



ST. PAUL'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, September 17, 2023
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship

1609 Kurtz Avenue ~ Lutherville, MD 21093

www.facebook.com/SPLutherville and www.stpaulslutherville.org

Welcome to our contemporary worship service. If you haven't already done so, take a moment to silence your devices, check in on social media, and breathe a bit before we start. Directions from the pastor will invite you to stand or "rise in body or spirit" for that section, also indicated by an asterisk.

As We Gather for Worship Today

Connection: Guest WIFI is available with no password needed, and we encourage you to share your experience with your home and digital community. We also encourage you to wear a nametag, and pink slips to request reusable ones are available at the entrance table.

Hospitality: The bathrooms and changing tables can be found alongside the entrance hallway. Hand sanitizing stations are available at either of the double entrance doors.

Communion: We celebrate the sacrament of Communion as part of our worship, and all are welcome at the Table. Instructions for distribution can be found within the bulletin. Gluten-free wafers are also available. Pre-packaged elements are also available from a basket at the entry table to commune yourself at your seat.

Offering: There is a basket at the host table to receive your paper offerings, and you may also give electronically at www.stpaulslutherville.org.

GATHERING

WELCOME & PRELUDE: *Word of God Speak* by Bart Millard, & Pete Kipley

***CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be God,
the one who forms us,
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.
Amen.

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Steadfast and faithful God,
**you have revealed the ways of justice,
yet we fail to follow you.**

**We are overwhelmed
by the world's violence and suffering.
We are afraid to risk what we have
for the sake of others.
For the harm we have caused,
known and unknown, forgive us.**

**For the unjust demands we place on others
and your creation, forgive us.**

**For the ways we turn away
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**

**Lead us back to you
and set us on the right path;
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.
God's compassion is beyond compare.
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.
In ✝ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.
Amen.

***GATHERING SONG: *Open the Eyes of my Heart* by Paul Baloche**

Open the eyes of my heart Lord ~ Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You ~ I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up ~ Shining in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love ~ As we sing holy holy holy

Open the eyes of my heart Lord ~ Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You ~ I want to see You

Open the eyes of my heart Lord ~ Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You ~ I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up ~ Shining in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love ~ As we sing holy holy holy

Holy holy holy ~ Holy holy holy
Holy holy holy ~ I want to see You

Holy holy holy ~ Holy holy holy
Holy holy holy ~ I want to see You

Holy holy holy ~ Holy holy holy
Holy holy holy ~ I want to see You

***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.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

WORD

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Children of all ages are welcome to come and gather on the blanket to join in a message just for them! After we pray together, they will be invited to go back to their seats or the Prayground space.

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

A reading from Genesis.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as God is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way Joseph reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

A reading from Romans.

Paul writes: ¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL: 18:21-35**

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹Peter came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the dominion of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

SONG OF THE DAY: *Mighty to Save by Ben Fielding, & Reuben Morgan

Ev'ryone needs compassion ~ Love that's never failing ~ Let mercy fall on me
Ev'ryone needs forgiveness ~ The kindness of a Saviour ~ The hope of nations

Saviour He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save ~ He is mighty to save
Forever Author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave ~ Jesus conquered the grave
So take me as You find me ~ All my fears and failures ~ Fill my life again
I give my life to follow ~ Ev'rything I believe in ~ Now I surrender

Saviour He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save ~ He is mighty to save
Forever Author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave ~ Jesus conquered the grave

Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing ~ For the glory of the risen King ~ Jesus
Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing ~ For the glory of the risen King

Savior He can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save ~ He is mighty to save
Forever Author of salvation
He rose and conquered the grave ~ Jesus conquered the grave

***CREED**

Using words of faith and belief, let us confess our faith together.

