**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Sunday, August 23, 2020**

***12th Sunday after Pentecost***

**Introduction to the day**

*In Isaiah the people are advised to look to their spiritual ancestors as the rock from which they were hewn. Jesus declares that the church will be built on the rock of Peter’s bold confession of faith. God’s word of reconciliation and God’s mercy are keys to the church’s mission. Paul urges us to not be conformed to this world but to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, using our individual gifts to build up the body of Christ. From the table we go forth to offer our spiritual worship through word and deed.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prelude**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

P: In the name of the Father,

and of the ☩ Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.** **Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake

God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority,

I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**Gathering Song: *Built on a Rock* (ELW 652) vs 1, 4 and 5**

(hum or sing softly with mask on)

Built on a rock the church shall stand,  
even when steeples are falling;  
crumbled have spires in ev'ry land,  
bells still are chiming and calling--  
calling the young and old to rest,  
calling the souls of those distressed,  
longing for life everlasting.  
  
Yet in this house, an earthly frame,  
Jesus the children is blessing;  
hither we come to praise his name,  
faith in our Savior confessing.  
Jesus to us his Spirit sent,  
making with us his covenant,  
granting his children the kingdom.  
  
Through all the passing years, O Lord,  
grant that, when church bells are ringing,  
many may come to hear your Word,  
who here this promise is bringing:  
"I know my own, my own know me;  
you, not the world, my face shall see;  
my peace I leave with you. Amen."

**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.**

**Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

**C:** **O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Word**

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

**First Reading: Isaiah 51:1-6**

L: A reading from Isaiah.

*Just as God had called Abraham and Sarah and given them many descendants, so now God offers comfort to Zion. God’s deliverance will come soon and will never end.*

1Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,  
  you that seek the Lord.  
 Look to the rock from which you were hewn,  
  and to the quarry from which you were dug.  
 2Look to Abraham your father  
  and to Sarah who bore you;  
 for he was but one when I called him,  
  but I blessed him and made him many.  
 3For the Lord will comfort Zion;  
  he will comfort all her waste places,  
 and will make her wilderness like Eden,  
  her desert like the garden of the Lord;  
 joy and gladness will be found in her,  
  thanksgiving and the voice of song.  
 4Listen to me, my people,  
  and give heed to me, my nation;  
 for a teaching will go out from me,  
  and my justice for a light to the peoples.  
 5I will bring near my deliverance swiftly,  
  my salvation has gone out  
  and my arms will rule the peoples;  
 the coastlands wait for me,  
  and for my arm they hope.  
 6Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
  and look at the earth beneath;  
 for the heavens will vanish like smoke,  
  the earth will wear out like a garment,  
  and those who live on it will die like gnats;  
 but my salvation will be forever,  
  and my deliverance will never be ended.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 138 read responsively**

1I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;  
  before the gods I will sing your praise.  
 2**I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;**  
  **for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**  
 3When I called, you answered me;  
  you increased my strength within me.  
 4**All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord,**  
  **when they have heard the words of your mouth.**   
 5They will sing of the ways of the Lord,  
  that great is the glory of the Lord.  
 6**The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly,**  
  **perceiving the haughty from afar.**  
 7Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe;  
  you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.  
 8**You will make good your purpose for me;**  
  **O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

**Second Reading: Romans 12:1-8**

L: A reading from Romans.

*In response to God’s merciful activity, we are to worship by living holistic, God-pleasing lives. Our values and viewpoints are not molded by the time in which we live but are transformed by the Spirit’s renewing work. God’s grace empowers different forms of service among Christians, but all forms of ministry function to build up the body of Christ.*

1I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

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

**Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20**

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

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

*At a climactic point in Jesus’ ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God,” and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.*

13Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

**Sermon**

***Silence for meditation***

**Hymn of the DaY *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (MELITA)* (ELW 597)**

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
no merit of my own I claim,  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
  
Refrain  
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.  
  
