



As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

WELCOME MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND VISITORS.

Individuals need to follow healthy hygiene practices, stay at home when sick, practice physical distancing to lower the risk of disease spread, and use a cloth face covering... in community settings when physical distancing cannot be maintained. These universal precautions are appropriate regardless of the extent of mitigation needed. [The Center for Disease Control] Therefore out of love for one another as part of the Body of Christ, we will all wear masks, stay six feet away from other households, sanitize our hands, and regrettably refrain from singing or speaking together through the service as a congregation.

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

8th Sunday after Pentecost – July 26th, 2020

Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

252 Dock Street, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

570-385-2657 * www.jerusalemchurch.com

FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

GATHERING

PRELUDE

(8:00) *Simple Gifts*

American Shaker Tune

(10:30) *Great is the Lord*

Michael W. Smith

Guitar, Linda Covert and Piano, Audrey Christ

The bell rings calling us to worship.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands and faces the baptismal font. 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 steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.**

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

**We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.**

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

By your grace, forgive us;

through your love, renew us;

and in your Spirit, lead us;

so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,

through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now

527

- 1 Lord Jesus Christ, be present now;
our hearts in true devotion bow.
Your Spirit send with light divine,
and let your truth within us shine.
- 2 Unseal our lips to sing your praise
in endless hymns through all our days;
increase our faith and light our minds;
and set us free from doubt that blinds.
- 3 Then shall we join the hosts that cry,
"O holy, holy Lord Most High!"
And in the light of that blest place
we then shall see you face to face.
- 4 All glory to the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
be praise throughout eternity!

Text: attr. Wilhelm II, 1598-1662; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

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

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

READING FROM THE CHURCH'S SCRIPTURES

Romans 8:26-39

The assembly is seated.

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

The assembly stands for the gospel.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵²And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

SERMON

Pastor David Rowe

The assembly is seated. Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Neither Death nor Life

622

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

Refrain

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor trials in the present, nor any trial to come,
neither height, nor depth, nor all of creation
can ever separate us from the love of God
poured out in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

- 1 Dwell in the one who raised Christ from the dead;
though your body shall die, in Christ you shall rise
through the Spirit who brings you to life. *Refrain*
- 2 All who are led by the Spirit shall live
as children of God, and heirs with Christ Jesus,
God's adopted and chosen and loved. *Refrain*
- 3 All of the suffering we now must endure
is nothing to the glory so soon to be revealed
when creation itself is set free. *Refrain*
- 4 All of creation awaits the new birth,
the fullness of redemption, through labor pains of love,
and so we wait in patience and hope. *Refrain*
- 5 Who can separate us from the love of Christ?
Will hardship or distress, persecution or famine,
or nakedness or peril or sword? *Refrain*

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on Romans 8. Text © 2001 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

APOSTLES CREED

We confess our faith with the whole church using the ancient baptismal creed that summarizes the teaching of the scripture and the apostles.

**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 INTERCESSION

As a local assembly of believers, we pray for the whole world and church, as well as our local congregation and neighborhood.

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.*

Merciful God, your reign is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a fishing net. Help your church witness to the surprising yet common ways you encounter us in daily life. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of your creation. Guide the work of scientists and researchers especially as they seek a safe and effective coronavirus vaccine. Lead us to live as grateful and healing caretakers of the earth. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations of the world into the welcoming shade of your merciful reign. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and walk in the way of peace. Inspire us in this nation to seek greater justices where racism, sexism, or class divides us. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Your Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for the saints according to your will. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice to those who are oppressed, recovery to those with the coronavirus, healing to the sick, and your comfort for all whom we now raise in prayer before you.... Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You show steadfast love and direct us to ask of you what we need. Help this congregation ask boldly for what is most needed. Refresh us with new dreams of being your people in this place and time. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You call us to care for not only for ourselves, but also for our neighbors. We pray for administrators, teachers, and students as they seek to find the best way for school to resume in the fall, and we also pray for people who in their daily work provide essential services, or care for people with Covid-19. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

In you our lives are never lost. Strengthen us by the inspiring witness of your people in all times and places. Embolden our witness now and one day gather us with all your saints in light. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

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

Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

The presiding minister invites the assembly to give thanks.

Let us pray. Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

we give you thanks and praise.

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

we give you thanks and praise.

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

we give you thanks and praise.

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Amen.

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.

PASSING THE PEACE

We greet each other with a nod or gesture of Christian fellowship from a distance, and we also invite you to text or email a word of peace to someone who cannot be here! Yes, now is the time to use our phones in church, on silent of course!

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly may be seated.

