



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The 17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 2026

10:30 Holy Communion

Today we begin a worship series on two books of the Bible you may have never paid attention to. They are Ezra and Nehemiah. These two books show us the events of the Jews being allowed to rebuild Jerusalem after it was destroyed by the Babylonians. (The art above depicts leaving Babylon for Jerusalem.) We'll see the people overcome some problems, fail at others; and sometimes come up with solutions we don't like. But their struggles teach us about our own faith.

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 Thy Word is a Lamp Unto my Feet
(For music turn to Hymn 36 in the Songbook binder)

**Refrain: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.**

**1. When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,
still you're there right beside me
And nothing will I fear, as long as you are near
Please be near me to the end.** *Refrain*

**2. I will not forget your love for me and yet,
my heart forever is wandering.
Jesus be my guide and hold me to your side,
and I will love you to the end** *Refrain*

**3. Instrumental-----

Nothing will I fear as long as you are near.
Please be near me to the end.** *Refrain*

Text by Amy Grant, music by Michael W. Smith; copyright 1984 Meadowgreen Music Co./Word Music, Inc.; CCLI #14301

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 Dance With Me
(For music turn to Hymn 73 in the Songbook binder)
Refrain*

**Come on – every body
take a chance,
dance with me.
Grab your sister,
tell your brother,
celebrate life dancing free.**

**1. Painful tears
shattered dreams,
darkness on our left and right.
But with the dawn
joy breaks loose
dispersing sorrow and fright. *Refrain***

**2. Life's a dance
where we learn
to move our feet creatively.
We may slip
as we move
but God still leads gracefully. *Refrain***

Coda

**Mourning turns to dance,
when we give the Lord
a chance to say... *Refrain***

Text and music: Hans Peterson, Dakota Road Music, Used by permission of the composer.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Ezra 1

B: In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared:

‘Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. ³Any of those among you who are of his people—may their God be with them!—are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem; ⁴and let all survivors, in whatever place they reside, be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods and with animals, besides freewill-offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.’

The heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites—everyone whose spirit God had stirred—got ready to go up and rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. ⁶All their neighbors aided them with silver vessels, with gold, with goods, with animals, and with valuable gifts, besides all that was freely offered. ⁷King Cyrus himself brought out the vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. ⁸King Cyrus of Persia had them released into the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of

Judah. ⁹And this was the inventory: gold basins, thirty; silver basins, one thousand; knives, twenty-nine; ¹⁰gold bowls, thirty; other silver bowls, four hundred and ten; other vessels, one thousand; ¹¹the total of the gold and silver vessels was five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar brought up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

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

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 122 (*read responsively*)

D: With joy I heard them say,

“Let us go to the Lord’s house!”

**C: And now, Jerusalem,
we stand inside your gates.**

D: Jerusalem, the city so built
that city and temple are one.

**C: To you the tribes go up,
every tribe of the Lord.**

D: It is the law of Israel
to honor God’s name.

**C: The seats of law are here,
the thrones of David’s line.**

D: Pray peace for Jerusalem:
happiness inside your walls,

**C: safety inside your walls,
peace in your great houses.**

D: For love of family and friends
I say, “Peace be with you!”

**C: For love of the Lord’s own house
I pray for your good.**

Gospel Acclamation (*Ecclesiastes 7:13*)

**C: Alleluia. Consider the works of God. Who can make straight
what he has made crooked? Alleluia.**

Gospel Reading Matthew 5:33-42

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 5th chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus preached] ‘Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, “You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you

have made to the Lord.” ³⁴But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let your word be “Yes, Yes” or “No, No”; anything more than this comes from the evil one.*

‘You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

After the reading:

P: The gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day We All Are One in Mission
(For music see Hymn 576 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **We all are one in mission;
we all are one in call,
our varied gifts united
by Christ the Lord of all.
A single great commission
compels us from above
to plan and work together
that all may know Christ’s love.**
2. **We all are called for service,
to witness in God’s name.
Our ministries are different;
our purpose is the same:
to touch the lives of others
with God’s surprising grace,
so ev’ry folk and nation
may feel God’s warm embrace.**
3. **Now let us be united,
and let our song be heard.**

**Now let us be a vessel
for God's redeeming Word.
We all are one in mission;
we all are one in call,
our varied gifts united
by Christ, the Lord of all.**

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955, copyright 1986 Hope Publishing Company. Music: Finnish folk tune; arr. hymnal version, copyright 2006 Augsburg Fortress

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

Simple Gifts from God by J. Paul Williams and Joseph M. Martin

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)

647 *Glorious Things of You Are Spoken (Red Hymnal)*

655 *Son of God, Eternal Savior (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 Morning Has Broken
(For music see Hymn 556 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
fresh from the Word!**
2. **Sweet the rain's new fall,
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dew fall
on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
spring in completeness
where God's feet pass.**
3. **Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning,
born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation,
praise ev'ry morning,
God's re-creation
of the new day!**

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965, copyright Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust, admin. David Higham Associates.. Music: Gaelic tune; arr. hymnal version, arr. copyright 2005 Augsburg Fortress

Dismissal

**P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C: God's Work. Our Hands.**

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Tom and Carol Urbanic
Acolyte	Elijah Young
Altar Care	Sue Kaufmann
Communion Assistants	Mary Zuege
Counters	John and Linda Thompson
Coffee Hour	Chicken Barbeque

Worship assistants for next Sunday, September 27

Greeters and Ushers	Linda Flood
Acolyte	Alyssa Young
Counters	Michele Myers and Anne Stromstad
Coffee Hour	Apple Treats

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St. John's Lutheran Church

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The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
Dongwon Shin, Pianist