

Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✝ Holy Communion ✝

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 4, 2026



NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

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.

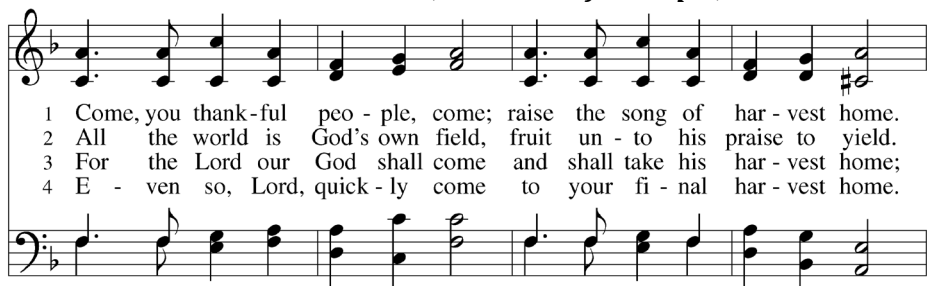
I have not loved my neighbor as myself.

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

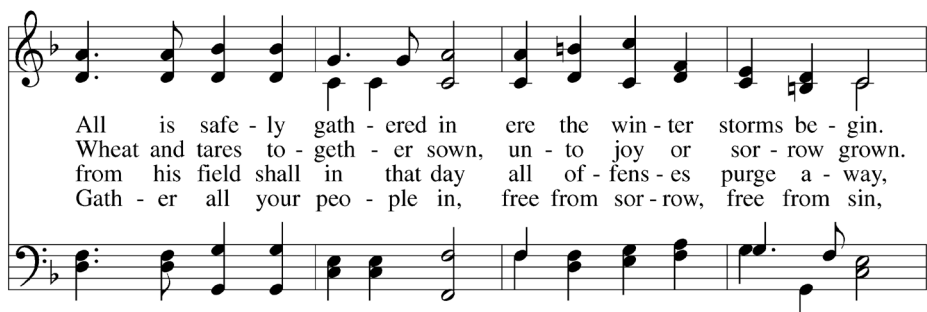
P: Almighty God, our Father in Heaven, has given his Son to die for us, and for his sake forgives us all our sin. As a Called and Ordained minister of the Church of Jesus Christ, and by his authority, I declare to you the forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

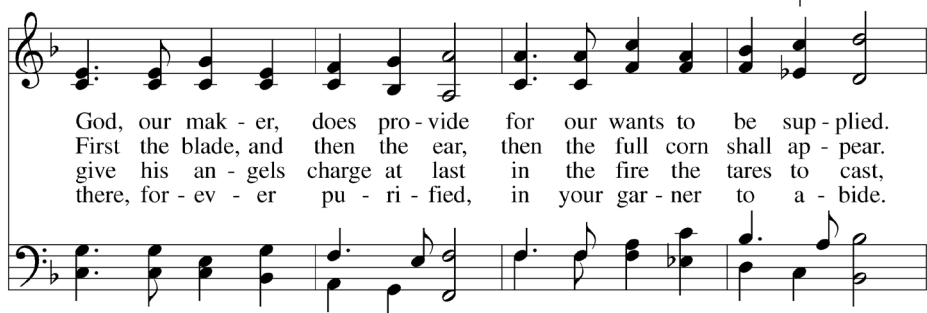
Stand

GATHERING HYMN*Come, You Thankful People, Come*


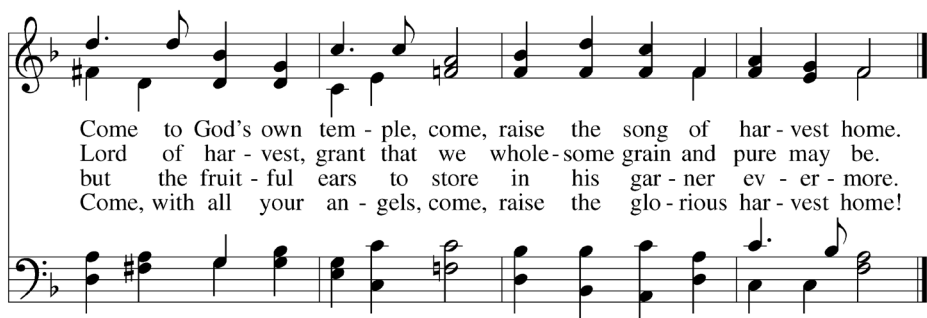
1 Come, you thank-ful peo - ple, come; raise the song of har - vest home.
 2 All the world is God's own field, fruit un - to his praise to yield.
 3 For the Lord our God shall come and shall take his har - vest home;
 4 E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come to your fi - nal har - vest home.



