

Third Sunday after Pentecost  
June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Introduction to the Day

Moses tells the Israelites that they are called to be a priestly kingdom and a holy people. Jesus sends out the disciples as laborers into the harvest. In baptism we too are anointed for ministry, sharing God's compassion with our needy world. From the Lord's table we go forth to proclaim the good news, to heal the sick, and to share our bread with the hungry.

**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**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who greets us in this and every season,  
whose word never fails,  
whose promise is sure.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God  
and of our neighbors.

Merciful God,

**we confess that we have sinned.**

**We have hurt our community.**

**We have squandered your blessings.**

**We have hoarded your bounty.**

**In the name of Jesus,**

**forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Righteous God,

**we confess that we have sinned.**

**We have failed to be honest.**

**We have lacked the courage to speak.**

**We have spoken falsely.**

**In the name of Jesus,**

**forgive us and grant us your mercy.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst.

God offers boundless grace when we fail.

Claim the gift of God's mercy:

you are freed and forgiven

in the name of † Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn**

**“Will You Come and Follow Me”**

**#798 vs. 1,4,5**

**Prayer of the Day**

God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Judges 6:36-40**

Then Gideon said to God, “In order to see whether you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said, <sup>37</sup> I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said.” <sup>38</sup> And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. <sup>39</sup> Then Gideon said to God, “Do not let your anger burn against me, but let me speak one more time; let me, please, make trial with the fleece just once more; let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew.” <sup>40</sup> And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Children's Message**

## Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 9:35 – 10:8

<sup>35</sup>Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

<sup>10:1</sup>Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ <sup>8</sup>Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, O Christ**

### Sermon

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Though this seems like a really weird story, and I’m with you in thinking that it is, the themes that we have seen throughout the call narratives that we have explored are present with this one as well.

We transition from the selected text of Joshua’s call narrative last week that was full of the Lord’s affirmation and assurance, and now get this portion of Gideon’s narrative that is all of Gideon speaking to God. In fact, it is Gideon *testing* God, if you will.

Leading up to this selection of the Gideon story, the larger context gives us, as it always does, the bigger picture. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and their first words are, “The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior.” And Gideon, like Moses and Joshua before him is hesitant.

He asks a question that many today ask. “If the Lord is with us, how can all of this (as he gestures wildly around) take place?”

But, the Lord is persistent in the commissioning of Gideon. “I hereby commission you!”

“But sire, how can I deliver Israel? I’ve got reasons to the contrary.”

And the Lord is persistent. “But I will be with you.”

What follows is some back and forth in this “if you’re really calling me show me a sign” between Gideon and the Lord, when we finally come to our selected text for today. Our introduction in our devotional for this day states:

After Joshua and the people of Israel conquered and settled in the Promised Land challenges continued to arise. Throughout the time of the judges they lived as a loose confederation of tribes. Neighboring nations periodically invaded and captured some of the territory, requiring God to raise up a leader to bring them back to freedom. The book of Judges attributes these invasions to the faithlessness of God’s people.

God came to Gideon in a time when Midian ruled over some of their territory. God commissioned him to lead the people to victory over Midian. God’s people would again be free. Gideon wasn’t so sure, so he devised a test for God.

Gideon is almost begging God to say, “you know what? Never mind.” It is a little difficult to determine if this is doubt or disbelief. But, Gideon is no doubt giving God every chance he can for God to prove NOT all things are possible with God.

But Gideon, despite his best efforts, fails. God is faithful. God will make it happen.

We (as the much larger people of faith) have done this, too. As a church we have asked ourselves, “okay, God, we think that we do indeed have a future but mayyyyyyyyyybe, if you could just have God’s people respond so that we feel it, that would be great.” AND GOD DID!

But we’re still hesitant. “Okay God, that was great, and don’t get mad that we are still testing you, but if you could do this (fill in the blank) then we will really believe that we have a God guided and centered future.”

And, God DOES, time and time again, continue to show up. Because that is what God does.

But if we look beyond this odd story of the dew and the fleece blanket on the threshing floor, we see how Gideon responds, and how the army is chosen.

As part of the trimming down of the Army numbers (because God doesn’t want too big of an army thus not making God look as mighty) Gideon brings the 10,000 to a body of water. The ones who get down on their hands and knees drinking from their cupped hands, are not chosen. The 300 who come to the water and lap it up like dogs, are the ones that are chosen.

In this is a lesson, and an answer to the age old million dollar question in the church.

“Why can’t we do it how we always use to do it?”

You see, the ones who lapped up like dogs were chosen for the mighty force because they were always looking ahead, to see what was coming next.

That isn’t to say that we can’t ask, “why can’t we have it the way we used to.” What it is saying is that we need to reconsider what we are actually asking.

What if we were to look at our past, and see what it is that we want to copy, and lift up where that is actually happening?

An example: this question is frequently asked and framed in the context of full Sunday School Rooms, or even full sanctuary for that matter.

What if we asked, “what did we love about that?”

I recently had a teacher from a good number of years ago ask about a name in the prayers. This person was curious if that name was a person that she’d had in Sunday School many years ago.

The connection is that what we long for from the past, happened because of what we continue to make a focus in the present, and will continue to make a focus into the future. 30 years ago this person had a child in Sunday School and when they heard a name recently in the prayers they wondered if it was them because they were a caring adult in this child’s life 30 years ago, and they are a caring adult now! And that is what we do. And here is the beautiful part, what matters is indeed NOT that the Sunday School room was full of people, but was full of love and compassion, and the same can be said for the classrooms now that might not be as full as we would want them to be, but with that continued emphasis on placing caring adults in young people’s lives, we can and will see that fullness again.

