

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost  
July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Introduction to the Day

God's word is like the rain that waters the earth and brings forth vegetation. It is also like the sower who scatters seed indiscriminately. Our lives are like seeds sown in the earth. Even from what appears to be little, dormant, or dead, God promises a harvest. At the Lord's table we are fed with the bread of life, that we may bear fruit in the world.

**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**

**“What Is This Place”**

**#524**

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Jonah 1:1-6, 17**

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.” <sup>3</sup> But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. <sup>5</sup> Then the sailors were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. <sup>6</sup> The captain came and said to him, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up; call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.”

<sup>17</sup> But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Children's Message**

### **Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

[<sup>1</sup>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!"

<sup>18</sup>"Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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.

Jonah literally flees from that which God is calling him to do.

The word of the Lord comes to Jonah and sends him to speak out against the wickedness of Ninevah. And we finally, FINALLY, on week 8 of this 16 week series, encounter so please, O Lord, one that actually does run the other way.

And, we see what happens next.

Jonah sets out on a great journey in order to do anything but that which God calls him to do. This takes him to Joppa to board a ship headed for Tarshish.

Now, two times in the first three verses of the book of Jonah, it is mentioned that he is running "from the presence of the LORD.

Now, we don't believe in a puppet string kind of God that sits up in heaven and makes things happen, but there are times in the Old Testament that do indeed make me consider otherwise. What happens next is one of those times. "The LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up."

Seeing that Jonah is running away from the presence of the LORD, God sends a mighty storm to threaten to break this vessel into pieces.

The sailors aboard the ship start to realize that maybe, just maybe, this gentleman that has boarded their vessel to flee from the presence of the LORD could be their problem. They have tried praying to their God, they've

lightened the load, to no avail. They shake dice to confirm who it is that is actually to blame and sure enough, it is Jonah.

“Who are you? What have you done? Why is this happening to us?”

Running from that which God has called him to has caused great calamity for those whom Jonah encounters. Yet, do you notice that these men still, STILL, show Jonah mercy? He tells them what they need to do to free them of the burden that is him, and they STILL try other approaches.

They attempt to power through this storm, again to no avail, before they, too, turn to the LORD. “Please, O Lord, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.”

And then, they threw him overboard. And the storm stopped. And they are even more fearful of the LORD. So, they made sacrifices to the LORD and made vows.

Meanwhile, Jonah is swallowed up by a large fish.

We have come to know that what follows, those three days in the belly of the fish, are transformative for Jonah and his call. But what do we make of this first part.

In wondering about this, it does us some good to get some background. Our devotional for this day tells us, “God called Jonah to go to Niveveh and proclaim God’s word. Jonah had other ideas and ran as far away as he could. God persisted.”

Seemingly unhelpful, until we look a little deeper into what a call to Nineveh means. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria which is a feared enemy of the people of Israel. Jonah runs not because this call isn’t going to be fun, he runs because it is terrifying. There will be opposition. Bringing God’s word to this place likely has him fearing for his life. He runs out of self-preservation. And God persists! God sends a storm to a boat and a whale to swallow Jonah just to prove God’s point.

People of God, if there were ever an illustration that God knows what God wants and knows where God wants us, this is it! But again, God does not abandon. God sends Jonah into the most difficult of places because that is where Jonah’s prophetic message is needed!

Just last week remember we heard that the average person says no 6 times to where God is calling them before saying yes. We worship and believe in a persistent God.

So often when we hear God telling us “this is where you need to be going” we tell ourselves, “we must have heard wrong.”

So again, our question is, “Where are the difficult places God might be calling us?” And, “in what direction is God persistently telling us to Go?”

Let us continue to strive to find those answers and together go into this difficult places, the places we think we could never go.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

**Song of the Day**

**“Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil”**

**#512**

## **Apostle's Creed**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

Guide your church, O God, to sow seeds of forgiveness and righteousness on good soil. Direct your people to proclaim your love in this congregation and throughout the world. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Sustain your creation, O God, by sending favorable weather, causing trees and fields to grow, protecting waterways from pollution, and instilling in all people the need to be good stewards. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Maintain peace among all people, O God, and raise up lawyers to work for justice in the courts, advocates to speak for the downtrodden, and politicians to work on behalf of the common good. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Heal those who are sick, O God (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, 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, and family of Lois Stolts*). Guide health care workers to care for those who suffer, scientists to conduct lifesaving research, and counselors to care for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Answer the prayers of those gathered in worship, O God. Protect those who travel near and far, accompany visitors to this congregation, and nurture our faith. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Inspire us by the faithful departed, O God, examples of your embodied love, whose confidence in the resurrection guides us in living lives worthy of the gospel. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior.

**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**

**#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

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

#547

### Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the harvest.

**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!**

And all of Good Shepherd said...

**AMEN!**

## July Financial Snapshot

### Your generosity in action:

WE HAVE PAID OFF THE BOILER LOAN  
WE’VE COVERED THE BUDGETED  
EXPENSES FOR THE YOUTH ROOM RENO  
UP NEXT: Paying off Line of Credit Debt

#### Going Strong Update:

\$2,000 lead gift  
\$6,760 towards the \$10,000 match.  
\$18,910 total!

**THANK YOU!!**

### Through July 12

Total  
Revenue **\$11,606**

3 more Sunday Offering to Come

Total  
Expenses **\$12,223**

Projected Expenses: \$25,000

Difference to date:

**\$617**

# 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



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

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