

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Sunday, September 13, 2026

10:30 AM

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
901 East Stroop Road
Kettering, Ohio 45429
(937) 298-0136

INTRODUCTION

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.

NEW PERSPECTIVE

Being a disciple requires an expansive perspective on forgiveness. Today our perspective is broadened by the good news that God's forgiveness is not based on our idea of fairness, but rather on abundant, unimaginable grace. God "[has] not dealt with us according to our sins, nor repaid us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10). The king forgives our entire debt, no matter how enormous it is (Matt. 18:23-27). We also are challenged to stretch our perspective and forgive each other. With Peter, we learn to stop keeping score (Matt. 18:21-22).

It's not an easy thing to do. Again and again we fall back on limited human understandings of what is "fair." Looking at the story of Joseph and his brothers, it's easy for us to say that his brothers really didn't deserve forgiveness. Even their plea for forgiveness is dishonest and manipulative—have they really repented (Gen. 50:15-17)? Joseph takes the wider view and realizes that it isn't his brothers' intentions that matter, but God's. God's forgiveness is much greater than what is fair, what we deserve.

So what does this new, broadened perspective look like in the lives of Christians and congregations? Paul provides a pragmatic glimpse: "Those 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" (Rom. 14:3). If all are truly welcomed by God, we are called to share the good news of that welcome in all we say and do.

*** indicates to stand as you are able.*

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Mallory Morris

CALL TO WORSHIP

"Bless His Holy Name"

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in 4/4 time, using a treble clef and a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The score is divided into five systems, each with a single line of music and its corresponding lyrics. The lyrics are: "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is with - in me, bless His ho - ly name. He has done great things, He has done great things, He has done great things; Bless His ho - ly name. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is with - in me, bless His ho - ly name." The score ends with a double bar line.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is with -

- in me, bless His ho - ly name. He has done great

things, He has done great things, He has done great

things; Bless His ho - ly name. Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and

all that is with - in me, bless His ho - ly name.

OPENING LITANY

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,

Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

We seek forgiveness for the harm we have done to others,

Knowing we must show unto others the same mercy we seek.

As God has extended boundless grace to us,

Let us open our hands in forgiveness to one another.

Let us worship the God of unending mercy.

Amen. Thanks be to God!

GATHERING SONGS

“10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)”

(Refrain - Music Ministers)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.

Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul;

I'll worship your holy name.

(Verse 1 - Music Ministers)

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning,

It's time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,

Let me be singing when the evening comes.

(Refrain - All)

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.

Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul;

I'll worship your holy name.

(Verse 2 - Music Ministers)

You're rich in love, and you're slow to anger.

Your name is great and your heart is kind.

For all your goodness, I will keep on singing;

Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

(Refrain - All)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.**

(Verse 3 - Music Ministers)

And on that day, when my strength is failing,
The end draws near, and my time has come;
Still, my soul will sing your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore!

(Refrain - All/Music Ministers)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.
Worship his holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.
I'll worship your holy name.
Lord, I'll worship your holy name.**

"You Are Holy"

1*



Du är he - lig, du är hel. Du är all - tid myck-et mer
You are ho - ly, you are whole. You are al - ways ev - er more



än vi nån - sin kan för - stå, du är nä - ra än - då.
than we ev - er un - der - stand. You are al - ways at hand.



Väl - sig - nad va - re du som kom - mer hit just nu,
Bless - ed are you com - ing near. Bless - ed are you com - ing here



väl - sig - na - de vår jord, blir till bröd på vår jord.
to your church in wine and bread, raised from soil, raised from dead.

2



Du är he - lig, du är hel - het,
You are ho - ly, you are whole - ness,



du är när - het he - la kos - mos lo - var dig!
you are pres - ent. Let the cos - mos praise you, Lord!



Ho - si - an - na, ho - si - an - na,
Sing ho - san - na in the high - est!



ho - si - an - na, ho - si - an - na vår Gud.
Sing ho - san - na! Sing ho - san - na to our God!

"Our Father, We Have Wandered"

1 Our Fa - ther, we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
3 O Lord of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,

in fool-ish-ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
be - hold us, Lord, re - turn - ing with hope and trust to you.
com-pas-sion-ate, for - giv - ing, and ev - er - car - ing Lord,

But now, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we rise with fear and shame,
In haste you come to meet us and home re - joic - ing bring,
grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith - less - ness may cease.

as, dis - tant but com - pel - ling, we hear you call our name.
in glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

**** CONFESSION**

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

**Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

**** FORGIVENESS**

Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ☩ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

**** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Assisting Minister

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.**

**** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

WORD

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

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.

A reading from Genesis, the fiftieth chapter.

Realizing 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?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, '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. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even 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. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 103 (1-7) 8-13

Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all God's benefits—**

who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases;

**who redeems your life from the grave
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**

who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

**O Lord, you provide vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.**

You made known your ways to Moses
and your works to the children of Israel.

**Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.

**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

**As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

As a father has compassion for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O Lord.

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.

A reading from Romans, the fourteenth chapter.

Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those 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. Who are you to pass judgment on slaves 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.

Some 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. Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If 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. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why 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. For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

**** GOSPEL READING**

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.

