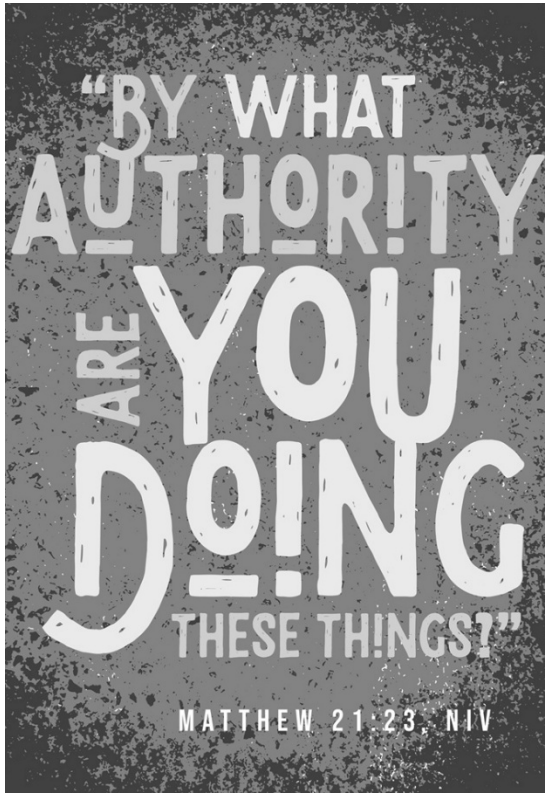


Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✝ Holy Communion ✝

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2026

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

GATHERING**PRELUDE**

Stand

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray...

Dear Father in Heaven—to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we might perfectly love you and worthily magnify your Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us. But we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Therefore, let confess all our sins to God, so that we may hear his forgiveness and know his mercy...

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, our Father in Heaven, has given his Son to die for us, and for his sake forgives us all our sin. 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



1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with you in low - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear,
3 Teach me your pa - tience; share with me a clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the



paths of ser - vice true; tell me your se - cret;
win - ning word of love; teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, in work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - 'ning way, in peace that on - ly



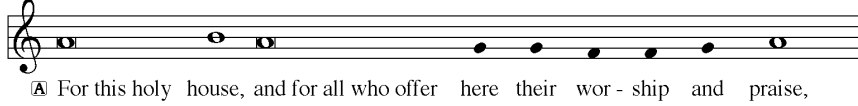
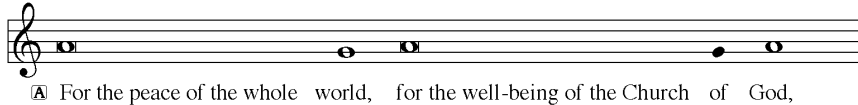
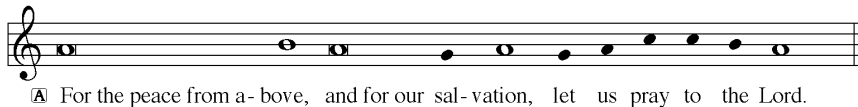
help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong,
you can give; with you, O Mas - ter, let me live.

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836–1918, alt.
Music: MARYTON, H. Percy Smith, 1825–1898

APOSTOLIC GREETING

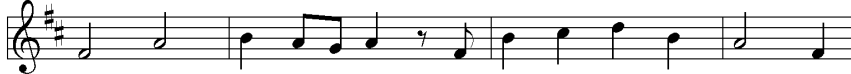
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

KYRIE

HYMN OF PRAISE

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



G 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.



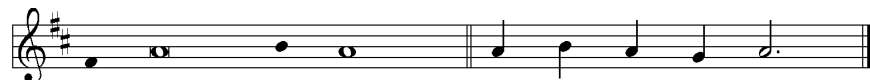
For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



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 The Lord be with you.

G And al-so with you.

P: Let us pray.

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

G: Amen.

Sit

WORD

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

[A]: A Reading from Ezekiel:

¹ The word of the LORD came to me:

² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"?

³ As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die.

²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.

²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die.

²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin.

