

# St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

Pentecost 16 + Saturday, September 16, 2023



## INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

*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.*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

## 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.**

## KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

## CANTICLE OF PRAISE

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.**

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,  
whose blood set us free to be people of God.

Power and riches and wisdom and strength,  
and honor and blessing and glory are his.

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.**

Sing with all the people of God  
and join in the hymn of all creation:

Blessing and honor and glory and might  
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

**This is the feast of victory for our God, for the Lamb who was slain has begun  
his reign. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

## 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.

**Amen.**

## 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.*

A reading from Genesis.

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

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13**

LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy. (*Ps. 103:8*)

<sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

<sup>2</sup>**Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all God's benefits —**

<sup>3</sup>who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases;

<sup>4</sup>**who redeems your life from the grave  
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**

<sup>5</sup>who satisfies your desires with good things  
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

<sup>6</sup>**O LORD, you provide vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.**

<sup>7</sup>You made known your ways to Moses  
and your works to the children of Israel.

<sup>8</sup>**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

<sup>9</sup>you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.

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

<sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high above the earth,

so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

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

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

## **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.*

A reading from Romans.

<sup>1</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. <sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." <sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

## **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 St. Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>21</sup>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?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup>"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>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. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>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.' <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>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.**

## **SERMON**

### **CREED**

**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**

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy especially those whose names we speak out loud, in our hearts, or list online... Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world. Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**



### OFFERING

*We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website [www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html](http://www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html). Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.*

### OFFERTORY PRAYER

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.

**Amen.**

### GREAT THANKSGIVING

#### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**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:

## **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:**

**Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

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.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

#### **COMMUNION HYMN**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us  
    peace.**

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

#### **COMMUNION**

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
**Amen.**

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

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.  
**Amen.**

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**WALKING AT ROOSEVELT PARK.** Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. and Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. Call your friends and put on your walking shoes and meet at the entrance to skating rink at Roosevelt Park. It's a time to meet with friends, spend time out doors, get some exercise and follow the Spirit to meet new people.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL BREAKFAST FOR ALL AGES!** Gather for breakfast tomorrow, September 17, at 9:00 a.m., to kick off a new school year. Hear about our new plans for Sunday school, volunteer to help out from time-to-time, and enjoy getting together with your friends!

**SUNDAY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS!** This year, our Sunday school will use a learning station model, similar to what we do at VBS. We need people who are willing to lead a learning station at various time throughout the year. Stations may include: Bible story, crafts, drama, games, science, and more. Planning materials are provided. Each station

leader needs to plan a 10-12 minute lesson that will be repeated for each age group. Depending on the number of volunteers, each station leader should expect to serve once every four to six weeks.

**BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS. Saturday, October 7 during 5:30 p.m. worship.** Join us for a heartwarming event during worship, where all creatures great and small, from live animals on a leash to stuffed animals and cherished photos, are welcomed with open arms. This gathering will celebrate the bond between humans and their furry, feathered, and finned companions, offering a moment of gratitude for the joy and companionship they bring into our lives. Animal treats and surprises will be shared!

**3FT TRUNK OR TREAT. Saturday, October 21 after worship at 6:15 p.m.** Get ready for a spooktacular evening of fun! We invite all members to transform their car trunks into creative displays, and extend a warm invitation to bring along children, grandchildren, and neighbors for a festive night of candy, costumes, and community. Our parking lot will be transformed into a wonderland with exciting activities and tasty refreshments for all, ensuring a memorable and safe celebration of the season. Come join us for a night of thrills!

**WE ARE FORMING A CRICUT GROUP.** If you know how to do a variety of crafts and other projects using a Cricut machine ... or if you would like to learn ... we are forming a group of Cricut users to make stuff we can use to share the good news of Jesus with people in our community.

**PAY FOR THE ROOF; ENDOW THE FOOD PANTRY.** Every gift you make to repay the cost of the new roof supports and endows the future of our Food Pantry Ministry. You can make a gift to the Roof → Food Pantry campaign by using the special envelopes or by giving online.

#### **BIBLE STUDY.**

**Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.** We gather in the lounge on Wednesdays for fellowship and discussion around God's Word.

**Thursday at 7:00 p.m.** This study meets on Zoom. See your virtual bulletin for the link to join this study from any place.

**DAILY PRAYER.** Daily prayer is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to keep us in faith. Here are two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

**Morning Prayer:** Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#) and the St. Paul's Facebook each morning. You can listen and pray along from your home or take it with you as you exercise or commute.

**Night Prayer:** End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** to share what has been happening in their

day, to let go of each day's trouble and to participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662

## **BLESSING**

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

**Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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*Our ministry center is located on land which is part of the traditional territory of the Lenno-Lenape, called "Lenapehoking." The Lenape People lived in harmony with one another upon this territory for thousands of years. During the colonial era and early federal period, many were removed west and north, but some also remain among the continuing historical tribal communities of the region: The Nanticoke Lenno-Lenape Tribal Nation; the Ramapough Lenape Nation; and the Powhatan Renape Nation, The Nanticoke of Millsboro Delaware, and the Lenape of Cheswold Delaware. We acknowledge the Lenno-Lenape as the original people of this land and their continuing relationship with their territory. In our acknowledgment of the continued presence of Lenape people in their homeland, we affirm the aspiration of the great Lenape Chief Tamanend, that there be harmony between the indigenous people of this land and the descendants of the immigrants to this land, "as long as the rivers and creeks flow, and the sun, moon, and stars shine.*