

Service of Holy Communion

October 3, 2021 19th Sunday after Pentecost

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Have Thine Own Way, Lord" Adelaide Pollard/ George Stebbins

The assembly stands.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:

like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed. Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By the gift of grace in ✙ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous. Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG ELW 796 "How Firm a Foundation"

- 1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in Christ Jesus, the Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?
- 2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
for I am your God and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."

4 "Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove
my sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
and then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,
like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

Text: J. Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787, alt.

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



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,



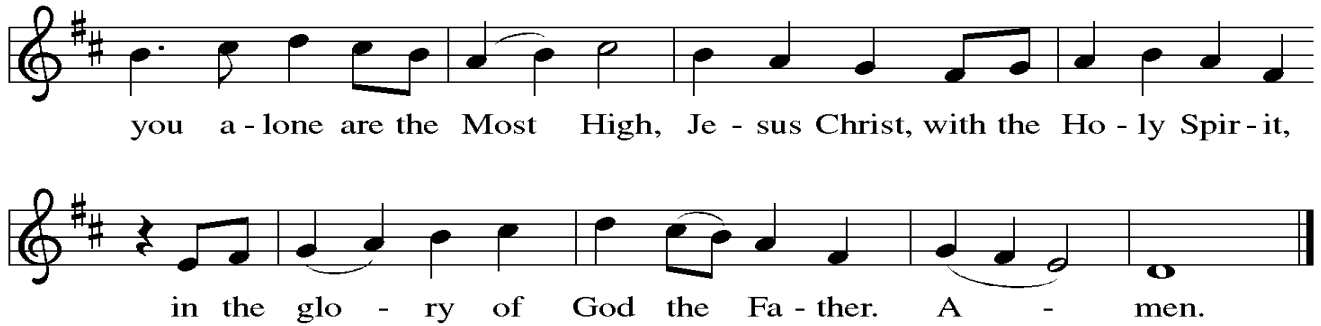
you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



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,



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Sovereign God, **you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

THE WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 2 stresses that people are not meant to live in isolation but in relationship. Out of love for humanity, God creates them male and female, to provide companionship for each other and to become with each other "one flesh." The Hebrew words used here are ish (man) and ishshah (woman).

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 8

¹O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!—

²**you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children; you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.**

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

⁴**what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them?**

⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.

⁶**You have made them rule over the work of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet:**

⁷all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field,

⁸**the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.**

⁹O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

SECOND READING: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Quoting from the psalms, this passage from Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus, the one through whom God created everything and who sits at God's right hand, is also the one who experienced human suffering and death in order to blaze the path of salvation for us.

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

^{2:5}Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

“What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?”

⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned them with glory and honor,

⁸subjecting all things under their feet.”

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control.

As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them,⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

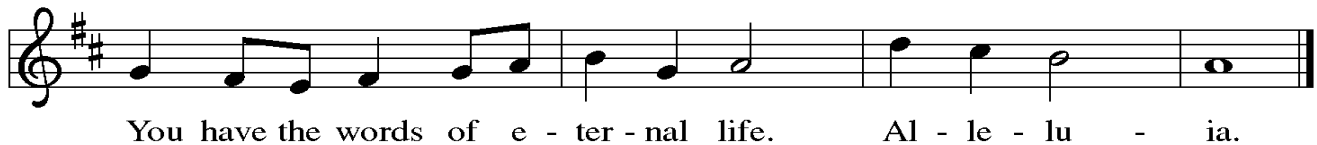
¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL READING: Mark 10:2-16

The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the tenth chapter

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus announced and enacted in history the new reality of God's surprising activity. These two stories demonstrate this new reality: Women and children are accepted and valued, not dismissed as inferior to adult men.

²Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” ³He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” ⁴They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” ⁵But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore

what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

In the second chapter of Genesis, God is depicted as a friendly, physical creature – visible, touchable – bounding around on the newly formed earth, making things out of dust and breathing life into them. The first being God made, after the earth and the trees and the rivers, was an “*Adam*” – an earthling, a creature made from the clay. It was a human without gender, neither male nor female, one of us, but not quite like us. The English language has not had the capacity to talk about an ungendered person, so our biblical translation speaks of “man” and “he” and “him”. But in Hebrew, what is communicated – until we get to verse 23 – is an undifferentiated human.

God gave the human a garden to live in, food to eat, and boundaries for safety (*stay away from that one tree or you’ll die*). Then, immediately, God saw that the human should not be alone. God did not want this new creature to be lonely. It needed a friend, a partner, several friends and partners, a community to live among. So God stood beside the human, and made all kinds of animals and brought them forward: turtles and birds, giraffes and goats and insects, dogs and kangaroos and cats. Each was terrific, beautiful, amazing, but none was a genuine, one-on-one companion corresponding to the human.

