

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
July 2nd, 2023

Introduction to the Day

The welcome of baptism is for all God's children. This baptismal gift sets us free from the power of sin and death. In today's gospel, Christ promises that the disciple who gives a cup of cold water to the little ones serves Christ himself. From worship we are sent on our baptismal mission: to serve the little ones of this world and to be a sign of God's merciful welcome.

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

“All Are Welcome”

#641 vs. 1,2,3,5

Prayer of the Day

O God, you direct our lives by your grace, and your words of justice and mercy reshape the world. Mold us into a people who welcome your word and serve one another, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading: 1 Kings 19:9b-18

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰He answered, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.”

¹¹He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁴He answered, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.”

¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children’s Message

Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 10:40-42

[Jesus said to the twelve:] ⁴⁰“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

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.

Leading up to our passage from 1 Kings and the call of Elijah, Elijah had given up.

Many years after Saul and David, and after the Promised Land split into two nations (Israel and Judah), Ahab and Jezebel ruled in the nation of Israel. They ignored God and followed Baal, a God of other nations. Elijah served as God’s prophet, a thorn in their sides. After a show-down between God and Baal on Mount Carmel, God displayed great power and many of the priests of Baal were put to death.

This angered the queen and made Elijah flee for his life, despairing for the future. God was not down with Elijah (or Israel) yet.

Ahab tells his wife Jezebel that Elijah is responsible for the killing of the priests/prophets of Baal and she sends a warning to Elijah. “You shall meet the same fate of the prophets that you have killed.

So, Elijah flees. For him this is the end. He heads to the wilderness. Lays under a trees. And he prays that this would be the end. “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.”

Feeling that he is the only believer left and he has failed in his call, he is prepared to be done with it all.

And an appears. The angel touched him and told him, “Get up and eat.” Looking around he saw a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. So, he ate and he drank. And then he lays back down.

The angel appears again! “Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.”

So again, he got up and ate and drank and goes on with the strength of that food for forty days and nights to Horeb the mount of God.

And it is here that we pick up with our text for the day.

The Lord speaks to him asking him why he is there. Elijah says to the Lord, this is what has taken place. I am the only one left. They want to kill me. I am afraid.

So the Lord sends him out to the mountain for the Lord is about to pass by.

And in that moment there is great chaos. There is a mighty wind. An earthquake. And fire. And God is in none of it. Following the moment of chaos is sheer silence. Where Elijah hears God.

And again, the Lord asks Elijah, “What are you doing here.”

And again, Elijah complains about the hand he has been dealt. The people no longer worship God. They’ve torn down the altars to God. God’s prophets have been killed and they now seek to kill Elijah. And, rightfully so, Elijah is afraid. So he is fleeing and pleading, “Please God, let me die.”

So, what does God do?

“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus...’ and he gives him three new assignments.

Thinking that he had no future Elijah was ready to throw in the towel, pack up his belongings, and call it quits. He heads to the wilderness where he prays that God would just let him die. And God says no.

In the face of Elijah’s complaint and plea to surrender, God says, “I’m not done with you yet.”

God sends Elijah back to those whom he is fleeing. Back into the face of those who are worshiping other Gods and gives Elijah the command to appoint new kings and a new prophet to take his place. He is to appoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his successor.

We hear that these three will outdo one another in violence and that many will die, but Elijah will learn that he is indeed no the only believer remaining, but instead there will be 7,000 others when all is said and done.

So how does this speak to us?

There are times in our lives, and in the life of a faith community, where we feel this. There are times when we plead with God, just end it. It would be better if we were no more, let us pack up and call it a day. There is no future here.

And God has other plans.

God who is faithful and abounding in steadfast love continues to send us out into the world to do God’s work. In the face of a dominant narrative that says church as we know it is all but dead, God continues to faithfully call us into this work that is holy. To love the unlovable and declare a future rooted in that love.

People of God, that is what this is about. We surround ourselves with a community of faith for those very moments that we experience just as Elijah did. When we want to throw in the towel and say, “no more.” It is the power of the community that shows us the future that God has in mind for us and carries us to that day when we are ready to pick ourselves up and go at it again.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Song of the Day

“Lord, Whose Love In Humble Service”

#712 vs. 1,3,4

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.

We pray for the church. For wisdom to heed the voices of prophets in our midst who cast a vision of God's promised future. For courage to welcome people whom society rejects. For resolve to serve all in need. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for creation. For (*local bodies of water and*) all rivers, lakes, oceans, and streams. For lands experiencing scorching heat, drought, or wildfires. For conservation organizations and environmental activists. For scientists working on clean energy solutions. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for this nation and all nations. For (*national elected leaders and*) presidents, governors, and legislators. For judges, juries, district attorneys, and public defenders. For military personnel. For those who are incarcerated. Guide us in ways of freedom that promote the common good. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for those in need. For exiles, immigrants, refugees, and those seeking asylum. For victims of harassment, torture, or abuse. For those who are ill (*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*).. For any near death and for all who grieve. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for children. For their safety at home and in childcare settings. For their flourishing at summer programs and camps. For the many people who care for them including parents and grandparents; childcare workers and teachers; coaches, counselors, and mentors; pediatricians and psychologists. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We give thanks for (*names and*) all the saints and prophets who have received the free gift of God, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. May their lives of humble service inspire us in faith. 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 and #483

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 “God Bless Our Native Land”

#891

Dismissal

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

2023 Financial Snapshot

	Month of June	Year-to-Date	One year ago...
Total Revenue	\$27,557	\$161,101	When we talk about the \$16,000 gap that we faced last summer, that didn't include the \$25,000 Line of Credit that was tapped out, or the balance that remained on the Boiler Loan. We have now paid off the Boiler Loan and are well on our way to eliminating the LoC Debt. THAT IS BECAUSE OF YOUR GENEROSITY! THANK YOU!!
Total Expenses	\$25,439	\$150,118	
Difference	\$2,118	\$10,983	

What your generosity makes possible

We are heading into the summer months ready to clear some of our smaller debts through our Going Strong Summer Giving Appeal. With your generosity we will be able to erase our Line of Credit Debt as well as our Boiler Loan Debt and set ourselves on a firm financial foundation heading into the fall!



