

# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

**“Be opened.”  
And immediately his  
ears were opened,  
his tongue was released ...**

Mark 7:34-35, NRSV



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 8, 2024

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

*James tells us to stop showing favoritism in the assembly, treating the rich visitor with more honor than the poor one. Jesus himself seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophenician woman in today's gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don't deserve the goods meant for God's children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings a need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.*

**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**

*Earth and All Stars st. 1, 3, 5, 6* .....LBW 558

**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**



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



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



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.



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.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray.

Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life. Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord.

**C:** Amen.

*Sit*

**WORD**

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:4-7a**

*These verses are a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon. Isaiah 34 portrays God's vengeance on Edom, Israel's age-old enemy, which makes the path from Babylon to Zion safe for the exiles' return. The desert itself will flow with water to give drink to the returning exiles.*

**A:** A Reading from Isaiah:

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,

and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,

and streams in the desert;

<sup>7a</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,

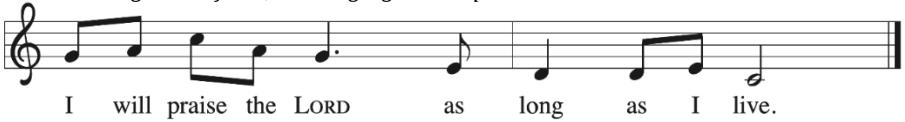
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

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

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**PSALM: Psalm 146**

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



*Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*



<sup>1</sup> Hal- | lelujah!

Praise the LORD, | O my soul!

<sup>2</sup> **I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;**

**I will sing praises to my God while I | have my being.**

<sup>3</sup> Put not your | trust in rulers,  
in mortals in whom there | is no help.

<sup>4</sup> **When they breathe their last, they re- | turn to earth,  
and in that day | their thoughts perish. R**

<sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,  
whose hope is in the | LORD their God;

<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;  
who keeps promis- | es forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who  
hunger.  
The LORD sets the | captive free.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those  
who | are bowed down;  
the LORD | loves the righteous. R**

<sup>9</sup> The LORD cares | for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the  
wicked.

<sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall | reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R**

**SECOND READING: James 2:1-17**

*Faithful Christians do not show partiality to the rich and powerful of the world, especially at the expense of the poor and weak. Likewise, faith does not pay mere lip service to God's will. Instead, a living Christian faith expresses itself in acts of compassion and mercy for those in need.*

**A:** A Reading from James:

<sup>1</sup>My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? <sup>2</sup>For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," <sup>4</sup>have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

<sup>8</sup>You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. <sup>11</sup>For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? <sup>17</sup>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

**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:** Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

**C:** Repeat the Alleluias

**GOSPEL: Mark 7:24-37**

*In Mark's gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus' ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.*

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

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

<sup>24</sup>Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,<sup>25</sup>but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." <sup>29</sup>Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." <sup>30</sup>So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

<sup>31</sup>Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." <sup>35</sup>And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

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

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

*Sit*

**SERMON**..... Pastor Ron Montgomery

*Stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace*..... LBW 419

**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**: Hear us, O God.

**C**: **Your mercy is great.**

*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

Sit

**MEAL**

**OFFERING**

*The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

**I Will Sing a Sunday Song ..... Pepper Choplin**

Stand

**OFFERTORY**

*As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung*

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 the dreams of all; u -  
 nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your  
 pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

**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 him 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'r and might,  
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
 san-na. 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.

**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.

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**

*We Come to You for Healing, Lord*

1 We come to you for heal - ing, Lord, of  
2 As once you walked through an - cient streets and  
3 You touch us through phy - si - cians' skills, through  
4 When nights are long with wake - ful - ness, through  
5 We come to you, O lov - ing Lord, in

bod - y, mind, and soul, and pray that by your  
 reached toward those in pain, come, ris - en Christ, a -  
 nurs - es' gifts of care, and through the love of  
 days when strength runs low, grant us your gift of  
 our dis - tress and pain, in trust that through our  
  
 Spir - it's touch we may a - gain be whole.  
 mong us still with pow'r to heal a - gain.  
 faith - ful friends who lift our lives in prayer.  
 pa - tience, Lord, your calm - ing peace to know.  
 nights and days your grace will heal, sus - tain.

Text: Herman G. Stuenkel Jr., b. 1923

Music: MARTYRDOM, Hugh Wilson, 1764–1824

Text © 2002 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638, www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

All rights reserved. Used by permission.

*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**

*How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds.....* LBW 345

**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:** Susan Bryan; **Communion Assistant:** Fred Harbaugh

**Acolyte:** Jonathan Hess; **Altar Guild:** Sue Shoemaker, Yvonne Kaiser;

**Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Kathy Stiber;

**Cantor:** Bob Schweppenheiser; **Flower Delivery:** Paul Weaver

**IN BLESSED MEMORY**

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Sam Hessert's 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday on September 13<sup>th</sup>, with love from his wife Carol and family.

**The Basket of Flowers** is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Roland Weaver on the anniversary of his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, with love from his wife Jean and family.

## **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 Pastor Ron Montgomery**, retired Pastor in the Synod, who is presiding over worship.

**This morning immediately following worship** we will gather in Shaheen Hall for our “Welcome Back Picnic” immediately after worship. All food will be provided, so all we need is you.

**Sunday School is back!** Join us Sunday mornings at 9:30 am.

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

**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!*

**The Preschool Bingo Committee** is asking for your help. On October 26, the committee will be having their 2<sup>nd</sup> Gift Card Bingo event. During this event there will be themed baskets for the Chinese Auction. Please consider donating a basket or items to make a basket to help us raise funds for our preschool. Thank you!

**The Eucharistic ministers** will be sent out next Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. Please let the office know if you are not available to take communion. If anyone is homebound, can’t get to church and would like to receive communion please notify the office at 570-326-9171.

## MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702

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

### **A Table-scrap Feast**

The story of the Syrophenician woman is one of the most puzzling in all the gospels. It raises more questions than answers: Why did Jesus turn her down? Was he testing her? Was the human side of him mistaken? Perhaps Jesus was just grumpy?

Unfortunately, the gospel writer did not record what Jesus was thinking, only what he said, and those words remain troubling.

But we do know that Jesus was moved by the Syrophenician woman's persistence and faith. She bravely crossed multiple barriers—gender, ethnicity, class, religion—to get the help her daughter needed. In the end, Jesus grants her the mercy she seeks: he heals her daughter and restores their family. The woman had come begging for crumbs and instead received an abundant feast.

Who is the Syrophenician woman today? Maybe she is one of the millions who face daily violence and abuse, or perhaps the countless many who live with addiction or mental illness. She may be an asylum-seeker or refugee, reluctantly fleeing home because it's no longer safe for her family. The woman in today's gospel represents all who are outcast and ignored. This story is a powerful reminder of the inclusivity and compassion at the heart of Jesus' teachings and deeds. It is also a call to action, urging us to open our hearts and extend love and mercy to those who are marginalized or in need, just as Jesus did.

God has this amazing ability to bring about change in astonishing ways, through the most unexpected people. God's work in our lives is always surprising us, shaking up our worldview, and making abundance out of scarcity. Even when all we expect for ourselves or others are scraps, God has a larger vision: a banquet to which we are all invited.

From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

Copyright © 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2006 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #24158. 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. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Reprinted Hymns by permission of OneLicense.net #A-712396 and CCLI #11444333.