

Introduction to the Day

Someone who isn't part of Jesus' own circle is casting out demons in Jesus' name, and the disciples want him stopped. They appeal to Jesus, as Joshua did to Moses about the elders who prophesied without official authorization. Like Moses, Jesus refuses to see this as a threat. Jesus welcomes good being done in his name, even when it is not under his control. The circle we form around Jesus' word must be able to value good being done in ways we wouldn't do it, by people we can't keep tabs on.

**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.

**Welcome**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin and come to God for healing.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have honored you with our lips,**

**but have harmed our neighbors with our tongues.**

**The cravings at war within us  
cause conflicts and disputes.**

**In our desire to be first  
we make distinctions among ourselves.**

**We place the needs of the poor and the suffering  
last.**

**Gathering Hymn                      “You are Holy”                      #525**

**Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God, we thank you for the community that is Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. We are grateful for the lives impacted, relationships built, and the mission we share in the neighborhood and larger community.

We turn our hearts and minds to the future, knowing that your work is not done here. Enlighten and enliven us to come together in confidence, courage, and hope. Fill us with your life-giving love. Give us generous hearts to commit fully to the work of the **“Building Together for Generations to Come”** Capital Campaign.

Stir in us a desire to contribute to a creative and faithful legacy. As we go forward, bless this campaign to be a blessing to others. May all that we do lead others into a relationship with you and bring honor and glory to your name. AMEN

**Capital Campaign Verse - Colossians 2:6-7**

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him,

established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

### **Reading - James 5:13-20**

13Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. 14Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. 16Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. 17Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

19My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, 20you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

### **Gospel – Mark 9:38-50**

38John said to [Jesus], “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” 39But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40Whoever is not against us is for us. 41For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

42“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. 43If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. 47And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, 48where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

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The Gospel of Our 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

IF, and that is a massive if, IF the disciples have learned anything from the lessons of the last two weeks, they show us here that they've still much to learn.

Two weeks ago, the lesson that to follow Jesus fully is to disconnect from those earthly anchors to fully experience the divine in their midst.

Last week, to be greatest of all is to be last and least of all.

Today, they show us they still really don't get it. Jesus takes a break from telling them of his pending death (which we've heard about in the last two weeks), and we are presented with a story where someone is doing work in Jesus name, though they are not one of the twelve.

“Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” For some reason, with the lessons of the last two weeks fresh in their minds, they are appalled that someone who is NOT ONE OF THEM would do good works in Jesus' name. “He is not following us.

After two weeks being told, and really there is room to wonder if they were being scolded, that to be Jesus followers they need to put others first, the first chance they get they put qualifiers on who it is that can do this work. Hearing the lesson of letting go of those human things that get in their way and putting (all) others first in life, they still think that this discipleship is reserved for them and only them.

And they could not be more wrong.

And, again, as he has done in weeks past, Jesus calls them on it. “Whoever is not against us is for us.”

Jesus goes on to give them a lesson on removing the stumbling blocks that we so often place in front of ourselves and others when it comes to fully experiencing the abundance of God's grace and mercy in our lives.

Separating these two sections, the lesson of the “not one of us” casting out demons in Jesus names, and the lesson of the stumbling blocks, is a touch confusing when seen as isolated moments. But, when seen as a continuation of the lessons that he has been teaching them, and not separate moments, what he is teaching here becomes more clear.

These verses immediately follow the verses from last week. There is no travel that takes place. Seeming no time has passed. Presumably they are still in the house where Jesus has placed a child in his lap telling them, “to welcome this child is to welcome me, and to welcome me is to welcome God.”

It is to this lesson that the disciples respond with inquiries about “others” who are doing work in Jesus name. John says to Jesus, in response to Jesus saying to welcome a child just as you'd welcome me, “Teacher, others are doing this work in your name, though they are not one of us.”

The disciples are still clinging to this idea, this hope, this dream, that being his closest twelve will bring with it glory. Though, it won't, at least not as they imagined.

And Jesus is quick to see that this is their hope. That they might be able to place stumbling blocks in front of those that may want to experience fully the Body of Christ. Because, folks, that is what Jesus is talking about here.

