St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church Sunday, September 17, 2023

229 South Broad Street

Jersey Shore, PA 17740 16th Sunday after Pentecost

570-398-1676



**Children’s Church will meet upstairs in the youth Sunday School room at end of the hallway** **at 9:30 a.m. Please take your child there before worship begins.**

**Introduction to the day**

*In today’s second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus’ challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God’s boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Confession and Forgiveness**

*The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be God, the one who forms us,

☩ Jesus who bears the cross,

the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

**Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,

**you have revealed the ways of justice,**

**yet we fail to follow you.**

**We are overwhelmed**

**by the world’s violence and suffering.**

**We are afraid to risk what we have**

**for the sake of others.**

**For the harm we have caused,**

**known and unknown, forgive us.**

**For the unjust demands we place on others**

**and your creation, forgive us.**

**For the ways we turn away**

**from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**

**Lead us back to you**

**and set us on the right path;**

**in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.** **Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,

God’s justice stretches beyond all understanding.

God’s compassion is beyond compare.

In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.

In ☩ Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen.**

**Gathering Song: *All Creatures Worship God Most High 835***

**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.**

**Hymn of PRAISE:  *What a Friend We Have in Jesus 742***

**Prayer of the Day**

**P: Let us pray.**

**O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

L: A reading from Genesis.

### First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

*After Jacob’s death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.*

15Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers said, “What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?” 16So they approached Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this instruction before he died, 17‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” 19But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? 20Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. 21So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

L Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse

### Psalm: Psalm 103: [1-7] 8-13

[ 1Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
  and all that is within me, bless God’s holy name.  
 2**Bless the Lord, O my soul,**  
  **and forget not all God’s benefits—**  
 3who forgives all your sins  
  and heals all your diseases;  
 4**who redeems your life from the grave**  
  **and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**  
 5who satisfies your desires with good things  
  so that your youth is renewed like an eagle’s.  
 6**O Lord, you provide vindication**  
  **and justice for all who are oppressed.**  
 7You made known your ways to Moses  
  and your works to the children of Israel.  
 8**Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,**  
  **slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**  
 9you will not always accuse us,  
  nor will you keep your anger forever.  
 10**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,**  
  **nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**  
 11For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
  so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.  
 12**As far as the east is from the west,**  
  **so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**  
 13As a father has compassion for his children,  
  so you have compassion for those who fear you, O Lord.

L: A reading from Romans

### Second Reading:  Romans 14:1-12

*This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.*

1Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. 2Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 3Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. 4Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.  
 5Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. 6Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.  
 7We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. 9For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.  
 10Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11For it is written,  
 “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
  and every tongue shall give praise to God.”  
12So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

***The assembly stands.***

**Gospel Acclamation *p.142***

*Alleluia Lord to whom shall we go?*

*You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, Alleluia.*

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew

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

### Gospel:   Matthew 18:21-35

*When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.*

21Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” 22Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.  
 23“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; 25and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. 26So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 28But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 31When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 32Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ 34And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 35So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

*The assembly is seated.*

**Sermon**

*The assembly stands.*

**Hymn of the Day:  *Where Charity and Love Prevail 359***

**Apostles Creed *( p. 105 at the beginning of the hymnal)***

**Prayers of Intercession**

A: Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm’s way. Protect all who cry out for mercy (*especially*). Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: Gracious God, we give thanks to you for guiding us in our accompaniment with our companion synod of Lutheran Church of Liberia. Bless Bishop Padmore and Bishop Miller as they work together for your glory to proclaim your message of grace love, forgiveness and mercy. Merciful God

**C: receive our prayer**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world (*like Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, whom we commemorate today*). Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

P: Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

**C: Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**CHOIR ANTHEM *Our Hope Is in the Lord***

**A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION**

*The assembly stands.*

**Offering Prayer**

A: God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you.

We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed.

Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

**gREAT THANKSGIVING *p.144*** *(in the beginning of the hymnal)*

**Dialogue**

**Holy Holy Holy**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

**Words of Institution**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER *P 145 (in the beginning of the hymnal)***

**Invitation to Communion**

P: Jesus invites you to this table.

Come, eat and live.

**Communion**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*and each person may respond* **Amen.**

**Communion Song *Lamb of God You Take Away p.146***

**Song after Communion *Jesus, Remember Me***

*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.  
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

**Prayer after Communion**

A Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word,

Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.

Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet,

where none are left out and all are satisfied.