All is safe - ly gath - ered in ere the win - ter storms be - gin.
 Wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, un - to joy or sor - row grown.
 from his field shall in that day all of - fens - es purge a - way,
 Gath - er all your peo - ple in, free from sor - row, free from sin,



God, our mak - er, does pro - vide for our wants to be sup - plied.
 First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall ap - pear.
 give his an - gels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
 there, for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, in your gar - ner to a - bide.



Come to God's own tem - ple, come, raise the song of har - vest home.
 Lord of har - vest, grant that we whole - some grain and pure may be.
 but the fruit - ful ears to store in his gar - ner ev - er - more.
 Come, with all your an - gels, come, raise the glo - rious har - vest home!

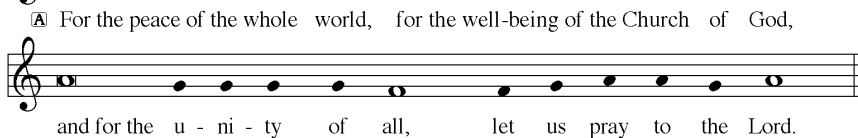
Text: Henry Alford, 1810–1871, alt.

Music: ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR, George J. Elvey, 1816–1893

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**

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

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

☞ Let us pray.

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

☞ Amen.

Sit

WORD**FIRST READING: Isaiah 5:1-7**

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "rotten grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

A: A Reading from Isaiah:

¹ I will sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

² He dug it and cleared it of stones
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

³ And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴ What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵ And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

⁶ I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷ For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice, but saw bloodshed;
righteousness, but heard a cry!

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:7-15*Sung by the cantor and repeated by the congregation.*

Look down from heav'n, O God; be - hold and tend this vine.

Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.⁷Restore us, O | God of hosts;

show the light of your countenance, and we | shall be saved.

⁸**You have brought a vine | out of Egypt;****you cast out the nations and | planted it.**⁹You prepared the | ground for it;

it took root and | filled the land.

¹⁰**The mountains were covered | by its shadow****and the towering cedar trees | by its boughs.**¹¹You stretched out its tendrils | to the sea

and its branches | to the river.

¹²**Why have you broken | down its wall,****so that all who pass by pluck | off its grapes?**¹³The wild boar of the forest has | ravaged it,

and the beasts of the field have | grazed upon it.

¹⁴**Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven; behold and | tend this vine;****preserve what your right | hand has planted.**¹⁵They burn it with | fire like rubbish;at the rebuke of your countenance | let them perish. **R.****SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14***Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.***[A]:** A Reading from Philippians:

Paul writes:

^{4b} If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:⁵ circumcised on the eighth day,

a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin,

a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;

⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church;
as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had,
these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ.

⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss
because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things,
and I regard them as rubbish,
in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him,
not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law
but one that comes through faith in Christ,
the righteousness from God based on faith.

¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection
and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,
¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal,
but I press on to make it my own,
because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own;
but one thing I do:
forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

¹⁴ I press on toward the goal
For the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

A The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

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

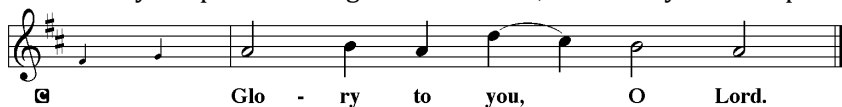
CANTOR: Jesus says, I chose you and ap- | pointed you* to go and bear fruit |
that will last.

C: Repeat the Alleluias.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

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



Jesus said to the people:

³³ “Listen to another parable.

There was a landowner who planted a vineyard,
put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower.
Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

³⁴ When the harvest time had come,
he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.

³⁵ But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another,
and stoned another.

³⁶ Again he sent other slaves, more than the first,
and they treated them in the same way.

³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying,
“They will respect my son.”

³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves,
“This is the heir;
come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.”

³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes,
what will he do to those tenants?”

⁴¹ They said to him,
“He will put those wretches to a miserable death
and lease the vineyard to other tenants
who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:
“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes”?

⁴³ “Therefore I tell you,
the kingdom of God will be taken away from you
and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces,
and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables,
they realized that he was speaking about them.
46 They wanted to arrest him,
but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

[P]: The Gospel of the Lord.



G Praise to you, O Christ.

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

Stand
HYMN OF THE DAY
The Day Is Surely Drawing Near.....**LBW 321**



1 The day is sure - ly draw - ing near when Je - sus, God's a -
2 The fi - nal trum - pet then shall sound, and all the earth be
3 May Christ our in - ter - ces - sor be and, through this blood and
4 O Je - sus Christ, do not de - lay, but has - ten our sal -



noint - ed, in all his pow - er shall ap - pear as judge whom
shak - en, and all who rest be - neath the ground shall from their
mer - it, read from his book that we are free with all who
va - tion; we of - ten trem - ble on our way in fear and



God ap - point - ed. Then fright shall ban - ish i - dle mirth, and
sleep a - wak - en. But all who live will in that hour, by
life in - her - it. Then we shall see him face to face, with
trib - u - la - tion. Oh, hear and grant our fer - vent plea; come,



hun - gry flames shall rav - age earth, as scrip - ture long has warned us.
God's al - might - y, bound - less pow'r, be changed at his com - mand - ing.
all his saints in that blest place which he has pur - chased for us.
might - y judge, and set us free from death and ev - 'ry e - vil.

Text: Bartholomäus Ringwaldt, 1532–c. 1600; tr. Philip A. Peter, 1832–1917, adapt,
Music: ES IST GEWISSLICH. *Etlich christlich Lieder*, Wittenberg, 1524

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.

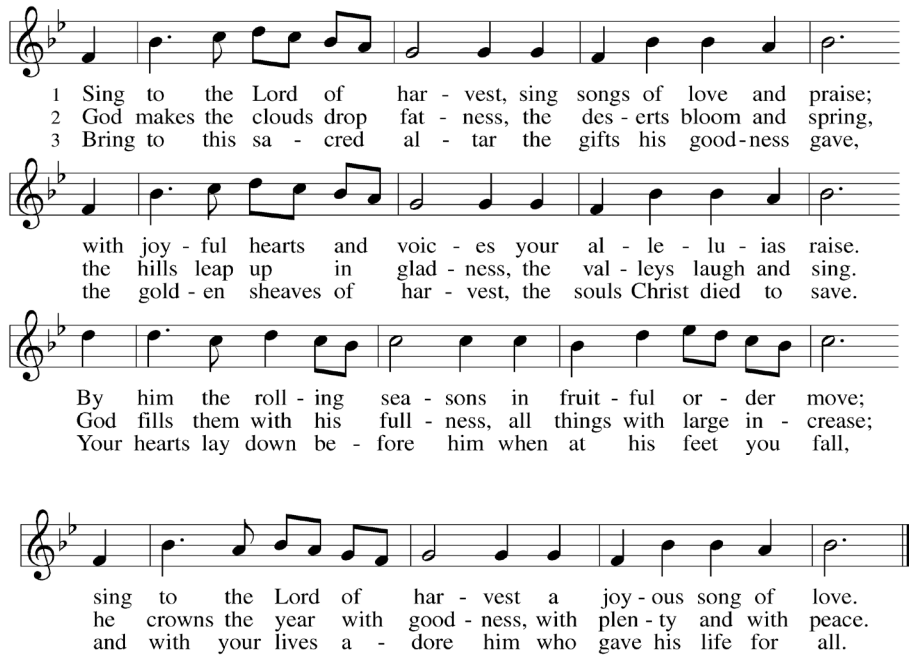
Anthem

Thy Word Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith

Stand

OFFERTORY HYMN

During the Offertory hymn please bring forward your offering envelopes, harvest home gifts and blankets.