So God put the human to sleep. According to Hebrew scholar Wil Gafney, God took, not just a rib, but *Adam*’s side – and made another

human from it. The two humans then became differentiated into male and female. When the first person awoke, he rejoiced, recognizing in the other, his true partner and friend.

This is serious business, this problem of human alone-ness. Solitude can be great – refreshing and necessary – but not if there is nothing other than solitude. God recognized that human beings cannot live without companionship, that adults and children alike need people to talk to, to know, to live and work beside, to plan with, to make families and neighborhoods and villages with. Human beings need other people as much as they need air and food and water and shelter.

“It is not good for the *Adam* to be alone,” God said. “I will make it another, a partner, a friend as its companion.” A measure of solitude is healthy. But we cannot live cut off from the rest of humanity. God has not made us like that.

And yet, loneliness is a terrible problem in our world. Over fifty percent of people in the United States report being lonely. This was true before the pandemic, but social distancing and months of staying home during COVID, exacerbated the situation. I read an article from *Scientific American Magazine* that reported most people have the brain capacity to maintain five close, intimate friendships. In 1985, the average adult in the United States had three such confidants; in 2004 they had two, and one in four Americans at the time reported having no close friends at all.

“It is not good that the human should be alone,” said the LORD. “I will make for him, for her, for them, a friend, a companion.” Someone who will listen and understand, someone who will confide their wishes and their worries, someone to do things with, someone to laugh and cry with.

It’s not good for you to be alone. That was never God’s intent. Prolonged isolation takes a toll on mental health, and can even contribute to heart disease, stroke, and premature death. Excessive loneliness is not simply unpleasant, it is dangerous, and it is contrary to God’s design for human living.

We might expect people in their 80s and 90s to feel lonely since many of their friends and family members have died. That’s awfully sad, but not unexpected. What might be more surprising is that loneliness is highest among young people, men, and those living in “individualistic” societies, like ours. (*The BBC Loneliness Experiment*)

This is a concern for us, for all people of God. We know how deeply God loves us. We hear, in God’s word, how ardently God wants us to love

one another. The ten commandments give us guidance for building communities where people can live among each other well. Jesus had 12 disciples plus more good friends; he spent time and ate meals with all sorts of people; he loved by listening and healing and feeding and encouraging others. He suffered death in order to save sinners. As his followers, our lives are about giving, caring, finding the lost and forsaken and befriending them. The love of Jesus, alive in us, leads us to respond to loneliness as best we can.

I cannot imagine what the pandemic shut-down would have been like had we not been able to gather for worship, Bible Study, meetings, and fellowship on the internet. It was hard enough not to see friends and family in person, but thank God we could talk on the phone, or visit through Zoom, or worship via live-stream. I'm grateful we are still able to have an online community. Although I cannot track them in real time, I enjoy going back and seeing your comments later.

Last Sunday, those of us on the ground were able to attend a book signing and art show after worship. When I walked into the Fellowship Hall, my heart skipped a beat to see so many people (all wearing masks) looking at the paintings, visiting with each other, taking their time. I've missed that – ordinary human interaction and easy conversations. I look forward to more opportunities to gather and visit, safely, in the future.

Being in the same room (with windows and doors open to air things out), seeing each other's smiles, hearing each other's voices and laughter... it is air and food and water for our souls. We need the companionship, the partnership, the community building in order to be well. And sometimes we need to push ourselves to take the first step to battle loneliness – shut down the internet, put away the screens, and visit a neighbor, call a friend, make plans with someone you haven't seen in a while. God looks at you, all of you, with great love and says "It's not good for you to be always alone. I've made companions, friends, partners for you. They're all around you."

Sometimes pictures speak more clearly than words. So I'm going to leave you with a couple images from today's readings. The first comes from the last line of the Genesis text. The man and woman have left their home of origin to find their way in the world, but they do not go alone. They cling to each other as they step out into a new and unknown life. And from the last line of the Gospel reading, the children whom the disciples had been trying to keep away from Jesus, keep from bothering him, run to Jesus instead. He wraps them in his arms, lays his hands on them, and blesses them.

Both of those images depict you, you and everyone – not alone in the world, not alone; held close to the chest of the Lord.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 656 *“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”*

- 1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind
is like to that above.

- 2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.

- 3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

- 4 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740-1817, alt.

The assembly stands.

