

## SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 24, 2023

Guest Preacher: Rev. Matthew Heise

Lutheran Heritage Foundation

“Seek Ye First” LSB 712 Saturday-Sung by congregation

Sunday-sung by St. Paul Lutheran School Grades 3-5

- 1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God,  
And His righteousness.  
And all these things shall be added unto you!  
Allelu, alleluia!
- 2 Ask and it shall be given unto you,  
Seek and ye shall find,  
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you,  
Allelu, alleluia!
- 3 Man does not live by bread alone,  
But by ev'ry word  
That proceeds from the mouth of the Lord,  
Allelu, alleluia!

Text: Karen Lafferty, 1948

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### INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### OPENING SENTENCES

*Psalm 67:1-5, 7*

P: May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us,

**C: that Your way may be known on earth, Your saving power among all nations.**

P: Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You!

**C: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for You judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.**

P: Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You!

**C: God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him!**

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: It is good and right that we should make confession of our sins and hear the words of absolution that assure us of God's forgiveness. The section on "Confession" in the Small Catechism written by Dr. Martin Luther instructs and directs us with these words:

**C: Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.**

P: Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.

**C: O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a troubled and penitent sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your present and eternal**

**punishment. By nature I am a sinful creature. By thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life.**

P: God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

**C: Amen.**

P: As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely and may your lives reflect His forgiveness.

Be at peace!

**C: Amen.**

**KYRIE** *LSB 186*

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Christ, have mercy upon us.**

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**SALUTATION**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray.

Lord God, heavenly Father, since we cannot stand before You relying on anything we have done, help us trust in Your abiding presence and care that confidently we may live according to Your Word, learning of You at all times and ever growing in Your grace and mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** Isaiah 55:6–9

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (NIV)

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** Philippians 1:12–14, 19–30

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.

As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved--and that by God.

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. (NIV)

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** Matthew 20:1–16

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twentieth chapter.

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

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard.

He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.

He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.'

So they went.

"He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius.

So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.

When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.

'These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'

Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you.

Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last." (NIV)

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

**APOSTLES' CREED**

P: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life + everlasting. Amen.**

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

### **“Hark, The Voice of Jesus Crying” LSB 826**

- 1 Hark, the voice of Jesus crying,  
“Who will go and work today?  
Fields are white and harvests waiting—  
Who will bear the sheaves away?”  
Loud and long the Master calleth;  
Rich reward He offers thee.  
Who will answer, gladly saying,  
“Here am I, send me, send me”?
- 2 If you cannot speak like angels,  
If you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus,  
You can say He died for all.  
If you cannot rouse the wicked  
With the judgment’s dread alarms,  
You can lead the little children  
To the Savior’s waiting arms.
- 3 If you cannot be a watchman,  
Standing high on Zion’s wall,  
Pointing out the path to heaven,  
Off’ring life and peace to all,  
With your prayers and with your bounties  
You can do what God commands;  
You can be like faithful Aaron,  
Holding up the prophet’s hands.

- 4 Let none hear you idly saying,  
“There is nothing I can do,”  
While the multitudes are dying  
And the Master calls for you.  
Take the task He gives you gladly,  
Let His work your pleasure be;  
Answer quickly when He calleth,  
“Here am I, send me, send me!”

Text (sts. 1–2, 4): Daniel March, 1816–1909, alt.; (st. 3): unknown, alt.

Text and tune: Public domain

### **SERMON "God's Ways"**

*Text: Isaiah 55:6-9*

*Guest Preacher - Rev. Matthew Heise - Lutheran Heritage Foundation*

### **OFFERING**

#### **“O Christ, Our True and Only Light” LSB 839**

- 1 O Christ, our true and only light,  
Enlighten those who sit in night;  
Let those afar now hear Your voice  
And in Your fold with us rejoice.
- 2 Fill with the radiance of Your grace  
The souls now lost in error’s maze;  
Enlighten those whose inmost minds  
Some dark delusion haunts and blinds.
- 3 O gently call those gone astray  
That they may find the saving way!  
Let ev’ry conscience sore oppressed  
In You find peace and heav’nly rest.
- 4 Shine on the darkened and the cold;  
Recall the wand’ers to Your fold.  
Unite all those who walk apart;  
Confirm the weak and doubting heart,
- 5 That they with us may evermore  
Such grace with wond’ring thanks adore  
And endless praise to You be giv’n  
By all Your Church in earth and heav’n.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

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### **THE LORD'S PRAYER - WITH THE PETITIONS OF THE CHURCH**

**P:** Friends in Christ, I urge you all to lift up your hearts to God and pray with me as Christ our Lord has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on earth, and grant us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives. Graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all transgressors and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [name(s)] and all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

## **“Jesus Shall Reign” LSB 832**

1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does its successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

2 To Him shall endless prayer be made,  
And endless praises crown His head;  
His name like sweet perfume shall rise  
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.

3 People and realms of ev'ry tongue  
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
And infant voices shall proclaim  
Their early blessings on His name.

4 Blessings abound where'er He reigns:  
The pris'ners leap, unloose their chains,  
The weary find eternal rest,  
And all who suffer want are blest.

5 Let ev'ry creature rise and bring  
Honors peculiar to our King;  
Angels descend with songs again,  
And earth repeat the loud amen.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

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