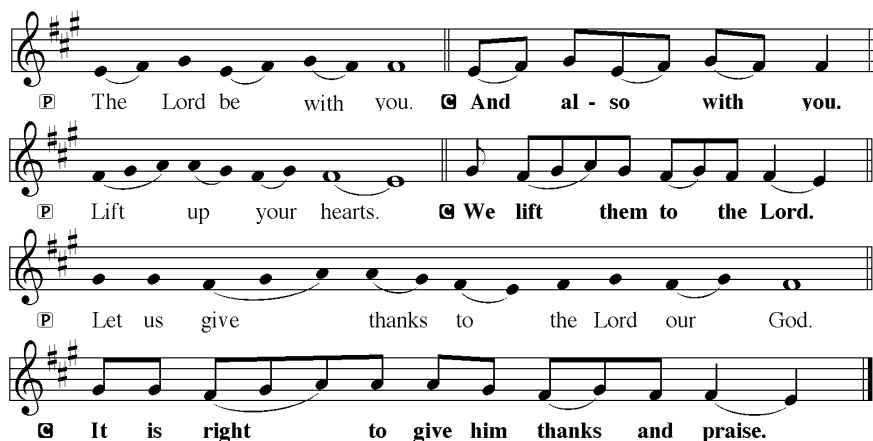


1 Sing to the Lord of har - vest, sing songs of love and praise;
2 God makes the clouds drop fat - ness, the des - erts bloom and spring,
3 Bring to this sa - cred al - tar the gifts his good-ness gave,
with joy - ful hearts and voic - es your al - le - lu - ias raise.
the hills leap up in glad - ness, the val - leys laugh and sing.
the gold - en sheaves of har - vest, the souls Christ died to save.
By him the roll - ing sea - sons in fruit - ful or - der move;
God fills them with his full - ness, all things with large in - crease;
Your hearts lay down be - fore him when at his feet you fall,
sing to the Lord of har - vest a joy - ous song of love.
he crowns the year with good - ness, with plen - ty and with peace.
and with your lives a - dore him who gave his life for all.

Text: John S. B. Monsell, 1811–1875, alt.
Music: WIE LIEBLICH IST DER MAIEN, Johann Steurlein, 1545–1613

OFFERING PRAYER

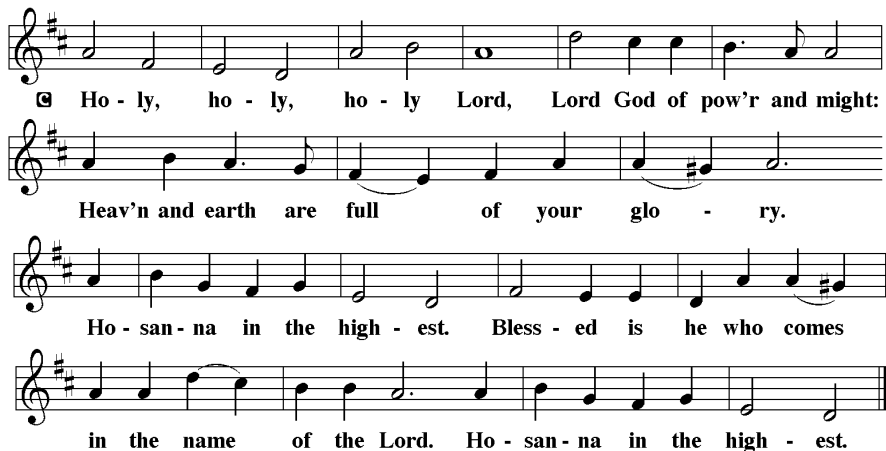
- A**: Let us pray... Merciful Father,
- C**: We offer you with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—ourselves, our time, and our possessions—signs of your gracious Love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself to us, + Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING


¶ The Lord be with you. ☩ 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 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...



☩ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
 Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 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

¶ 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!

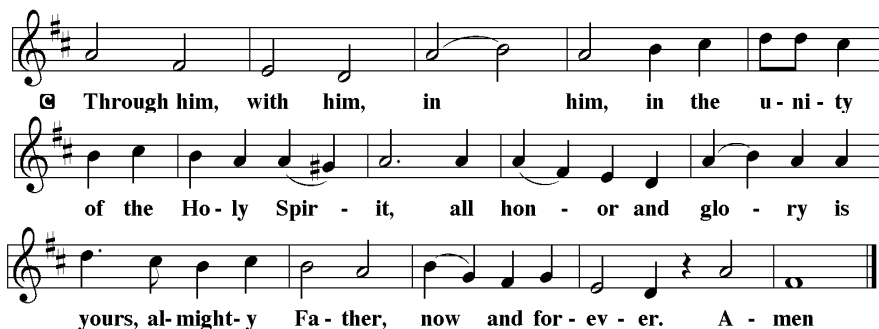
C Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!

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...



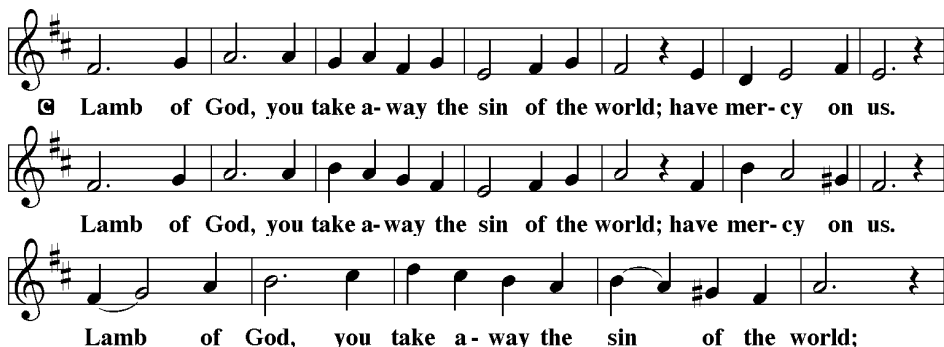
LORD'S PRAYER

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



grant us peace, grant us peace.