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But 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.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTH MESSAGE

MESSAGE

Pastor Mallory Morris

**** APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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**

Assisting Minister

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Each petition concludes:

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

OFFERTORY

"I Give My Life"
arr. Jean Anne Shafferman
based on "Higher Ground"
by Charles H. Gabriel
Chancel Choir

Take my life and let it be
A gift of service all for thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

I give my life to serve thee, Lord;
I give my all forevermore.
I give my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

I give my love to thee, my Lord;
I give my heart, its treasure store.
I give myself, Lord, let me be
Ever, only, all for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
A sacred song, a melody,
Filled with messages from thee,
A song of love for Christ, my King.

I give my voice, my Lord, and sing
A sacred song, a melody,
Filled with messages from thee,
A song of love for Christ, my King.

OFFERING PRAYER

Assisting Minister

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. **Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**** DIALOGUE**

Lift up your heads; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your voices; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your hearts; **we lift them up to God.**

**** THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

And so we gather at the table. We come from many different places in life. And as we come together around the table we discover that our differences are not something we just tolerate, but that our differences are indeed a blessing. So come, children of God, just as you are. Wherever you are on this journey of life and faith, you are welcome here - here in this place, here in this community, here at this table. Come, children of God, come and remember. Remember the stories that Jesus' friends tell: Stories of bread broken and shared to feed a multitude; stories of gathering both enemy and friend together around a common table; stories of unlikely guests revealing the face of the sacred.

On a night of both celebration and betrayal Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it; gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Then Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so we pray: Lord, bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be open, and that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed in one another.

**** LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

For those communing at home or in the pew:

COMMUNION — *Receiving the Lord's tangible presence*

The body of Christ given for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

Each person may respond: **Amen.**

Communion Statement ~ We believe that the communion table is not Pr. Mallory's table, Good Shepherd Lutheran's table, or even the ELCA's table. This is God's table. And because this is God's table, we believe that anyone who wishes to receive communion can come forward and do so without condition or qualification.

Please note that we provide a non-alcoholic option (white) for those who do not want to partake of the communion wine (red). We also have gluten-free wafers available for those who need them. Simply let Pr. Mallory and the communion assistants know that you need something different when they come to you.

If anyone wishes to come forward and receive a blessing instead of communion elements, you are welcome to come forward to the communion rails with your arms crossed over your chest in the shape of an "X" instead.

If mobility concerns make it difficult to come forward for communion, you can alert the ushers, and they will let Pr. Mallory know to come to you.

REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ and ponder the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts, and then to work in us and through us each and every day.

**** TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and always keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

**** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Assisting Minister

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

**** SENDING OF COMMUNION**

*Communion ministers may be sent to take the sacrament to those who are absent.
The presiding minister may lead this prayer of sending.*

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, and imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

**** BLESSING**

The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

Amen.

The God of grace
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

**** SENDING SONG**

"All the People Said Amen"

(Verse 1 - Music Ministers)

You are not alone if you are lonely.
When you feel afraid, you're not the only.
We are all the same - in need of mercy,
To be forgiven and be free.
It's all you got to lean on,
But thank God it's all you need.

(Refrain - All)

And all the people said, "amen." Whoa!
And all the people said, "amen."
Give thanks to the Lord, for his love never ends;
And all the people said, "amen."

(Verse 2 - Music Ministers)

If you're rich or poor... well it don't matter;
Weak or strong, you know love is what we're after.
We're all broken, but we're all in this together.
God knows we stumble and fall,
And he so loved the world,
He sent his Son to save us all.

(Refrain - All)

And all the people said, "amen." Whoa!
And all the people said, "amen."
Give thanks to the Lord, for his love never ends;
And all the people said, "amen."

(Bridge - Music Ministers / All)

Blessed are the poor in spirit who are torn apart;
Blessed are the persecuted and the pure in heart;
Blessed are the people hungry for another start,
For theirs is the kingdom, **the kingdom of God.**

(Final Refrain - All)

And all the people said, "amen." Whoa!
And all the people said, "amen."
Give thanks to the Lord, for his love never ends;
And all the people said, "amen."

And all the people said, "amen." Whoa!
And all the people said, "amen."
Give thanks to the Lord, for his love never ends;
And all the people said, "amen."
And all the people said, "amen."

**** DISMISSAL**

Assisting Minister

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Created, saved and gifted by god,
we seek, serve and share Jesus Christ. Hallelujah, thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“W + 2” = WORSHIP PLUS TWO

**MAKE A COMMITMENT NOT ONLY TO WORSHIP EACH WEEK,
BUT ALSO TRY TO FIND A WAY TO SERVE IN THE CONGREGATION
AND SEEK OUT A WAY TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.**

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, died 407

Sunday, September 13, 2026

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname "Chrysostom" ("golden mouth"). Appointed bishop of Constantinople, seat of the empire, he criticized corruption in the court. As a result, he was exiled by the empress.

Holy Cross Day

Monday, September 14, 2026

Helena, mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and found what may be the actual site of Jesus' crucifixion. Her son built two churches there, and the dedication of one of them gave rise to this celebration of our Lord's victory on the cross.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179

Thursday, September 17, 2026

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961

Friday, September 18, 2026

A Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary General of the United Nations until his death in a plane crash while trying to negotiate peace in present-day Zambia. His journal, published as *Markings*, revealed the depth of his Christian faith.