSE



GOSPEL

Matthew 18:21-35

Page 799

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

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

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 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...

Pastor: The gospel of the Lord. **Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

We Sit

SERMON

We Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY

Our Father, We Have Wandered

ELW 606

We Sit

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Each petition ends either “Lord, in your mercy,” and we respond **“Hear our prayer.”**
OR “Hear us, O God” and we respond **“Your mercy is great.”**

OFFERING

We Stand

OFFERTORY



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that



we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of



all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble



with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

versuchung, sondern erlöse
uns Von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich, Und die Kraft,
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Congregation: Amen.

DIALOGUE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Pastor: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in whichever language is closest to our hearts.

**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.**

**Vater unser, der du bist im Himmel,
Geheiligt werde dein Name,
Dein Reich komme,
Dein Wille geschehe,
Auf Erden, wie im Himmel.
Gib uns heute unser tägliches Brot;
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
Wie wir vergeben unserem
Schuldigern;
Und führe uns nicht in
Versuchung, sondern erlöse
uns Von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich, Und die Kraft,
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit. Amen.**

**Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo,
santificado sea tu Nombre;
venga a nosotros tu reino;
hágase tu voluntad
en la tierra como en el cielo.
Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día;
perdona nuestras ofensas, como también**

**nosotros perdonamos
a los que nos ofenden;
no nos dejes caer en la tentación,
y líbranos del mal.
Porque tuyo es el reino, el Poder,
y la gloria por los siglos de los siglos.
Amén.**

We Sit

SPECIAL MUSICAL OFFERING

After all have receive Communion, we stand.

TABLE BLESSING

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Congregation: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray. **Congregation: Amen.**

SENDING OF COMMUNION

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

BLESSING

Pastor: The God of glory, ✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer

ELW 618

SHARING OF PEACE & DISMISSAL

Together we have heard God's Word and shared in the Lord's Supper, we have given and have been forgiven. The peace of the Lord be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. God is at work in you. **Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

Light refreshments are served after the church service on the front porch just to the left as you exit. Please come join us for cookies and conversation.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #27824. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Hymns used with permission under ONE LICENSE #738836-A. All rights reserved.

All Creatures, Worship God Most High!



- 1 All crea-tures, wor-ship God most high! Sound ev - 'ry voice in earth and
- 2 Sing, broth - er wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and
- 3 Sing, broth - er fire, so mirth-ful, strong; drive far the shad-ows, join the
- 4 All who for love of God for - give, all who in pain or sor - row



sky: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Sing, broth - er sun, in splen-dor
 grain: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Dear sis - ter wa - ter, use - ful,
 throng: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Dear moth - er earth, so rich in
 grieve: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Christ bears your bur-dens and your



bright; sing, sis - ter moon and stars of night:
 clear, make mu - sic for your Lord to hear: Al-le - lu - ia, al-le -
 care, praise God in col - ors bright and rare:
 fears; still make your song a - mid the tears:



lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

5 And you, most gentle sister death,
 waiting to hush our final breath:
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 Since Christ our light has pierced your gloom,
 fair is the night that leads us home.
 Alleluia.

6 O sisters, brothers, take your part,
 and worship God with humble heart:
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
 and Holy Spirit, Three in One:
 Alleluia.

Text: Francis of Assisi, 1182–1226; tr. composite
 Music: LASST UNS ERFREUEN, *Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1623
 Text © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer



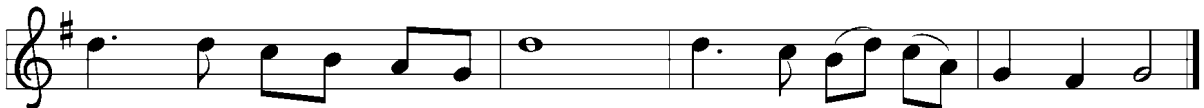
1 Guide me ev - er, great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain where the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



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