To fully experience the Body of Christ is to let go of those earthly things that might be holding us back.

To fully experience the Body of Christ is to realize the value and importance of the last and the least.

To fully experience the Body of Christ is to notice the stumbling blocks that may be in place in our personal lives and in our communal lives that may be keep ourselves and other from experiencing it.

The lesson of the millstone and removing the hand, or foot, or eye that causes you to sin is a scary one. It is confusing. It surely does not sound like God's grace and mercy. Or, maybe it does.

Jesus in this lesson is calling us to remove that which might be keeping us from allowing ourselves and others to experience the fullness of God's grace and mercy and live into it fully. His lesson to his disciples who are upset that others might be doing work in his name is not that are gatekeepers of God's activity in the world, but recipients and participants together in that work!

People of God, Jesus is speaking to us in this lesson. He is encouraging us to examine what those stumbling blocks are that might be keeping ourselves and others from fully experiencing the Body of Christ and then get rid of them. Throw them out and come and live fully in the expansive promise of God's grace and mercy active in the world.

Jesus reminds them that this is going to lead to some flavor. The Body of Christ is going to have some variety. We aren't all going to be the same, but we do all have our own salt. That is great. What matters most is that we are peace with one another.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

**Hymn of the Day**

**"Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service"**

**#712 vss 1,3**

**Apostle's Creed**

**Prayers**

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the people of God in all places. Shape our witness to the good news of Jesus that we joyfully share your transforming love with all whom we encounter. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the healing of the earth. Renew oceans and seas, marshes and estuaries. Uphold the work of conservationists, oceanographers, and all who care for fragile ecosystems and habitats. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for peace and cooperation among local and global communities. Bless the efforts of community organizers, international aid workers, and all those who work for justice and peace around the world. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all who are in any need. To all who grieve, bring consolation; to all who are weary or lonely, bring solace. By your grace, make your presence known among all who call to you for healing. We pray especially for *Grady and Jace, Matt, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Cherri, Peggy, John, Judy, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Dan and Sharon, Roger and MaryLee*. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for caregivers: doctors and nurses, home health aides and counselors, and those who care for loved ones (*other caregivers or individuals may be named*). Sustain them in their work and help us to build a health care system that supports all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for the saints who now rest in your eternal presence. In thanksgiving for their lives of faithful service and witness, we commend them to your loving care. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

**Amen.**

**Peace**

**Offering**

**Offertory Prayer**

Blessed are you, O God,  
source of every gift of your creation.  
By these gifts and with our lives,  
help us to serve one another and all in need,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**Lord's Prayer**

Jesus welcomes you to this table.  
Come, here is your God.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Holy God,  
you have welcomed us to this meal  
and fed us with dignity at your table.  
Send us now to welcome others  
and to be at peace with one another,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

God all mighty,  
God most merciful  
✠ bless you, keep you,  
and give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Sending Hymn**                      **“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”**      **#547**

**Sending**

Go in peace. Follow Jesus!  
**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God.**  
And all of Good Shepherd said,  
**“AMEN”**

## Your Generosity in Action:



The graphic features the logo of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, which consists of three stylized figures in a circle. Below the logo, the text reads "BUILDING TOGETHER for Generations to Come". To the right of the logo, the word "Save" is written vertically, followed by a list of events: "September 22 - Campaign Kickoff", "September 29 - Front Porch Visits", "October 18 - Congregation Event at the Children's Theater - 5:30 pm", "October 23 - Appetizers Potluck and Hymn Sing at Church", and "October 27 - COMMITMENT SUNDAY". The background of the graphic is a light gray with a pattern of white and blue geometric shapes.

# THANK YOU!!

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Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	<b>\$13,387</b>	<b>\$13,324</b>	<b>\$63</b>
	2023: \$20,393	2023: \$21,677	

# **BUILDING TOGETHER**

for Generations to Come



## Capital Campaign Events for YOU!

**September 22 - Campaign Kickoff**

**September 29 - Front Porch Visits**

**October 18 - Congregation Event**

**at the Children's Theater - 5:30 pm**

**October 23 - Appetizers Potluck and  
Hymn Sing at Church**