People of God, in all things that we do as church, as people of faith, let us not ignore our past, but also let’s not dig our heels in trying to copy it. Let us learn from it. Let us ask the deeper questions about what it is that we are actually looking for.

And maybe, just maybe, we will again see places and moments in which the ever present nature of God is ever so evident.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

**Hymn of the Day** “In Christ Called to Baptize”

#575 vs. 1,4

### **Apostle’s Creed**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Trusting in God’s abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

*A brief silence.*

For the church here and around the world, we pray. Seek out disciples and send them out with authority to proclaim good news, bring healing where there is pain, and counter the forces of evil. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the earth and all its creatures, we pray. Equip farmers, farm workers, and all who labor on the land to produce a harvest. Nourish crops with ample rainfall and abundant sunshine. Restore lands ruined by pollution or misuse. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

For those who govern, we pray. Empower those who seek peaceful solutions to conflict and embolden those who advocate for all who are oppressed. Work through systems of government to establish justice throughout the world. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

For those who suffer, we pray. Accompany those who feel helpless, alone, or abandoned. Embrace any who long for successful treatment for mental illness or freedom from addiction. Heal those who are sick (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Lois, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Sandy*). God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

For fathers and father figures, we pray. Console all who long to be fathers, children estranged from their fathers, anyone grieving the death of a father, and fathers who have lost a child. Draw near to all for whom this day stirs up difficult emotions. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

For all the saints, we give thanks. Receive into your eternal care all those who have died (*especially*) and fill us with hope that does not disappoint. God, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

### **Offering**

#### **Offertory Prayer**

God of field and forest, sea and sky,  
you are the giver of all good things.

Sustain us with these gifts of your creation,  
and multiply your graciousness in us,  
that the world may be fed with your love,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Words of Institution**

### **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**

### **Communion**

**Hymns #471 & #466**

### **Prayer**

We thank you, generous God,  
for the refreshment we have received  
at your banquet table.  
Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world,  
through the one who is our dearest treasure,  
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

The God who calls across the cosmos  
and speaks in the smallest seed  
✠ bless, keep, and sustain you  
now and to the end of the age.  
**Amen.**

### **Sending Song**

“Hallelujah! We Sing Your Praises”

#535

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Share the harvest.  
**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!**  
And all of Good Shepherd said...  
**AMEN!**

**Please join us Sunday, June 25 to celebrate Bill and Betty Davey's 75th wedding anniversary.**

We will be in the upper fellowship hall at Good Shepherd from 2-4.

Please no gifts, cards will be accepted and appreciated.

Snacks and drinks will be available.

Hope to see you on June 25!

Bill and Betty's family

# June Financial Snapshot

## Your generosity in action:

Because of your generosity to kick off our Going Strong Summer Appeal, WE HAVE PAID OFF THE BOILER LOAN! to the Endowment Fund.

### Going Strong Update:

\$2,000 lead gift  
\$1,600 towards the \$10,000 match.  
\$13,600 total!

## THANK YOU!!

Through June 13

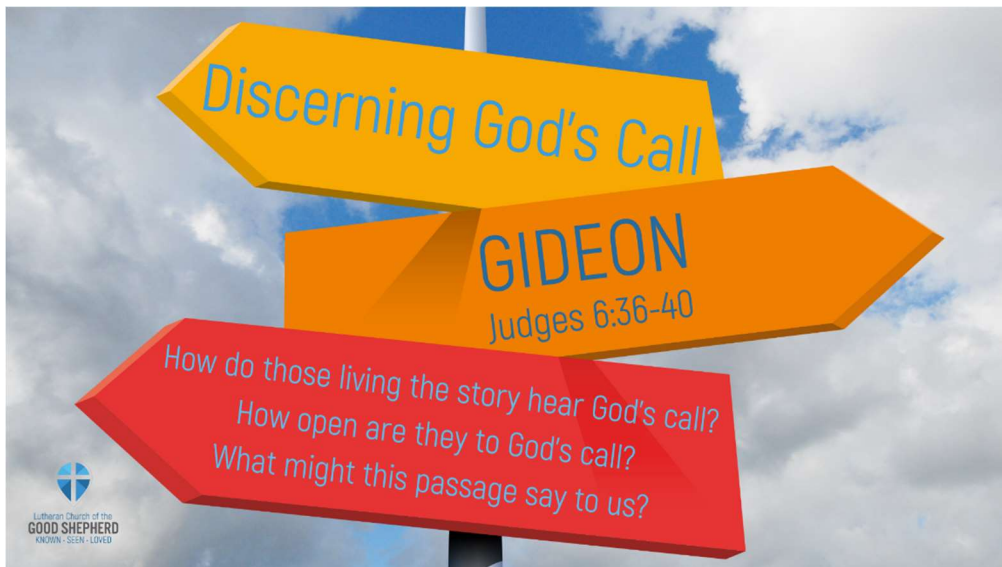
Total Revenue **\$14,186**

2 more Sunday Offering to Come

Total Expenses **\$14,529**

Projected Expenses: \$26,000

Difference to date:  
**-\$343**



**Questions to ponder with today's Call Narrative for Gideon. We encourage you to respond as you are able:**

**How do the people in the story hear God's call to them?**

**How open are they to God's call?**

**What might this passage say to our community of faith?**