APOSTLES' CREED

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

**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 Pontius 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 THE PEOPLE

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Holy One, you have raised up faithful leaders throughout history. Empower those discerning a call to ministry and all seminarians, especially Johnene, that they continue to be formed for the sake of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have established a diverse and beautiful creation. Revive declining species and preserve endangered lands. Cultivate in us a sense of wonder for the world you created. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You desire for us not to be alone and to live in community with one another. Strengthen relationships between nations and peoples, that we celebrate and support one human family. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You share in our experiences and struggles. Bless all who live with any mental or physical disability. Inspire creative communities, spaces, and environments that are accessible and hospitable. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have established and nurtured relationships that extend beyond those gathered here today. Bless members who can no longer travel to worship with us and remind us of their continued role in this community of faith. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You promise eternal life to all your children. Thank you for the people of faith who have gone before us. Strengthen our trust we have in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Listen to your gathered children praying...

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministry of Jesus at Shepherd King. If you wish to give to Shepherd King, there is a donate button on our website - www.skicsa.org

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 praise him, all creatures here below;
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

OFFERING PRAYER

God of abundance, you cause streams to break forth in the desert and manna to rain from the heavens. Accept the gifts you have first given us. Unite them with the offering of our lives to nourish the world you love so dearly; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)

THE 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 our thanks and praise.

Detailed description: This block contains four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff has two measures: 'The Lord be with you.' and 'And al - so with you.' The second staff also has two measures: 'Lift up your hearts.' and 'We lift them to the Lord.' The third and fourth staves each have one measure: 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS

It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,

al-mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ;

who on this day overcame death and the grave,

and by his glorious resur-rec - tion

opened to us the way of ev - er - last - ing life.

Detailed description: This block contains six staves of musical notation in G major. The first staff begins with a key signature change (one sharp) and contains the text 'It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,'. The second staff continues with 'that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,'. The third staff continues with 'al-mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ;'. The fourth staff continues with 'who on this day overcame death and the grave,'. The fifth staff continues with 'and by his glorious resur-rec - tion'. The sixth and final staff continues with 'opened to us the way of ev - er - last - ing life.' The notes are simple, using quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,
we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

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“Holy, Holy, Holy”

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

Praise to you, Great God, creator of heaven and earth, praise to you for all you have made. Praise to you for hearing the cries of Israel and delivering them from bondage in Egypt. Praise to you for bringing your people home from exile in Babylon. Praise to you for Mary, willing to bear your Word in her body. Praise to you for Jesus who lifted up the lowly and brought down the mighty from their thrones. Praise to you for his dying and rising from the dead. Praise to you for the Holy Spirit which gives us life and guides our way. Praise to you as we remember...

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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

All who hunger and thirst, come. The table is ready.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. (*please consume the bread*)

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. (*please drink from the cup*)

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord of life, in the gift of your body and blood you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation. Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy,

bearing witness to the abundance of your love in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Confirmation class meets today from 1:00 to 2:30. The next time we meet will be on October 24.

The Rachel Circle is gathering supplies for the Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. If you wish to participate, the following items are needed: (Place these items in the basket in the front of church by October 17.)

Bars of soap, 8 to 9 oz., any brand, in original wrapping

Adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging

Sturdy comb, remove packaging

Metal nail clipper (attached file optional) remove packaging

Thank you for being part of this project

We're glad so many of you tune in to worship with Shepherd King on Sundays. Please call us at 210-344-5881, if you're in need of prayer, a listening ear, or anything else.

BLESSING

People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world.

The holy Trinity, ✠ one God, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN ELW 876 *"Let the Whole Creation Cry"*

1 Let the whole creation cry,
 "Glory to the Lord on high!"
 Heav'n and earth, awake and sing,
 "Praise to our almighty king!"
 Praise God, angel hosts above,
 ever bright and fair in love;
 sun and moon, lift up your voice;
 night and stars, in God rejoice.

2 Servants striving for the Lord,
 prophets burning with the word,
 those to whom the arts belong
 add their voices to the song.
 Pow'rs of knowledge and of law,
 to the glorious circle draw;
 all who work and all who wait,
 sing, "The Lord is good and great!"

3 Men and women, young and old,
 raise the anthem loud and bold,
 and let children's happy hearts
 in this worship take their parts;
 from the north to southern pole
 let the mighty chorus roll:
 "Holy, Holy, Holy One;
 glory be to God alone!"

Text: Stopford A. Brooke, 1832-1916, alt.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

"My Lord, What a Morning" spiritual/arrg. by Cindy Berry

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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We ask at the end of the service that you kindly throw away your bulletin, communion cup and any trash you may have in the receptacles provided at the rear of the sanctuary. Your assistance is most appreciated.

Prayer concerns this week: