



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The 21st Sunday after Pentecost

October 18, 2026

10:30 Holy Communion

Ezra 9 and 10 are among the most troubling chapters in the Bible. Ezra discerns that God is upset with the Jewish people because they have made marriages with foreign people. Ezra's solution is to immediately end all of these marriages. Was Ezra really acting according to God's will? Was Ezra a religious fanatic? Are their political forces at work behind the scenes that we do not know about? What happens to all the broken families? The Bible gives us answers to none of these questions. But Ezra 9-10 does bring up the issue of technical righteousness causing harm.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

The Zoom feed for this service is available in the nursery.

✠ GATHERING ✠

Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn We Are Called
(For music turn to Hymn 720 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Come! Live in the light!**
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
To live in the freedom of the city of God.

Refrain

We are called to act with justice,
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.

2. **Come! Open your heart!**
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless
so hatred and blindness will be no more. *Refrain*

3. **Sing! Sing a new song!**
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other
as sisters and brothers united in love. *Refrain*

Text and Music: David Haas, Copyright 1988 GIA Publication Inc.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

C: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful God,

**C: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

**Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.
Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others.
Turn our hearts back to you.
Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.
Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

**P: Hear this good news:
We have peace with God through Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.
C: Amen.**

*Hymn of Praise O God, Why Are You Silent
(For music see Hymn 703 in the Red Hymnal)*

- 1. O God, why are you silent?
I cannot hear your voice;
the proud and strong and violent
all claim you and rejoice;
you promised you would hold me
with tenderness and care.
Draw near, O Love, enfold me,
and ease the pain I bear.**
- 2. My hope lies bruised and battered,
my wounded heart is torn;
my spirit spent and shattered
by life's relentless storm;
will you not bend to hear me,
my cries from deep within?
Have you no word to cheer me
when night is closing in?**
- 3. Through endless nights of weeping,
through weary days of grief,
my heart is in your keeping,
my comfort, my relief.
Come, share my tears and sadness,
come, suffer in my pain,
oh, bring me home to gladness,
restore my hope again.**

**4. May pain draw forth compassion,
let wisdom rise from loss;
oh, take my heart and fashion
the image of your cross;
then may I know your healing
through healing that I share,
your grace and love revealing,
your tenderness and care.**

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, copyright 2003 GIA Publications, Inc. Music: Hans Leo Hassler, 1564-1612; arr. J. S. Bach, 1685-1750

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Ezra 9:1-4

B: After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, ‘The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ²For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons. Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands, and in this faithlessness the officials and leaders have led the way.’ ³When I heard this, I tore my garment and my mantle, and pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat appalled. ⁴Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading Ezra 10:1-5

D: While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men,

women, and children gathered to him out of Israel; the people also wept bitterly. ²Shecaniah son of Jehiel, of the descendants of Elam, addressed Ezra, saying, ‘We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. ³So now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. ⁴Take action, for it is your duty, and we are with you; be strong, and do it.’ ⁵Then Ezra stood up and made the leading priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear that they would do as had been said. So they swore.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Third Reading Ezra 10:6-17

E: Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God, and went to the chamber of Jehohanan son of Eliashib, where he spent the night. He did not eat bread or drink water, for he was mourning over the faithlessness of the exiles. ⁷They made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the returned exiles that they should assemble at Jerusalem, ⁸and that if any did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all their property should be forfeited, and they themselves banned from the congregation of the exiles.

Then all the people of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days; it was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. All the people sat in the open square before the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain. ¹⁰Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, ‘You have trespassed and married foreign women, and so increased the guilt of Israel. ¹¹Now make confession to the Lord the God of your ancestors, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.’ ¹²Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, ‘It is so; we must do as you have said. ¹³But the people are many, and it is a time of heavy rain; we cannot stand in the open. Nor is this a task for one day or for two, for many of us have transgressed in this matter. ¹⁴Let our officials represent the whole assembly, and let all in our towns who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders and judges of every town, until the fierce wrath of our God on this account is averted from us.’ ¹⁵Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levites supported them.

Then the returned exiles did so. Ezra the priest selected men, heads of families, according to their families, each of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to examine the matter.
¹⁷By the first day of the first month they had come to the end of all the men who had married foreign women.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Just a Closer Walk with Thee
(For music turn to Hymn 697 in the Red Hymnal)

Refrain

**Just a closer walk with thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**1. I am weak, by thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
as I walk, let me walk close to thee. *Refrain***

**2. Through this world of toils and snares,
if I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. *Refrain***

**3. When my feeble life is o'er
time for me will be no more;
guide me gently, safely o'er
to thy kingdom shore, to thy shore. *Refrain***

Text and music: North American traditional

Apostles' Creed

P: We confirm our faith with the Apostles' Creed.

**C: 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.

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: We share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

Offertory and Gathering of Prayers and Offerings

During the offertory you are invited to write a prayer concern on the small blank slip of paper in your worship bulletin. This slip will be collected by the ushers in the offering plates. The concerns raised will be prayed for later in the service.

✠ MEAL ✠

Hymn of Thanksgiving Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful Lord

For music turn to page 35 in the Blue Hymnal

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.**

**Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.**

**Gather the hopes and dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer now.**

**Grace our table with your presence, Lord,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: God of creation:

C: you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.

All blessings are from you;

make us generous with what we have.

Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts

in service to you and in love to our neighbors,

today and always.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Issues raised by the congregation are lifted in prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

P: 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 of Nazareth; 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 church of yesterday, today and tomorrow; and the church here in this place and all churches throughout the world, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(Isaiah 6:3, spoken)

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

Heaven 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.

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, 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.”

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C: 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.**

Invitation to Communion

P: Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. We use wheat bread and wine for communion. If you would prefer a gluten free wafer instead of bread please tell the communion assistant. Also, if you prefer grape juice to wine, it is available pre-filled in the individual glasses. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:

Lamb of God (Page 39 of the Blue Hymnal)

719 Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life (Red Hymnal)

705 God of Grace and God of Glory (Red Hymnal)

Communion Blessing After all have communed the pastor will say:

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

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray:

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C: Amen.

✠ SENDING ✠

Blessing

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us

(For music see Hymn 707 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Lord of glory, you have bought us
with your lifeblood as the price,
never grudging for the lost ones
that tremendous sacrifice;
and with that have freely given
blessings countless as the sand
to the unthankful and the evil
with your own unsparing hand.**
2. **Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you
gladly, freely, of your own.
With the sunshine of your goodness
melt our thankless hearts of stone
till our cold and selfish natures,
warmed by you, at length believe
that more happy and more blessed
‘tis to give than to receive.**
3. **Wondrous honor you have given
to our humblest charity
in your own mysterious sentence,**

“You have done it all to me.”

**Naked, sick, in prison, hungry-
in the least, your face we view,
saying by your poor and needy,
“Give as I have giv’n to you.”**

- 4. Lord of glory, you have bought us
with your lifeblood as the price,
never grudging for the lost ones
that tremendous sacrifice.
Give us faith to trust you boldly,
hope, to stay our souls on you:
but, oh, best of all your graces,
with your love our love renew.**

Text: Eliza A. Alderson, 1818-1889, alt. Music: Rowland H. Prichard, 1811-1887

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: God’s Work. Our Hands.

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Greg and Mary Zuege
Acolyte	Alyssa Young
Altar Care	Mary Zuege
Communion Assistants	Sue Kaufmann
Counters	Babette Huber and Burdie Gillern
Coffee Hour	

Worship assistants for next Sunday, October 25

Greeters and Ushers	John and Linda Thompson
Acolyte	Charlotte Stroup
Counters	John and Linda Thompson
Coffee Hour	Pie Sunday

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