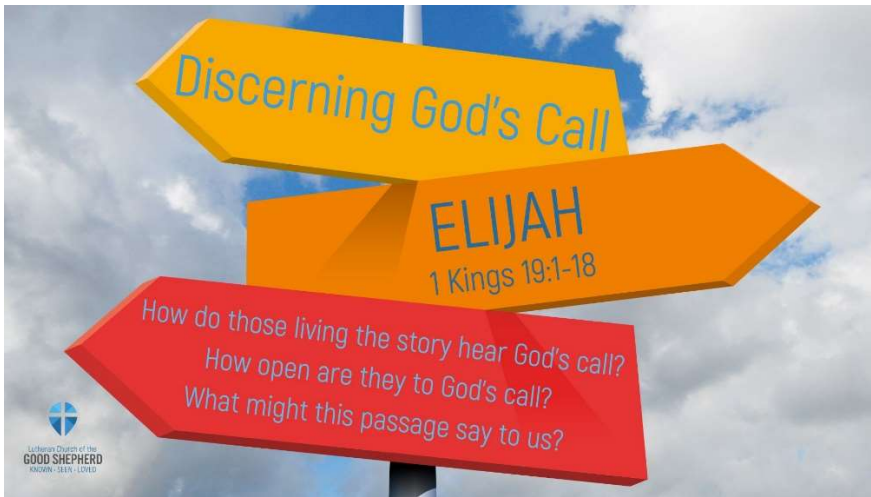
Lutheran Church of the
GOOD SHEPHERD
KNOWN · SEEN · LOVED

Strong Again Summer Appeal

\$20,000 Giving Campaign
THE BOILER LOAN IS PAID OFF
YOUTH ROOM COVERED
UP NEXT: Line of Credit

GIFTS RECEIVED
\$2,000 Lead Gift
\$6,625 towards \$10,000 Match
\$18,625 total received





As always, we want to hear YOUR THOUGHTS on these texts. You can respond in many ways. You can wait until the end of the 16 weeks. You can respond periodically.

How do those living the story hear God's Call?

How open are they to God's call?

What might this passage say to us?

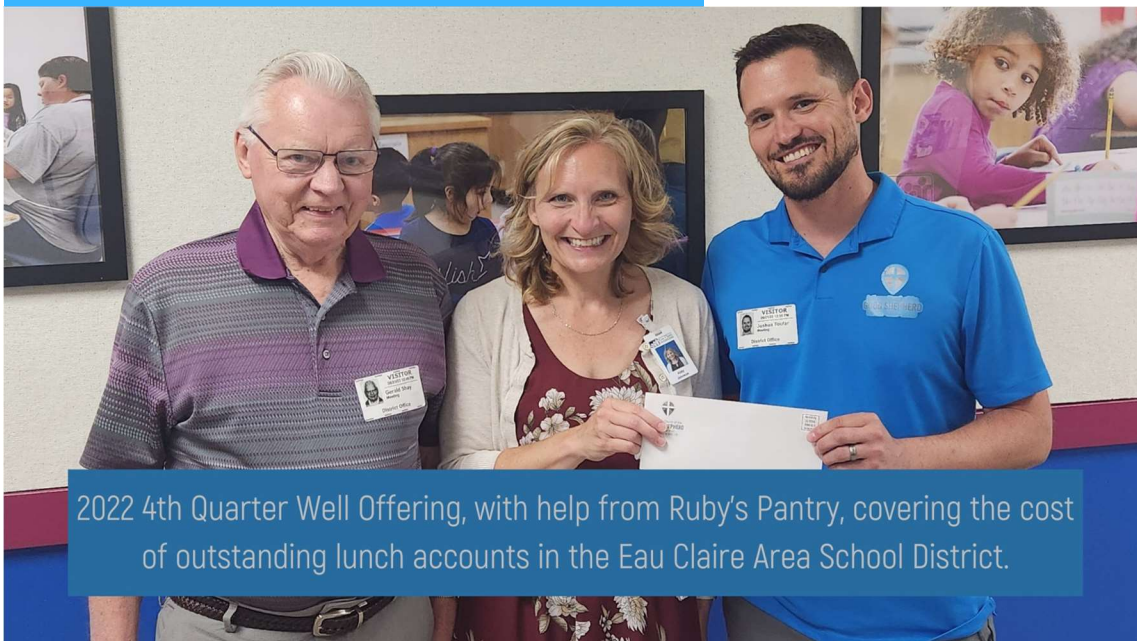
**HEART FOR
LUTHER PARK**
Art, Craft, and Quilt Auction

Sunday, August 6, 2023

9:30 Worship
10:00 Viewing of Quilts
11:00 Lunch
12:00 Auction Begins



Luther Park Bible Camp 944 24 1/4 St. Chetek, WI



2022 4th Quarter Well Offering, with help from Ruby's Pantry, covering the cost of outstanding lunch accounts in the Eau Claire Area School District.