³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

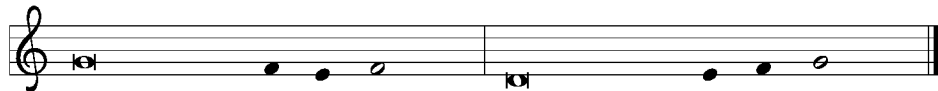
³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

[A]: The word of the Lord.

[C]: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9*Sung by the cantor and repeated by the congregation.*

Re - mem - ber, O LORD your com - pas - sion and love.

Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my | trust in you;
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph | over me.

²**Let none who look to you be | put to shame;**
let the treacherous be disappointed | in their schemes.

³Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths.

⁴**Lead me in your | truth and teach me,**
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted
all | the day long.

⁵Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.

⁶**Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;**
remember me according to your love and for the sake of your
good- | ness, O LORD.

⁷Gracious and upright | is the LORD;
therefore he teaches sinners | in his way.

⁸**He guides the humble in | doing right**
and teaches his way | to the lowly.

⁹All the paths of the LORD are | love and faithfulness
to those who keep his covenant and his | testimonies. **R.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

[A]: A Reading from Philippians:

¹ If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ,
any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit,
any compassion and sympathy,

² make my joy complete:

be of the same mind, having the same love,
being in full accord and of one mind.

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,
but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.

⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests
but to the interests of others.

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me,
not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence,
work on your own salvation with fear and trembling,

¹³ for it is God who is at work in you,
enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

A The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



C Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

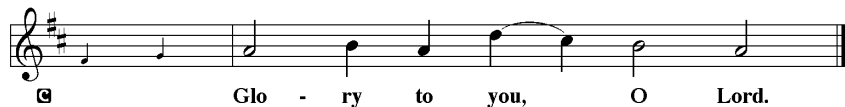
CANTOR: Open our | hearts, O Lord, to give heed to what is said | by your Son.

C: Repeat the Alleluias.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.



²³ When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said,

“By what authority are you doing these things,
and who gave you this authority?”

²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question;
if you tell me the answer,

then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.

²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?”

And they argued with one another,

“If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us,

‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’

²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd,
for all regard John as a prophet.”

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.”

And he said to them,

“Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons;

he went to the first and said,

‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’

²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same,

and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?”

They said, “The first.”

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you,

the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God
ahead of you.

³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness,

and you did not believe him,

but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him,

and even after you saw

it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.



Praise to you, O Christ.

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

Stand
HYMN OF THE DAY *How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord*



1 How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord, when once we heed your call
2 But if, for - get - ful, we should find your yoke is hard to bear;
3 We mar - vel how your saints be - come in hin - dranc - es more sure;
4 In what you give us, Lord, to do, to - geth - er or a - lone,



to live ac - cord - ing to your word and dai - ly learn, re - freshed, re - stored,
if world - ly pres - sures fray the mind and love it - self can - not un - wind,
whose joy - ful vir - tues put to shame the ca - sual way we wear your name,
in old rou - tines or ven - tures new, may we not cease to look to you,



that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.
its tan - gled skein of care: our in - ward life re - pair.
and by our faults ob - scure your pow'r to cleanse and cure.
the cross you hung up - on, all you en - deav - ored done.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000
Music: REPTON, C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848–1918
Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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.