2 When darkness veils his lovely face,  
I rest on his unchanging grace;  
in ev'ry high and stormy gale  
my anchor holds within the veil. Refrain  
4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
oh, may I then in him be found,  
clothed in his righteousness alone,  
redeemed to stand before the throne! Refrain

**Prayers of Intercession**

A: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

A: Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, your Son, whom we confess as the living God. Prepare your church for its mission in bearing witness to Christ, both here at home and throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord. Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your ways. Help leaders regard those in need with mercy and fulfill your loving purposes in the governance of peoples. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care (especially). Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: You call us into this community (name), in which we, though many, are one in Christ. May we recognize in ourselves and in one another the unique gifts you have given us for the building up of the church for the sake of the world. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion -** Please come forward to receive the “body of Christ” by holding out your hands in a cup like fashion as far as you can. The Pastor will drop the wafer into your hand, saying “the body of Christ given for you,” and you respond “Amen,” then go to the left or right and receive the “blood of Christ” from a pre-filled glass. The glasses will be separated so you don’t touch one another. Take the glass and the communion assistant standing in the choir loft will say, “the blood of Christ shed for you.” There will be a separate tray of glasses with grape juice for those who prefer grape juice.

P: The Great Thanksgiving and The Words of Institution

**Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,** **thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those** **who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**Dismissal**

**Postlude**

***Please leave your offering in the offertory plate located at each exit of the church.***

***Announcements***

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Dawn Hauser, Ralph Lehman, Caleb Leone, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Jane Shaffer, Brenda Traxler, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

**With the decrease in attendance during the pandemic, Council made the decision to continue with one service in September at 9:00 a.m., so that we may worship together.**

The altar flowers this morning are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of our Mom, Norma Schaefer, in remembrance of her birthday…love, Mick, Carl and family.

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

Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659

Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**“Grab-a-Tab” -** The youth of St. John would like to ask for donations of little tabs from beverage, soup and dessert cans. It doesn’t matter what color the tab, just grab them and deliver them to the church office. This project will benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Danville.“Grab-a-Tab” program allows people of all ages to join in the effort of providing a “Home-away-from-Home” to children with cancer or other serious illnesses and their families.

**Give+ Text:** Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute (example: 25). Within a few minutes, you’ll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

**Christmas-at-Sea**

Would you like to bring joy to seafarers who will not be home with their families for Christmas? Our port chaplains deliver satchels filled with gifts to the seafarers they meet in port in the weeks prior to Christmas. Later, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, when the ship is in the middle of the ocean, the captain will hold a celebration, and all the crew will open their satchels, each containing: One sweatshirt – hooded or unhooded (size L-XL)

Three pairs of socks – thermal or white gym

One casual pullover T-shirt (size M-L)

One can of nuts or bar of chocolate, and

A Christmas card from you.

We invite you to participate in a memory of Pastor Martha McCracken by purchasing the items needed for a Christmas Seafarer’s bag. Bags are available in the office. Please return by Nov. 5.

For many years Pastor McCracken was President of Seafarers Ministry.

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| **[Hunger in the Time of COVID-19:Life for Today and Hope for Tomorrow](https://community.elca.org/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fcommunity.elca.org%2fonline-registration%2fsept-24-rick-steves-virtual-hunger-event&srcid=233189&srctid=1&erid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084&trid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084)** |

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| [Rick Steves](https://community.elca.org/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fwww.ricksteves.com%2fabout-rick&srcid=233189&srctid=1&erid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084&trid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084), guidebook author and travel TV host; the Rev. [Elizabeth A. Eaton](https://community.elca.org/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fwww.elca.org%2fabout%2fleadership%2fchurchwide-officers%2fpresiding-bishop&srcid=233189&srctid=1&erid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084&trid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084), presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); and the Rev. [Shelley Bryan Wee](https://community.elca.org/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fwww.lutheransnw.org%2fsynod-staff&srcid=233189&srctid=1&erid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084&trid=3c5f539d-0623-45b9-9c25-9d3ac5a3f084), bishop of the ELCA Northwest Washington Synod, invite you to an online benefit — the first of its kind — for ELCA World Hunger. **Our goal is to raise $250,000 to confront hunger in the time of COVID-19. When:** Thursday, Sept. 24, 8 p.m. **Where:** Zoom virtual event |

We are in a historic moment, facing a once-in-a-century pandemic and a global change in hunger unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. Domestically and internationally, hunger is increasing at alarming rates. At this event, you will learn about the unique ways ELCA World Hunger is responding. Our hosts will also discuss the ongoing root causes of hunger and poverty addressed in Rick Steves’ recent special *Hunger and Hope: Lessons From Ethiopia and Guatemala.* And you will hear from ELCA World Hunger partners on the front lines of the current hunger crisis, who will tell you firsthand how your gifts make a difference.   
 We are called by God to share hope in this time of challenge. Join us to face this global hunger crisis head-on and to continue moving toward a just world where all are fed.