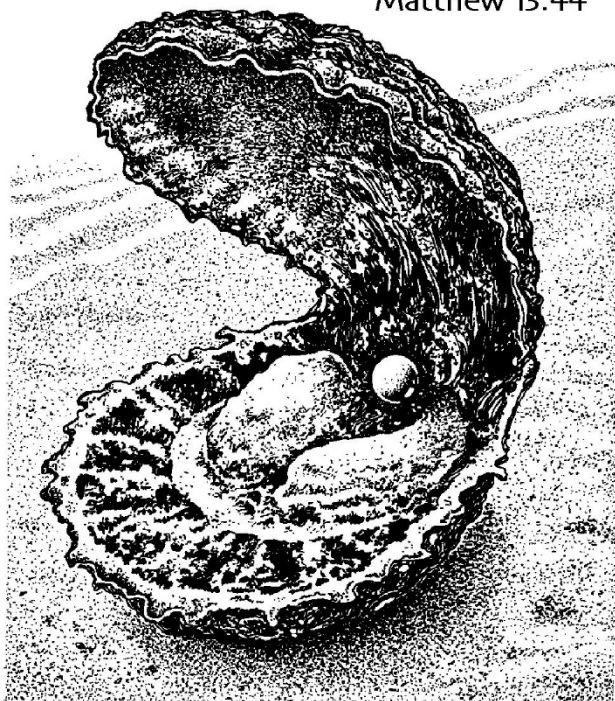


Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

The kingdom of heaven
is like a treasure hidden.

Matthew 13:44



✝ Holy Communion ✝

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2026



8

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near to God with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to grant us the forgiveness of all our sins, and through the grace of the Holy spirit, true repentance and amendment of our sinful lives.

Kneel

Silence is kept for meditation...

P: Almighty God, merciful Father:

C: I have sinned against you in thought, in word, and in deed;
By what I have done and what I have left undone.

I have not loved you with my whole heart, mind, and strength.

I have not loved my neighbor as myself.

For the sake of your beloved Son, who suffered upon the cross for me, have mercy upon me and forgive me all my sin!

P: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they may turn from their wickedness and live. As a Called and Ordained minister of the church of Jesus Christ, and by his authority, I declare to you the forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Stand

GATHERING HYMN*Gather Us In*

1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark - ness
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con - fin - ing, not in some heav - en,



van - ished a - way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 yearn for your face; we have been sung through - out all of his - t'ry,
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a - way— here in this place the new light is shin - ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu - man race.
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth.
 now is the king - dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for - sak - en, gath-er us in, the
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty, gath-er us in, the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas - sion, give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er, gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en,
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly,
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.
 lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.
 fire . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: GATHER US IN, Marty Haugen

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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.

G: And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

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



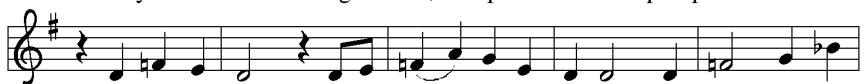
1 Lord God, heav'n-ly King, al - might-y God and Fa-ther, we



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



Refrain
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.



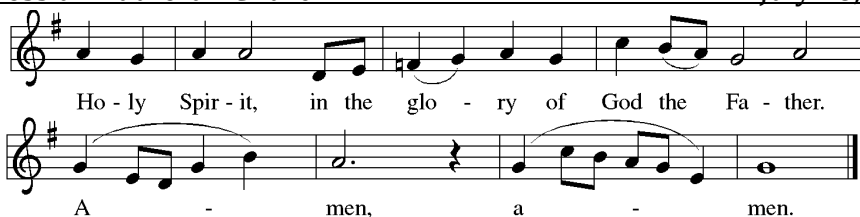
Refrain
Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



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

**PRAYER OF THE DAY****P:** Let us pray.

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

Sit

WORD**FIRST READING: 1 Kings 3:5-12**

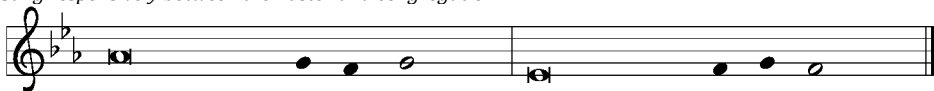
Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

A: A Reading from First Kings:

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

A: The word of the Lord.**C:** Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 119:129-136*Sung responsively between the Pastor and congregation.*

- 129 Your de- | crees are wonderful;
therefore I obey them with | all my heart.
- 130 **When your word is opened | it gives light;
it gives understanding | to the simple.**
- 131 I open my | mouth and pant
because I long for | your commandments.
- 132 **Turn to me and be gra- | cious to me,
as you always do to those who | love your name.**
- 133 Order my footsteps | in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion | over me.
- 134 **Rescue me from those | who oppress me,
and I will keep | your commandments.**
- 135 Let your face shine up- | on your servant
and teach | me your statutes.
- 136 **My eyes shed | streams of tears,
because people do not | keep your teaching.**

SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

A: A Reading from Romans:

26 The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up

for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

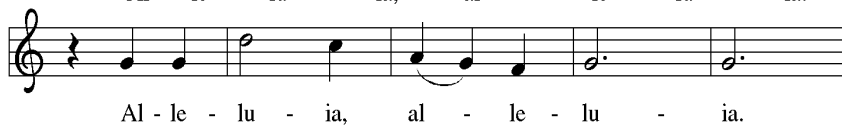
³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹ Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a

man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit
SERMON.....**Pastor Kliner**

Stand
HYMN OF THE DAY *Be Thou My Vision*



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.
thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:
may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,
Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,
thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,
Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Text: Irish, 8th cent.; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860–1935, alt.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880–1931
 Music: SLANE, Irish traditional

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]: Let us pray for the Church, the world, and all people according to their need...

After each petition:

[P]: Lord, in your mercy,

[C]: hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

[P]: All these things, most merciful God, we commend into your hands,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[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

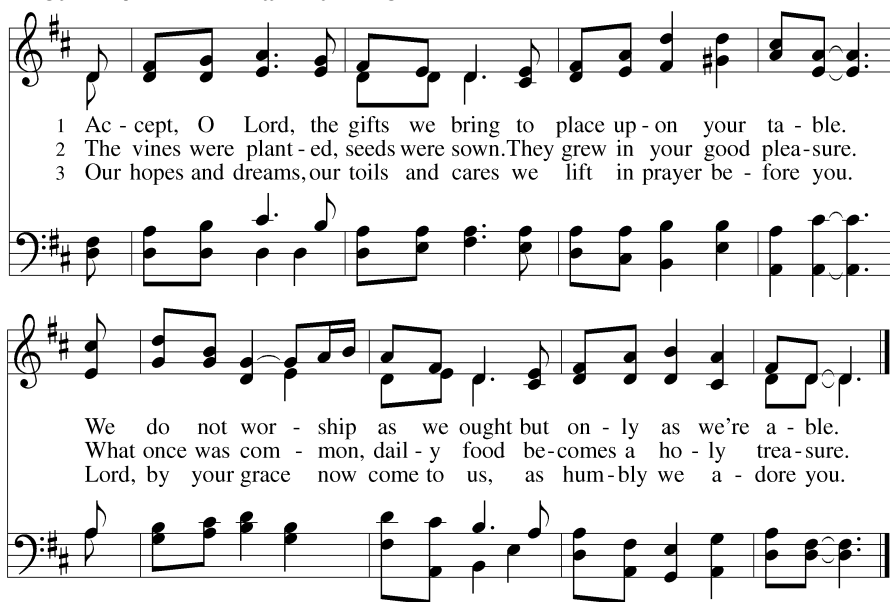
OFFERING

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

Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung



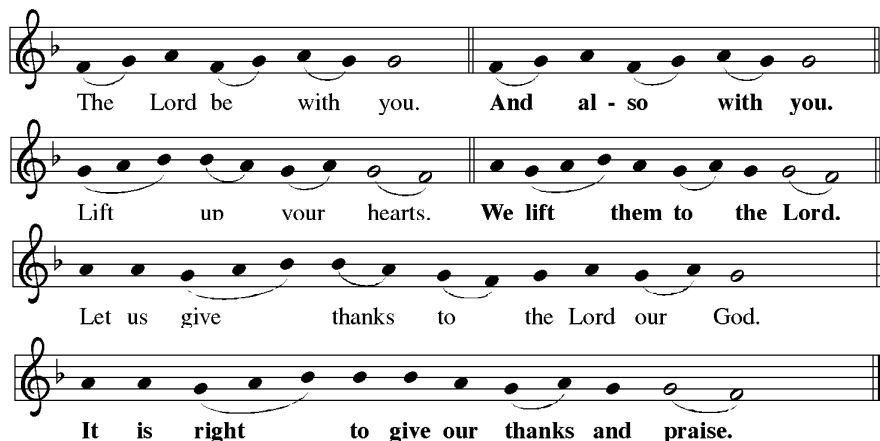
1 Ac - cept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place up - on your ta - ble.
 2 The vines were plant - ed, seeds were sown. They grew in your good plea - sure.
 3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer be - fore you.

