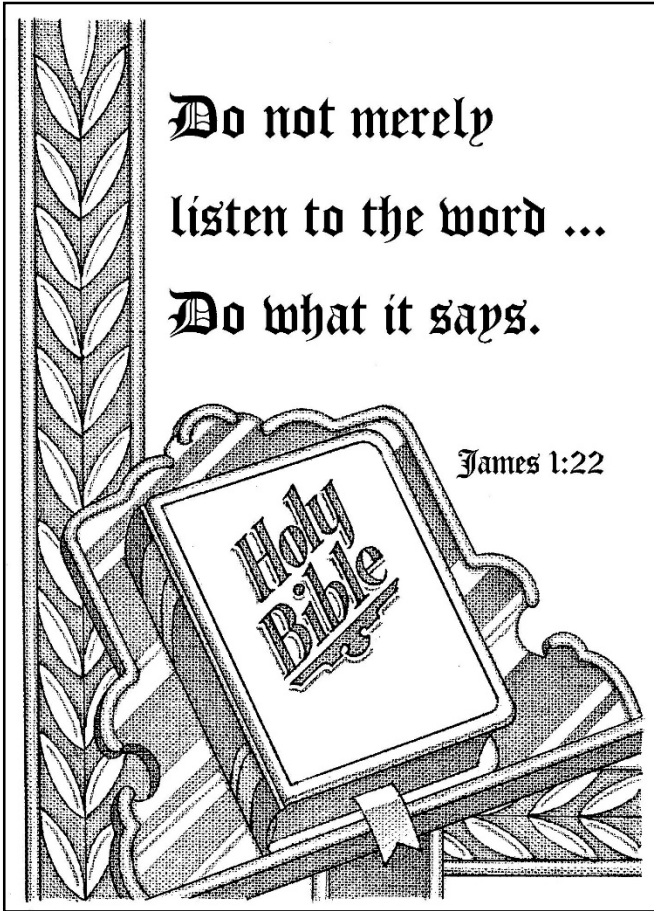


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



**Do not merely  
listen to the word ...  
Do what it says.**

James 1:22

✠ Holy Communion ✠

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 1, 2024

**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**



*Jesus protests against human customs being given the weight of divine law, while the essence of God's law is ignored. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. Last week Jesus told us "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Now James says God has given us birth by the word of truth. We who were washed in the word when we were born in the font return to it every Sunday to ask God to create in us clean hearts.*

**GATHERING**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

**P:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**C:** Amen.

**P:** Let us confess our sin and come to God for healing.

*Kneel*

**P:** Gracious God,

**C:** **have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have honored you with our lips,  
but have harmed our neighbors with our tongues.**

**The cravings at war within us  
cause conflicts and disputes.**

**In our desire to be first  
we make distinctions among ourselves.**

**We place the needs of the poor and the suffering last.**

**In your great mercy, forgive us our sins.**

**Draw near to us with grace in time of need,  
and turn us to follow in the way of Jesus Christ,  
our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**P:** God promises to forgive our iniquity  
and to remember our sin no more.

By grace you have been saved.

In the name of † Jesus Christ,  
the source of eternal healing,  
your sins are forgiven.

**C:** Amen.

*Stand*

**GATHERING HYMN**

*For the Beauty of the Earth*.....LBW 561

**APOSTOLIC GREETING**

**P**: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C**: And also with you.

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE**



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav'n-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of



God, you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the

Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the  
Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.  
A - men, a - men.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray.

O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C:** Amen.

Sit

### **WORD**

#### **FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9**

*The Israelites believed the law was a divine gift that provided guidelines for living out the covenant. Moses commands the people to obey the law and to neither add to nor subtract from it. The Israelites are also to teach the law to their children and their children's children.*

**A:** A Reading from Deuteronomy:

<sup>1</sup>So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. <sup>2</sup>You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you.

<sup>6</sup>You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" <sup>7</sup>For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup>And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup>But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all

the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

**A**: The word of the Lord.

**C**: **Thanks be to God.**

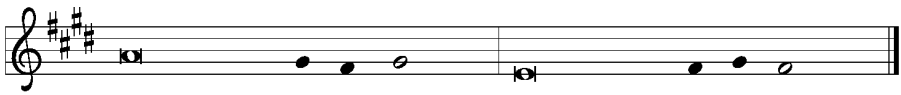
**PSALM: Psalm 15**

*The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.*



LORD, who may dwell in your tab - er - na - cle?

*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



<sup>1</sup>LORD, who may dwell in your | tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your | holy hill?

<sup>2</sup>**Those who lead a blameless life and do | what is right,  
who speak the truth | from their heart;**

<sup>3</sup>they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil | to their friends;  
they do not cast discredit up- | on a neighbor.

<sup>4</sup>**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those  
who | fear the LORD.**

**They have sworn upon their health and do not take | back their  
word.**

<sup>5</sup>They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes  
a- | gainst the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be | overthrown. **R**

**SECOND READING: James 1:17-27**

*The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.*

**A**: A Reading from James:

<sup>17</sup>Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. <sup>18</sup>In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

<sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. <sup>25</sup>But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

<sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world..

**A**: The word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**



*Stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

**Cantor:** God gave us birth by the | word of truth\* so that we would become a kind of first fruits | of creation.

**C**: Repeat the Alleluias

**GOSPEL: Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23**

*Mark's gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the seventh chapter.

**C**: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, <sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; <sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) <sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honors me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;

<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

<sup>14</sup>Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup>there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.