In Jesus’ name we pray. **Amen.**

**Sending**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**Blessing**

**Sending Song:  *God Be With You Till We Meet Again 536***

**Dismissal P:**  Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**C: Thanks be to God**

**Announcements**

We welcome our visitors and ask that you sign a Visitor Attendance and Holy Communion Card that is located in the pew rack. We ask that cards be returned via the offering plate during the receiving of the offering. We practice “open Communion” here at St. John meaning that all who believe in the “real presence” of Christ are welcomed to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We offer two choices for Holy Communion, wine or grape juice. Those worshipers desiring grape juice are asked at the communion rail to place their right hand over their heart after receiving “The Body of Christ.”

**Remember in prayer:** Rowan Aldridge, Jim Allen, Christine and Dave Barner, Linda Caris, Agnes Cryder, Don & Helen Delaney, Mary Ellen Doughtery, Joanne Fisher, Dawn Fryer, Dina George, Barb Hoffman, Mick Miller, Elsie Parks in Haven Place, Cora Pelletier, Shane Snyder, and all of our shut-ins.

We also remember in prayer Family Promise; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton – ELCA; Bishop Craig A. Miller - USS; for our Companion Synods in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany, and for peace in Ukraine.

We pray for the safety of our military troops around the world including Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Trevor and Nehemiah Eberhart, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Jeremy and Haley Naugle Sorrell, Richie Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Kevin Titus, and Jenna White. We also lift up in prayer their families who strive to keep a normalcy in the family and continue on often with added stress.

Thanks to this weeks’ helpers: Lector –Shane Snyder; Assisting Ministers—Gary Johnson, Karen Aucker; Children’s Church – Cathy Eisner; Head Usher –Gina Johnson; Teller –Christine Barner; Bulletin Sponsor – Cozette Stoltzfus.

Next week’s helpers: Lector –Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers—Joyce Braucht and Carl Schaefer; Children’s Church –Holly Dittmer; Head Usher –Gina Johnson; Teller –Christine Barner; Bulletin Sponsor – Cozette Stoltzfus; Flowers – Gottschall.

The flowers are to the glory of God and in thankfulness for our 58 years of marriage by Gary and Gina Johnson.

The Sanctuary Candle in September is given by Myrtle Long in memory of her brother.

**WOMEN OF THE CHURCH MEETING AFTER THE SERVICE TODAY!**

The Lutheran Church Women’s Prayer Chain is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran.  Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597       Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**This bulletin and more** can be found on our church website: [www.stjl.org](about:blank).

**RALLY SUNDAY FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL** is Sunday, September 17. We are planning a kick-off event for the start of this year’s Children’s Church. Our weekly attendance during the school year has been growing as we bring our children together for a Bible lesson and activity at the beginning of worship each Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Come join us for this fun faith-building event.

**FELLOWSHIP TIME AFTER CHURCH, Sunday, September 24**. The Women of the Church are sponsoring the meal and providing Ham Barbeque sandwiches. Bring a dish to share and enjoy lunch with your church family!

**CHURCH DIRECTORY DEADLINE!** Your information for the church directory is needed by the end of September. Need a picture? We can take one at the fellowship meal on Sept. 24.

**OCTOBER FELLOWSHIP TIME**. Who wants to participate in the October 22 Chili cook off? Please talk to a council person. Cookers of Chili are needed!

**Seafarer’s Bags** are due November 1 (It’s fast approaching!) The bags, list, and directions are on the table in the office. Our very own Pastor Martha McCracken was on the board of Seafarer’s International and served as their president.

**Bible Study books** on the Gospel of Mark are available in the office. Help yourself. Bible study will begin September 18 at 10:00 am. Note the date and time change back to 10:00 a.m.

**Women of the Church are selling APPLE DUMBLINGS**. The coast is $9.00 for a pan of two. The dumplings will be freshly baked Friday morning, September 29 and you can pick them up in the social room from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Orders must be returned by Sunday, September 24. You can remit payment with your order or pay when you receive them.

**Calendar**

Sunday, September 17, 2023 16th Sunday after Pentecost

8:30 A.M. Adult Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

Children’s Church **Sunday School Rally Day!**

10:30 a.m. **WOMEN OF THE CHURCH MEETING**

YOUTH Group after worship downstairs in the Sunday School Room

Monday, September 18, 2023 10:00 a.m. Bible Study

6:00 p.m. Christian Ed meeting

7:00 p.m. Youth Planning meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time at Shore

6:30 Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, September 24.2023 17th Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Fellowship Meal (ham barbeque sandwiches; bring a dish to share)

APPLE DUMPLINGS ORDERS DUE

CHURCH DIRECTORY DEADLINE!

1:00 p.m. Nippenose Worship

2:00 p.m. Catechism