**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**

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. We pray for leaders throughout the whole Church, for our church-wide bishop, Elizabeth, and our local bishop, William. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy. Be present in the neighborhood surrounding us here in Lutherville. In this time, we offer prayers and thanksgivings to you — with our voices, in our hearts, and within this open space (*we pause for spoken and silent prayers*)... Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Bless the work of our capital campaign team, and stir our hearts to how we are rooted in Christ for tomorrow. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.
Amen.

***PEACE**

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

You are invited to share the peace with a wave from your seat to those outside of your household group, and to use a greeting or gesture you would like to share within your group.

MEAL

OFFERING, CONNECTION BOOKS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Offering is the opportunity for us to share some of those gifts for the work of the church and the needs of the world. Thank you for your generosity! For those gathering onsite, an offering basket is located towards the main entrance of the hall, and for all we encourage you to give electronically at www.stpaulslutherville.org.

As the Offering is being gathered in and the Announcements shared, please check in and let us know you're here. Beginning at the end of each aisle, please pass and sign the black Connection Books as the host hands one to you. The books help us get to know one another, welcome guests, and keep us up to date on worship participation with our members. Once the Connection Book has reached the end of the row please pass it back or hand them to the ushers as they come around to collect them.

***GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy God,
our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,
you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.
You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,
and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.
You sent your Son to eat with sinners
and to become food for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life given for us
and his rising from the grave,
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church, both now and forever.

Amen.

***LORD'S PRAYER**

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.**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

SHARING THE MEAL

As we celebrate the sacrament of Communion today, all are welcome at the Table. When directed by the Host down the center aisle, you may turn right at the head of the aisle to pick-up pre-packaged Elements from the basket to commune at your seat, or turn left at the head of the aisle to be served bread and receive a pre-filled glass of red wine or white grape juice, then placing your empty cup in the basket. If you have a gluten or food allergy, please let the server know. Use the side aisle to return to your seat. If you are not sharing in the Meal today, please join in reflection and prayer, until we all regather.

REFLECTION SONG: *Hold Us Together* by Matt Maher & Steve Wilson

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray. Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

SENDING

***BLESSING**

May the blessing of God be with you, the love of ✝ Jesus fill you, and the power of the Holy Spirit sustain you, now and forever.

Amen.

***SENDING SONG: *My Lighthouse* by Chris Llewellyn & Gareth Gilkeson**

In my wrestling and in my doubts ~ In my failures You won't walk out
Your great love will lead me through ~ You are the peace in my troubled sea
You are the peace in my troubled sea

In the silence You won't let go ~ In the questions Your truth will hold
Your great love will lead me through ~ You are the peace in my troubled sea
You are the peace in my troubled sea

My Lighthouse my Lighthouse ~ Shining in the darkness ~ I will follow You
My Lighthouse my Lighthouse ~ I will trust the promise ~ You will carry me safe to shore
Safe to shore ~ Safe to shore ~ Safe to shore

I won't fear what tomorrow brings ~ With each morning I'll rise and sing
My God's love will lead me through ~ You are the peace in my troubled sea
You are the peace in my troubled sea

My Lighthouse my Lighthouse ~ Shining in the darkness ~ I will follow You
My Lighthouse my Lighthouse ~ I will trust the promise ~ You will carry me safe to shore
Safe to shore ~ Safe to shore ~ Safe to shore

Fire before us ~ You're the brightest ~ You will lead us ~ Through the storms

Fire before us ~ You're the brightest ~ You will lead us ~ Through the storms

Fire before us ~ You're the brightest ~ You will lead us ~ Through the storms

My Lighthouse my Lighthouse ~ Shining in the darkness ~ I will follow You
My Lighthouse my Lighthouse ~ I will trust the promise ~ You will carry me safe to shore
Safe to shore ~ Safe to shore ~ Safe to shore

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Thank you for helping to lead our worship service this holy day!

Preacher/Presider
Interim Director of Contemporary Music
Assisting Minister
Host/Usher
Refreshments

The Rev. Dr. Ed Kay
Peter Carpenter-Gonia
Josie Brock
Debi Maas