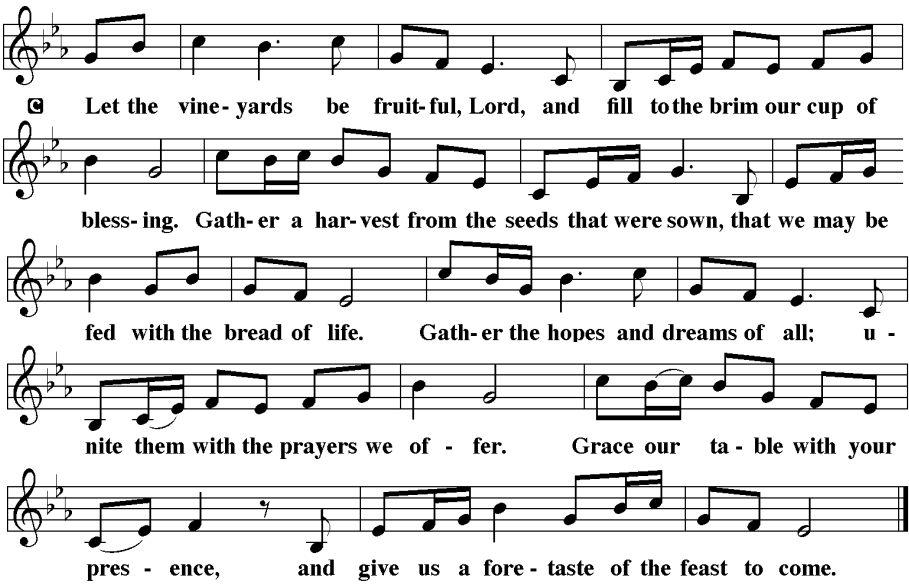
Anthem

Lord, I lift Your Name on High Rick Founds

Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung



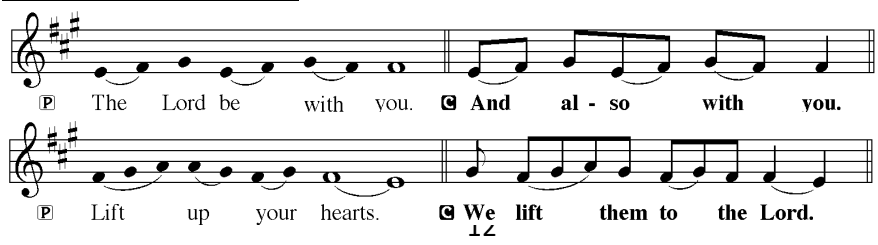
Let the vine- yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless- ing. Gath- er a har- vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath- er the hopes and dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

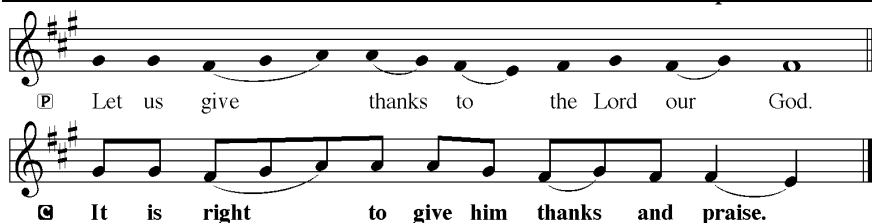
A: Let us pray... Merciful Father,

C: We offer you with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves, our time, and our possessions—signs of your gracious Love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself to us, + Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

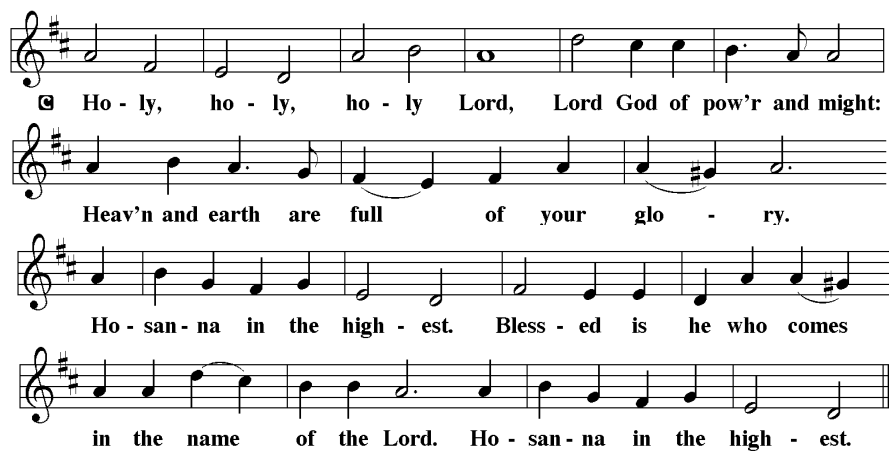


The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.



PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary, that we should at all times and in all places, offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, Holy Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord; 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 the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your Name and join their unending hymn...



EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

[P]: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Heavenly Father: endless is your mercy, and eternal is your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory!

Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations. You rescued Israel, your chosen people. Through the Prophets, you renewed your promise; and at this, the end of the ages, you sent your only begotten Son, who in words and deeds proclaimed your Kingdom and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life upon the Cross.

Send your Holy Spirit upon these the gifts of your Church, that they may be for us the very Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us who receive our Lord's Body and Blood live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your Saints in Light.

[C] Amen! Come Holy Spirit!

P: For, in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ 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.

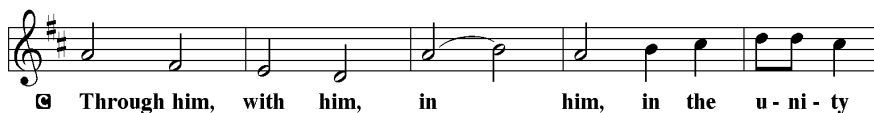
For as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again in his glory!

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, we pray: Look with favor on your Church, and see him 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, and believing the witnesses of his Resurrection, be sustained in the Faith and Hope of our Lord's coming in power and glory to share with us the great and promised Feast.

C Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

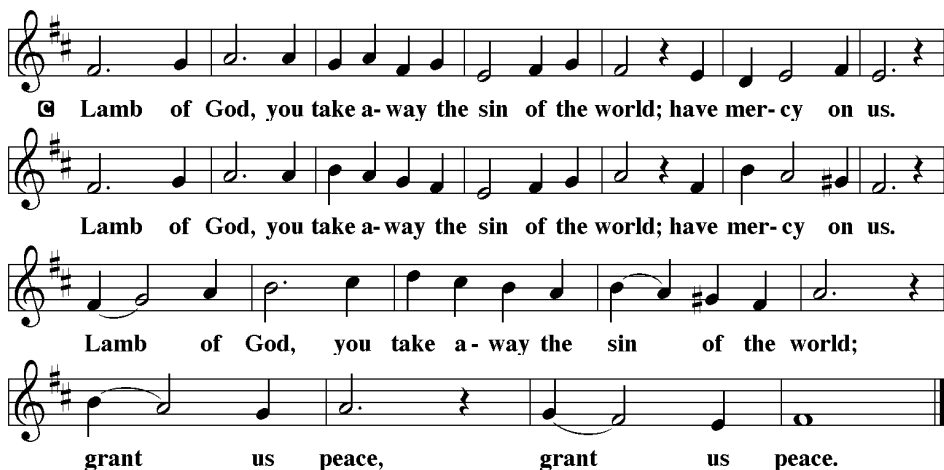
P: Join now our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the prayers of the Faithful throughout the ages—the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Holy Apostles and Martyrs, and all your Saints in Light who lived and died in Faith. Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church here on earth—together with our Bishops, Pastors, Deacons and the entire people your son has won for you through his Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Welcome into your Kingdom all our departed brothers and sisters, and all who have left this world in your friendship. Unite all these prayers with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest, Jesus Christ, until he comes as Victorious Lord of all...



**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



INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The Pastor lifts the Bread and Chalice and says:

P: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

C: Thanks be to God!

P: The Holy Things for the Holy people:

C: One is Holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God!

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

Take My Life, that I May Be LBW 406

1 Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
 2 Take my hands and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;
 3 Take my voice and let me sing al - ways, on - ly, for my King;
 4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, not a mite would I with - hold;

take my mo - ments and my days; let them flow in cease - less praise.
 take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
 take my lips and let them be filled with mes - sag - es from thee.
 take my in - tel - lect, and use ev - 'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
 it shall be no longer mine.
 Take my heart, it is thine own;
 it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
 at thy feet its treasure store;
 take myself, and I will be
 ever, only, all for thee.

