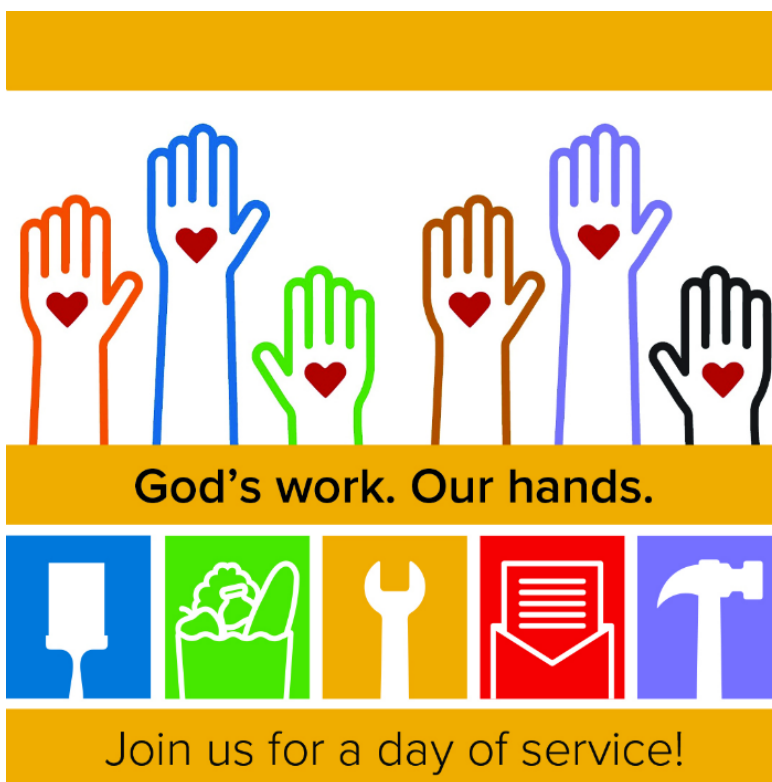


The 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, September 13th, 2026

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.



LIVING FAITH
LUTHERAN

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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GATHERING

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHURCH CONFESSES: FOR SELF-PRESERVATION

From Meta Herrick Carlson's "Speak It Plain"

Living God, we have come to offer public apology...

Merciful God,

**you put on flesh and lived among us,
showing all of creation how
to hold this world lightly,
to lose ourselves,
to trust that death is not the end after all.
And yet we struggle
to practice what we preach,
hiding behind locked doors,
frozen by fear of loss and change.**

We confess... **Have mercy on us, O God.** [5x when cued]

We confess that we prefer our slow denial and dissolution...
But if you let go of this life for my sake, you will finally find it.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

ELW 798

Will You Come and Follow Me

GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy One, you stretch wide your tent that all may be welcomed in, and in Jesus you stretched out your hands in expansive love for a weary and wounded world. Help us to reach out with your own wounded hands of love, that through us your life may be known in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵ 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?" ¹⁶ So 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. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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 103:8-13

Please read responsively.

⁸ Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;

⁹ **you 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.

¹¹ **For 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.

¹³ **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

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ 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. ⁴ 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.

⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ 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. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For it is written,

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

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Word of God. Word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ 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?” ²² Jesus 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. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ 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.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ 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. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Glory to you, O God, for your creative Word:
...With all creation we sing, Glory! **Glory!**

...With the whole world, we say, Blessing! **Blessing!**

...With saints and angels, we cry, Holy! **Holy!**

...Glory, praise, and blessing are yours, Holy God, now and forever.
Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 359

Where Charity and Love Prevail

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 the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontious Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**
**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

God of [____], we pray,

hear us when we call.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

ELW 583

Take My Life, That I May Be

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Holy God, giver of all good things, receive the gifts we bring, fruit of the earth and the work of human hands, that they may be used to your purposes for life and love in the world. Amen.

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.

SENDING

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

CELEBRATION OF VOCATION & BLESSING OF HANDS

We are called to proclaim the good news:

God is at work!

This good news is not left

in some history long ago or a place far away:

God is at work in the world still today!

In us and through us, God is glorified in our work.

When we offer a helping hand, God is praised.

When we share of our abundance, God is known in the world.

God is at work in us!

In our service today and in our daily lives,

let us live out what God has called us to in baptism.

God is at work through our hands!

BLESSING HYMNS

ACS 1000 & 1022

All are invited forward to receive a blessing of hands.

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN

Go to the World

ACS 991

SENDING

Go in peace. Be God's hands at work in the world!

Thanks be to God!

Thank you, worship leaders!

Lay Ministers: Mark Catton, Sandy Heeran, & Kay Michaelson

Greeter/Usher: Tim Kass

Accompanist: Pixie Balt

Reader: Karen Schroeder

Livestream: Jenni Mack

Audio/Visual: Tim Kass & Kay Michaelson

— . — . — . — . — Announcements — . — . — . — . —

Confirmation Begins! Confirmation classes for 6th-9th grade students begin this Wednesday, September 16th, at 7pm in Room 105. Mentors are expected to attend this first class with their mentees! This year students will be focusing on what it means to live out their faith through worship, proclamation, service, being in community, and striving for justice & peace.

Come & Go Brunch! Come celebrate the marriage of Pastor Paige & Bailey Quanbeck on September 19th between 10am and 12pm at the Wells' Visitor Center and Ice Cream Parlor!

Find more announcements at LivingFaithLeMars.com/Blog!

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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