<sup>21</sup>"For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup>adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

**P**: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C**: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

**SERMON**..... **Barbara Horn, ALWL**

*Stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

***Oh, that the Lord Would Guide My Ways*..... **LBW 480****

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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**

*A brief silence is held after the introduction.*

**P:** Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

*After each petition:*

**P:** Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**P:** We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**C: Amen**

**PEACE**

**P:** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

*The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

*Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you*



**MEAL****OFFERING***The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.**Stand***OFFERTORY***As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung*

1 Ac - cept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place up - on your ta - ble.  
 2 The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They grew in your good plea - sure.  
 3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer be - fore you.

We do not wor - ship as we ought but on - ly as we're a - ble.  
 What once was com - mon, dail - y food be - comes a ho - ly trea - sure.  
 Lord, by your grace now come to us, as hum - bly we a - dore you.

**OFFERING PRAYER****A:** Let us pray:

**C:** Blessed are you, O God,  
 source of every gift of your creation.  
 By these gifts and with our lives,  
 help us to serve one another and all in need,  
 through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
 Amen.

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and  
 might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
 san - na in the high - est, 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**P:** Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.  
In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,  
that all those who believe in him should not perish,  
but have eternal life.  
We give thanks to you  
for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.  
Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,  
that we may receive our Lord with a living faith  
as he comes to us in his holy supper.

**C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

**P:** 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.

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**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:** Jesus welcomes you to this table.

Come, here is your God.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you  
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

*Sit*

**COMMUNION**

*All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:*

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. The communicant may say: Amen**

**COMMUNION HYMN**

***My God, How Wonderful Thou Art*..... LBW 524**

*Stand*

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

**C** Amen.

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**A**: Let us pray:

Holy God,  
you have welcomed us to this meal  
and fed us with dignity at your table.  
Send us now to welcome others  
and to be at peace with one another,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C**: Amen

***SENDING***

**BLESSING**

**P**: God all mighty,  
God most merciful  
✠ bless you, keep you,  
and give you peace.

**C**: Amen

**SENDING HYMN**

*Savior, Again to Your Dear Name .....LBW 262*

**DISMISSAL**

**A**: Go in peace. Follow Jesus.

**C**: Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**

### SERVICE ASSISTANTS

**Ushers:** Mike Larson, Brian Bair, Bill Reasner, Sally Congdon, Mike Gardner  
**Lay Assistant:** Janet Stroble; **Communion Assistant:** Candy Watkins  
**Acolyte:** Doriann Morris; **Altar Guild:** Jody Fullmer, Jean Bower;  
**Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Howard and Jean Wilt;  
**Cantor:** Candy Watkins; **Flower Delivery:** Jody Fullmer

### IN BLESSED MEMORY

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Lawrence and Alice Gee's wedding anniversary, with love Debbie and Carl.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to Messiah Church!** It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. We hope to see you again.

**This morning we welcome Barbara Horn**, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Barbara has received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and has been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist.

**Sunday, September 8**, is the "Welcome Back Picnic" immediately after worship. All food will be provided, so all we need is you. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex, please be sure to fill your name and amount of people attending so we will be sure to get the right amount of food.

**Sunday School will begin** on Sunday, September 8 at 9:30 am and we can't wait to see you!

**Bible Study** will resume on Wednesday, September 18 at 7:00 pm. We will continue our study on the Book of Psalms.

**Choir rehearsals will begin** on Thursday, September 5, at 7 PM in the music room. If you like to sing and would be willing to add your voice in singing praises to God, please join us.

**God's Work. Our Hands. Save the date:** Saturday, September 14 at 5:00p.m. Grades 3 thru Adult (*Younger children may help with the assistance of an adult.*) Please join us for a Pizza Supper followed by a work session to fill the LWR Backpacks with school supplies. **We need you!** Please sign up in the narthex so that we know how much help is available and how much pizza to order. We have OODLES of packs to fill – *hope to see you there!*

## **MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**JARED GIST, ORGANIST**

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702

(570) 326-9171 | [www.messiahsouth.org](http://www.messiahsouth.org)

### **What Would Jesus Do?**

At the outset, rules seem simple. They divide the world into good and bad and help us restore a measure of order to a chaotic world. Unfortunately, the same rules that we use to bring order out of chaos are often insufficient to deal with the complexity of our lives, which is one of the reasons there truly is an exception to every rule. This is also the reason we appoint judges: to interpret the law when it fails to adequately address the circumstance to which it is applied.

In Jesus' day the Pharisees and scribes were known for their strict observance of the law. So when they notice the disciples of Jesus eating with defiled hands, the Pharisees and scribes bring this perceived breach of the law to Jesus' attention. The law itself, which requires that people wash their hands before eating, originated from ancient purity laws. Jesus understands this and simultaneously upholds and reframes the law by drawing his listeners' attention away from the washing of hands to what truly defiles. In doing so, Jesus acts as a judge and offers an interpretation of the law that both upholds its original intent of purity and absolves the disciples of wrongdoing. At the same time, he exposes the prioritization of human precepts over God's command and reminds us of God's sovereignty and compassion.

Rules are simple, but our world is not. Through the incarnation, the Word made flesh, God meets us at the intersection of law and life. In Jesus, God the judge enters our world in a new way and interprets the law. And through Jesus, we come to understand God's will in a messy world. Therefore, if we as Christians truly want to live out the will of God, we do well to start with that old and simple question "What would Jesus do?"

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