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

Let us pray... Father in Heaven, you provide the true Bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, may abide in him, and he in us, so that we might abound in Faith, Hope, and Love; to the glory of your 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

What God Ordains Is Right.....LBW 446



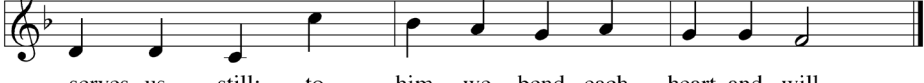
1 What - ev - er God or - dains is right; his will is just and ho - ly.
2 What - ev - er God or - dains is right, and he will not de - ceive us.
3 What - ev - er God or - dains is right; all that he does is for us.
4 What - ev - er God or - dains is right; he guides our joy and sad - ness.



He holds us in his per - fect might; in him, our lives are god - ly.
He leads us in the way of light and will not ev - er leave us.
He heals our souls and gives us sight and puts no ill be - fore us.
He is our life and bless - ed light; in him a - lone is glad - ness.



He is our God and all we need, the Fa - ther who pre -
In him we rest, who makes the best of all the stum - bling
Our God is true; he makes us new; our lives are built up -
We see his face, the way of grace; he holds us in his



serves us still; to him we bend each heart and will.
turns we take and loves us for his mer - cy's sake.
on his rock, our cor - ner - stone and build - ing block.
might - y arm and keeps us safe from ev - 'ry harm.

Text: Samuel Rodigast, 1649–1708; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943, alt.
Music: WAS GOTT TUT, attr. Severus Gastorius, c. 1675

DISMISSAL

A: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Mike Larson, Brian Bair, Al Cole, Sally Congdon, Kim Brofee

Lay Assistant: Janet Stroble; **Comm. Assist.:** Mandy Feinberg

Acolyte: Alivia Klemick; **Altar Guild:** Sue Shoemaker, Yvonne Kaiser

Greeters/Presenters: Yvonne Kaiser, Rhonda Koch

Cantor: Virginia Amme; **Flower Delivery:** Jody Fullmer

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of our parents, Bernard and Juanita Collins, by their daughters Sandy Ream, Jeanne Mosier and their families.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Jeanie Laurrell, on her second heavenly birthday, October 1st, with love from her 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.

Join WELCA in Shaheen Hall following worship for a coffee hour.

MLP Gift Card Bingo is Saturday, October 24 at 11:30 am.

Presale tickets are \$20 and at the door \$25. Tickets will be available before and after the service in the Narthex this morning *or anytime in the church office*. **To make this event a success we are asking the**

congregation for your support. Ways you can help: donate a gift card of your choice for our Gift Card Bingo; make a themed basket to donate for our Chinese Auction; or make baked goods to sell during the event. Deadline for gift cards and themed baskets is **October 16th**. Baked good items are due **Friday, October 23rd by NOON** in the church office.

PLEASE DROP OFF ALL DONATIONS TO THE CHURCH OFFICE.

Harvest Home is Sunday/Blanket Sunday is next Sunday, October 4, 2026. Worshippers will be invited to bring forward their gifts during the singing of the Offertory.

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

Marching Orders

Members of the string quartet look around at each other, nod, and begin tuning up to play. The basketball team huddles around the coach as she draws up the play on a dry-erase board. The volunteer teams go over their assignments one last time before heading off to their positions for the charity run. In each instance, before beginning their mission, the group takes a moment to get on the same page, to get their marching orders. In our lives as disciples of Christ, that moment is baptism.

Our marching orders, our mission guidelines, are marked on our hearts in baptism. The good news of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in Jesus Christ that is poured over us spills out in our lives, and we are called to be agents of restoration: to bind up the brokenhearted, to care for all people and all creation. Just as the coach draws up the play or someone makes a list of the things that need to get done, we are imbued with a way of life in baptism's waters. Our motivation for this way of life is the love that has also been shown to us in Jesus: the love that feeds us each week as we gather around our Savior's table.

Even if we are sometimes reluctant, like the son in Jesus' parable who initially says he will not go to the vineyard but eventually goes, we are motivated to carry out the work to which God has called us because of the baptismal grace we have received. And whenever we pause to collect ourselves—whether it's tuning up before the performance, getting the play in the huddle, or just taking a deep breath before beginning the next item on the to-do list—we think of baptism, when our marching orders and our motivations are indelibly marked on us by Jesus.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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