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

Praise and Thanksgiving

1 Praise and thanks-giv - ing, Fa - ther, we of - fer For all things
2 Bless, Lord, the la - bor We bring to serve you, That with our
3 Fa - ther, pro - vid - ing Food for your chil - dren, By your wise
4 Then will your bless - ing Reach ev - 'ry peo - ple, Free - ly con -

liv - ing, Cre - at - ed good: Har - vest of sown fields, Fruits of the
neigh - bor We may be fed. Sow - ing or till - ing, We would work
guid - ing Teach us to share One with an - oth - er, So that, re -
fess - ing Your gra - cious hand. Where all o - bey you, No one will

or - chard, Hay from the mown fields, Blossom and wood.
with you, Har - vest - ing, mill - ing For dai - ly bread.
joic - ing With us, all oth - ers May know your care.
hun - ger; In your love's sway you Nour - ish the land.

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

On What Has Now Been Sown

1 On what has now been sown your bless-ing Lord, be - stow; the
 2 To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; ac -
 3 Oh, grant that each of us, now met be - fore you here, may

pow'r is yours a - lone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in
 cept what is your own and par-don what is ours. Our prais - es,
 meet to - geth - er thus when you and yours ap - pear, and fol - low

grace the har - vest raise, and yours a - lone shall be the praise!
 Lord, and prayers re - ceive and to your word a bless - ing give.
 you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, A - men! Lord Je - sus, come!

DISMISSAL

A: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Carl Gee, Jody Fullmer, Paul Ulrich, Dave and Rita Strickler, Jimmy Gardner; **Lay Assistant:** Janet Stroble; **Comm. Assist.:** Fred Harbaugh; **Acolyte:** Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Vicki Bair, Doris Butt
Greeters/Presenters: Kim Brofee, Doris Butt
Cantor: Dave Bausinger; **Flower Delivery:** Susan Bryan

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Howard and B.Z. Goodbrod and Raymond and Hazel Rosenbaum with love by Don and Mary Ellen Rosenbaum.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Pat Hammaker on the anniversary of her birthday, on October 9th.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Albert Kelley on the anniversary of his birthday on October 6th, with love from his family.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Dorothy Artman on the anniversary of her 97th birthday, with love from her daughters Emily Bausinger, Connie Hess and families.

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.

Today is Harvest Home/Blanket Sunday. During the Offertory hymn please bring forward your offering envelopes, harvest home gifts. Please place blankets in the bin marked blankets in the alley entrance.

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 each 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.**

Rehearsal for next Sunday's Saints in Song anthem will be after worship today. Please stay for a few minutes if you can sing with us next week. If you can't stay today but would still like to sing next week, please come for rehearsal at 8:45 next Sunday morning.

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

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702
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One Word: *Jesus*

The tennis team had a word for the season: *rally*. That one word centered everything: “Extend each rally.” “Rally when you’re down.” “Rally back after a rough week.” Each practice began with the word “Rally” at the top of the chalkboard above the conditioning drills. The huddle before each meet was broken with the shout “Rally!” And it wasn’t just on the team. At night, when the coach’s family sat down to dinner, they all shared what they’d done that day to “rally” in their lives. Everything and everyone was centered, gathered around that one word. In our lives of faith, that one word is *Jesus*.

Jesus reminds his hearers that he is the cornerstone of faith: for the Pharisees, for the rest of the crowd gathered at the temple that day, and for us, the church here and now. The grace we find in Jesus’ love—the love that goes to the cross, to the empty tomb, and even beyond for us and our salvation—is the bedrock of our faith as we live out the life to which we are called in baptism. *Jesus* is the one word—indeed, Jesus is the Word—that gathers us together, that centers our lives.

United to Jesus, the cornerstone of our lives, in baptism, we are also united with one another. Today’s parable certainly showcases what human division can be and do at its worst, but in Jesus, we are not divided. Where division causes hurt and suffering, unity in Jesus brings hope, healing, and restoration. Where hope seems lost, Jesus rekindles that flame. Centered and united around Jesus’ baptismal grace, we are empowered and emboldened to proclaim the good news of Jesus, the cornerstone of our faith.

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