BLESSING

The assembly stands. The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

On What Has Now Been Sown

550

- 1 On what has now been sown
your blessing, Lord, bestow;
the pow'r is yours alone
to make it sprout and grow.
O Lord, in grace the harvest raise,
and yours alone shall be the praise!
- 2 To you our wants are known,
from you are all our pow'rs;
accept what is your own
and pardon what is ours.
Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive
and to your word a blessing give.
- 3 Oh, grant that each of us,
now met before you here,
may meet together thus
when you and yours appear,
and follow you to heav'n, our home.
E'en so, Amen! Lord Jesus, come!

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt.

DISMISSAL

The assisting minister sends the assembly into mission.

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Finale

John Stanley

OFFERING

You may drop your offering in the plates as you leave.

If you are worshiping at home, please mail your offering to Jerusalem Lutheran Church, 252 Dock Street, Schuylkill Haven, PA. Or you can drop it through the slot in the door at the back, office entrance of the church building.

To avoid crowding and therefore lessening the six-foot physical distance, we ask you to leave starting from the front pews to the back. If you and others feel comfortable, you can continue fellowship conversation in the lobby and outside with masks from a safe distance.

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MINISTRY NEWS

PRAYER LIST

Joyce Freed, Shirley Foose, Lee Miller, Joanna Sirianni Edwards, Ed Freed, Pauline Crawshaw, Karen Tropp, Diane Buffington, Jack Harnock, Marie Harnock, Keith Shoener, Charles Gurski, Tom Gerber, Kelly Carl, Cheryl Feeser, Leslie R., Mary Beth (Krater) Dinneen, Sam Huff, Stewart Haver, Sue Sigler, Donna Evans, Joan Heckrote, Robert Schwartz, Craig Bracken, Kenny Noecker, Nancy Reese, David Huff, Paul Calderone, Nicholas LaScala, Gail Kunkel, Lee Llewellyn, Dennis Heydt, Caroline Eister, Jeanette Stine, Christopher Payonk, Gemma Geary, Seth Ney, Renee Shade, Cathy Hale, Ben Moyer, Gaylene Ebling, Wally Foose, Craig Heffner, Jane Deibert, Denny Starr, Judy Reihman, Tom Cook, Sylvia Edling, Joe Dewald, Ronald Bromwell, Carla Zelinsky, Lisa Weiser, Janest Yost, Anna Mae Berger, Madge Miller, Kathleen Kelleher, Ron Gill, Melissa Focht, Jason Brown, Teagan Brown, Brenda Phillips, Family of Keith Ramsey, Cecelia Kacmar, Lois Pavelko, Edith Kriner, Melanie Hart, Janice Moore, Christie O'Dell, John Cooper, Florence Shay, Clarence Zweizig, Jayden Leiby, Melvin Rodriguez & family, Dorothy Moyer, Bruce Stees, JoAnn Baker Copley, Deanna Carl, Linda Bonfiglio-Boyer, Carlene Wenner, Christy Deaton Stocks, Maria Motto, Sherry and Kim Zulick, Katharine Macnutt, Peter Spontak, Nancy Cooper, David and Angela Weiser

Those with Long-term health issues:

Bonnie Jean Foose, Michelle Ochenrider, Rich & Sandy Moyer, Ethan Yost, Elizabeth Taylor, Carol Landes, Maureen Moyer, Karen Cockill, Janice Barr, Donna Drenzo, Bill Gordon, Jim Musico, John Krater, Fawn Goodman, Bob Yanek, Rebecca Marshall, Sapphire Schaeffer, Mark Wyllie, Krysta Kolbe, Shirley Emrich, Kathrine Smiley, Mark Noecker, Anna Heffner, David Wise, Joan Stefichack, Bill Everly, Donna Leashefski, Florence Clemens, Sara Berger, Chuck Copley, Jeff Kamar, Mary Sewalt, Pat Thomas, Kay LeBoeuf, Nathan Resch, Casey Watson

Those serving in the Armed Forces:

Major Michael Shay, Staff Sgt. Joseph Moyer, Senior Airman Matthew Nettles, Airman Jackie Nettles, 2nd LT Heather Strouse, Sgt. Travis D. Miller, Sgt. Anthony Cooper, Private 3rd Class Caleb Levan

THANK YOU TO today's cantors: 8:00am – Mary Rowe and 10:30am – Linda Covert.

COUNTERS FOR MONDAY, JULY 27TH are Lou Messina, Rob Baessler, and Janet Sattizahn.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN FOOD PANTRY UPDATE. Due to the impact of the pandemic we find ourselves in at the present time, food donations are falling behind expectations from member churches belonging to The Schuylkill County of Churches. It's clear that the lack of regular services, and attendance, by member churches is having a negative impact on our food donations. We ask that you place your donations of canned goods in the shopping cart provided in the lobby. You can also stop by the church during regular business hours with your food donation. At the present time we are in need of juice, corn, green beans, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, rice, fruit, peas, beans, potatoes, or almost anything else you can think of in canned, or boxed form that does not need refrigeration. Thank You in advance for your donations.

GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS 2020. From now until September 6, we will join forces with Lutheran World Relief's Covid-19 Response by donating funds to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. Please consider choosing one or more of the following options:

1. \$10.00 will purchase a personal hygiene kit.
2. \$25.00 will purchase 25 face masks.
3. \$75.00 will purchase emergency medical supplies.

Make your check payable to Jerusalem Lutheran Church and indicate in the memo line which option you would like to donate to. Together, we are making our community and our world a better, safer place!

OUR FIRST COFFEE HOUR during the pandemic will be held outside (weather permitting, rain date August 9th) under the covered walkway on Sunday, August 2nd. Beverages will be safely served, and snacks will be individually wrapped. With social distancing and masks we feel that we can safely linger after each service for conversation and fellowship. However, because this will certainly be more work, Faith Batz needs additional help, and we will not be offering refreshments every week. Nevertheless, we look forward to this opportunity to catch up with one another after months apart.

DEADLINE FOR FALL NEWSLETTER ARTICLES is Monday, August 24th. Thanks!

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS ARE IMPORTANT! Instead of usher and greeters, we are using a handful of guides who have been trained in the safer practices that we have developed for gathering. In addition, assisting ministers will serve as lectors to maintain distance in the chancel and avoid sharing the same surfaces that cannot be disinfected between people. We may tweak these practices in the weeks ahead, and then we will invite more people to be oriented and serve as guides and assisting ministers. Please see Jane Mahoney if you are interested. Also, please see Audrey Christ if you would like to be a cantor.

SOUND BOARD VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. We are currently looking for volunteers to run the sound board. Please contact Melissa Boyer if interested 570-789-1813.

HOLY COMMUNION will not yet be offered even though many of us hunger for its sacramental promise and Christ's presence. In this matter there are a variety of understandings and practices throughout the church, and even in the Lutheran Church, but we are listening to both the counsel of our bishop and the recommendations of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in

America. At the present time we are not offering the Lord's Supper because although some of the concerns about distancing, masking and unmasking, and the distribution of Communion can be addressed, a Lutheran consensus has not yet emerged about how to celebrate the Lord's Supper safely and with theological integrity. When we do begin offering the Eucharist again, we will also need to find ways to extend the Lord's Table to include the larger number of people who are staying at home due to their vulnerability.

VIDEOS OF WORSHIP will be recorded each Sunday, and then uploaded to YouTube and our website (jerusalemlutheran.com) to be available Monday afternoon. The recording posted on the internet, and the bulletin and sermon mailed to those who do not have computer access, will continue so that the additional people who have health conditions and therefore should not gather with us for worship, are included in our weekly worship.

OUR CORONAVIRUS TASK FORCE, the Worship and Music Committee, and the Church Council, have been studying, discussing and prayerfully discerning many documents and guidelines over the past several months. If you have any questions, please talk to them. The Task Force includes Deb Reed (council president), Donald Boyer (a retired school superintendent), Jane Mahoney (a retired nurse with experience in infection control), and Pastor Rowe. Please thank them for their hard work (often meeting weekly by video conference), and continue to pray for them.

PASTORAL VISITATION has had to change in this time of pandemic, even as we move forward. Consider this sobering recommendation from an ecumenical document developed by medical and pastoral leaders of the Methodist, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran Church: "Until the threat posed by COVID-19 is truly gone, we do not commend resuming pastoral caregiving visits inside homes, hospitals, or nursing care centers except for very brief times and only when most necessary, such as near death. [Care-Filled... Life, p. 32]." Therefore, for mutual protection, with the support of our Church Council Pastor Rowe will not be visiting unless the need is dire. Phone calls will be used instead, and all of us will share in the mutual care for one another, especially those most vulnerable and close to us. Please feel free to call Pastor Rowe at 570-933-5511.

ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES! If the Coronavirus has put stress on your marriage, you are not alone! Lutheran Marriage Encounter has scheduled a couple of Weekends this fall, and we believe that you will find that attending a Weekend will help you renew and revitalize your marital relationship no matter whether your marriage is in great shape or if you could really use some help.

The Weekends currently scheduled are: September 18-20 at the Heritage Hotel Lancaster in Lancaster PA and October 16-18 at the Olmsted Retreat in Ludlow, PA, an hour north of Pittsburgh. For more information, please see Joanne & Lloyd Wertz.

STAFF AND LEADERS

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