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... Blessed are you,

C: O Lord, our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness, you have blessed us with these gifts. With them, we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

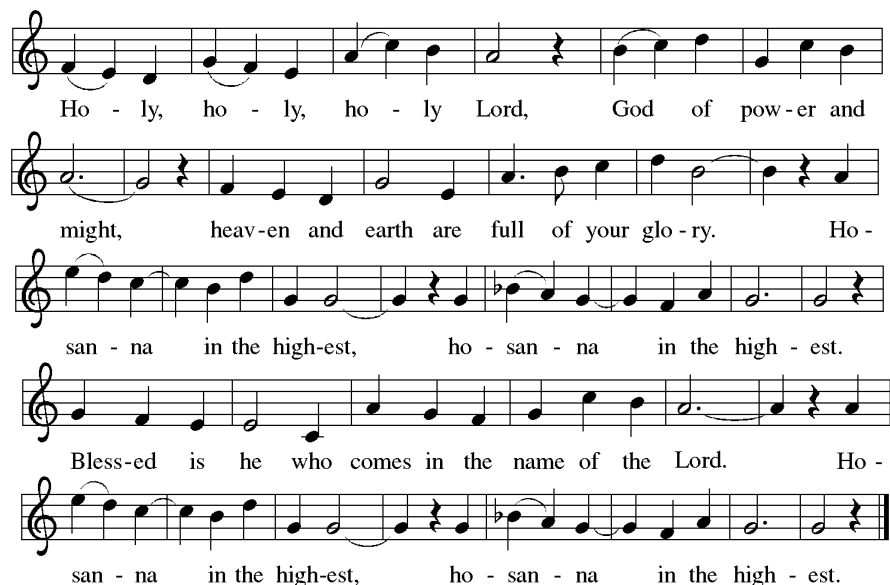
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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: Heavenly Father, you are holy indeed and all creation rightly gives you thanks and praise.

All life, all holiness comes from you, through your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, by the working of the Holy Spirit.

From age to age you gather a people unto yourself, so that, from the rising of the sun to its setting, a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your holy name.

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts:

We ask you to make them Holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.

For, in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying:

TAKE AND EAT.

THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

After supper He took the cup. Again, he gave Thanks and Praise to you and gave it them to drink saying:

DRINK OF THIS, ALL OF YOU:

THIS CUP IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT.

IT WILL BE POURED OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

The mystery of faith:

C Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

P: And so, Father Most Holy, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious Resurrection and his ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice of praise—

Look with favor on your Church, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself.

Grant that we, who are nourished by our Lord's body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ Jesus.

May he make us an everlasting gift to you and enable us to share in the inheritance of your Saints: The Patriarchs and Prophets, the Holy

Apostles and Martyrs, and all your Saints in Light, whose witness encourages us in our Faith.

Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth; together with our Bishops, Pastors, Deacons and the entire people your son has won for you.

Hear now the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you. In mercy and love, unite all your children wherever they may be.

Welcome into your Kingdom our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship.

There in your Kingdom, freed from the corruption of sin and death, we shall proclaim your glory with every creature, through Christ our Lord, through whom you give us everything that is good.

Through Him, with Him and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours almighty Father, now and forever.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Let us pray with confidence in the words that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us...

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

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

- P:** Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
- C:** Thanks be to God!
- P:** Come now and eat of the Bread of Life and drink of the Cup of Salvation! Taste and see, the Lord is good!
- C:** Amen!

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

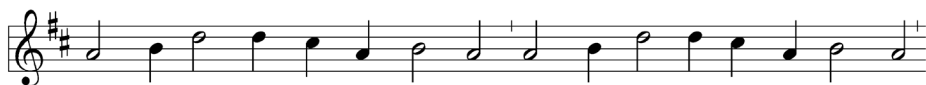
COMMUNION HYMN

Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness..... LBW 224

1 Soul, a - dorn your-self with glad-ness, leave the gloom-y haunts of sad-ness,
2 Has - ten as a bride to meet him, ea - ger - ly and glad - ly greet him.
3 Now in faith I hum-bly pon - der o - ver this sur-pass-ing won-der
4 Je - sus, source of last-ing plea-sure, tru - est friend, and dear-est trea-sure,



come in - to the day-light's splen-dor, there with joy your prais-es ren - der.
There he stands al-read - y knock-ing; quick - ly, now, your gate un-lock - ing,
that the bread of life is bound-less though the souls it feeds are count-less;
peace be-yond all un - der - stand-ing, joy in - to all life ex-pand-ing:



Bless the one whose grace un-bound-ed this a - maz-ing ban-quet found-ed;
o - pen wide the fast-closed por - tal, say - ing to the Lord im-mor - tal:
with the choic-est wine of heav-en Christ's own blood to us is giv - en.
hum-bly now, I bow be - fore you, love in - car - nate, I a - dore you;



he, though heav'n-ly, high, and ho - ly, deigns to dwell with you most low - ly.
"Come, and leave your loved one nev - er; dwell with-in my heart for - ev - er."
Oh, most glo-rious con - so-la - tion, pledge and seal of my sal - va-tion.
wor - thi - ly let me re-ceive you, and, so fa-vored, nev - er leave you.

Text: Johann Franck, 1618–1677; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 1978

Music: SCHMÜCKE DICH, Johann Crüger, 1598–1662

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

Father in Heaven, you have fed us with the Bread of Life,
your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Sustain us by the work of
the Holy Spirit, through this Holy Meal, that we may abide in Christ, and
he in us, to the glory of your Holy Name.

C: Amen.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. And may almighty God—the Father, ☩ The Son, and The Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN**God of Grace and God of Glory..... LBW 415**

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple
 2 Lo! The hosts of e - vil round us scorn the Christ, as -
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to
 4 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your pow'r; crown your an - cient chur - ch's sto - ry;
 sail his ways! From the fears that long have bound us
 your con - trol; shame our wan - ton, self - ish glad - ness,
 we de - plore; let the gift of your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flow'r. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
 free our hearts to faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.
 lest we miss your king - dom's goal, lest we miss your king - dom's goal.
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

DISMISSAL

A: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Fred Harbaugh, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker, Susan Christ, Greg Eckenrode; **Lay Assistant:** Georgette Copp; **Comm. Assist.:** Mary Schultz; **Acolyte:** Doriann Morris; **Altar Guild:** Vicki Bair, Doris Butt
Greeters/Presenters: Don and Mary Ellen Rosenbaum
Flower Delivery: Paul Weaver

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Karen Hockman Thomas, who passed away 15 years ago, August 3rd by her sister Linda and nephews Matthew, Michael and grandson Michael.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Dennis Ream on the fourth-year anniversary of his passing July 28, 2022, by his wife Sandy and children Dennis Jr., Kelley and their families.

The Sanctuary Lamp burns in memory of David Hutchinson by his 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 will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Pastor Kliner's ordination. In honor of this special occasion, please join us immediately following worship for a coffee hour/reception in Shaheen Hall.

"Save the Date" The Fourth Annual Gift Card Bingo benefiting the Messiah Lutheran Preschool has been scheduled for Saturday, October 24, 2026. Volunteers are always needed and welcomed to help make this event a great success. If you are interested in helping, please contact the church office.



SCHOOL SUPPLY KITS for Lutheran World Relief

Throughout the summer, we will continue to collect school supplies to fill school kits to be sent to children in need around the world. **These supplies often mean the difference between getting an education or not.**

Especially needed this week: notebooks, pens, scissors, erasers, and crayons. **Please note:** Once our order arrives, we should have more than enough pencils to fill all of the packs. All of the rest of the piles are pretty close to each other in count, with the notebooks pile being slightly lower than the others, so any of the five items listed will be helpful! Shop for some of each or shop for your favorites ... it always seems to even out in the end. 😊

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Rev. Gerald Kliner, STS, Senior Pastor
JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702
(570) 326-9171 | www.messiahsouth.org

It's the Small Things

Children like to collect things: rocks, sticks, and more. Adults tend to pretend-love the items that are brought to them: "Oh, how beautiful!" "Oh, that's a good one." Children, encouraged, continue their collections, finding the smallest of things and displaying them like they are the most valuable items in the world.

Jesus' parables in today's gospel reading teach the disciples about things that are so small they are often overlooked: a mustard seed, a little bit of yeast, a tiny pearl, and even a net that is quite small until it is filled with fish. These little things in his parables are treasures important for understanding the reign of God.

Adults tend to overlook the small things while seeking larger things, heavier things, shinier things. We walk right past the tiny flower in the crack of a sidewalk, which once would have caught our eye. One pearl? A full necklace is better. A shrub that provides creatures a home? It's now in an inconvenient place.

But Jesus teaches that in God's reign all things, large and small, matter. All people matter. It is a wise disciple who recognizes this. Even King Solomon, with all his wealth, prayed for wisdom. Wisdom helps us see more clearly and begin to understand the depth of God's grace.

And that grace Jesus displayed immediately. "Have you understood all this?" he asked. The disciples answered simply, "Yes" (Matthew 13:51). What a bold answer! They were too worried to admit they did not understand. A little yeast, though, goes a long way. Jesus knew this. Each parable would build on another until the disciples understood the entire collection.

For us today, understanding God's grace takes study, prayers for wisdom, and walking the path while looking for the small things that matter. The reign of God is like a rose among a bramble bush? A child's picture of their home? However, you visualize it, it is a treasure to cherish and to share.

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