St. Paul's Lutheran Church
15th Sunday after Pentecost
September 2, 2018

Rev. Arden Dorn, Transitional Minister
Mary Maddox, Lay Reader

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Gathering
The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Jesus protests against human customs being given the weight of divine law, while the essence of God’s law is ignored. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. Last week Jesus told us “the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Now James says God has given us birth by the word of truth. We, having been washed in the word when we were born in the font, return to it every Sunday to ask God to create in us clean hearts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING HYMN (ELW p. 793) Be Thou My Vision

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, the one who fashions us, the one who heals us, the one who reforms us again and again. Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ,

The assembly shall kneel as they are able.

We confess...
That we come believing in our emptiness, believing that we will never have enough, believing that what we have is unworthy.

We confess...
That we come fearful of sharing, fearful of losing our tenuous grip on security, fearful of touching and knowing the pain of others.

We confess...
That we come overwhelmed by the hunger, overwhelmed by the suffering of children near and far, overwhelmed by the endless tales of senseless violence, greed, and death.

We confess...
That we come aching from the weight of the responsibility, aching from the chilling challenge of knowing our abundance, aching from the gnawing awareness that we have much to share.

We pray...
That while we come clinging to our meager offerings, you might loosen our grip and help us to give so that all might thrive.
In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ takes our offerings and blessed them and us. Christ forgives us our sins and breaks us open for the world. Jesus shows us how we can share all that we are and still live in abundance. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen. Thanks be to God!**
PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**The assembly is seated**

Word

**God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.**

**FIRST READING:** Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

The Israelites believed the law was a divine gift that provided guidelines for living out the covenant. Moses commands the people to obey the law and to neither add to nor subtract from it. The Israelites are also to teach the law to their children and their children’s children.

1 So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. 2 You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

6 You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” 7 For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? 8 And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? 9 But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 15**

R: **Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?**

1 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill? 2 **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,** 3 **who speak the truth from their heart;** 4 they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor. 5 **In their sight the wicked are rejected,** 6 **but they honor those who fear the Lord.** 7 They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word. 8 They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown. R
SECOND READING:  James 1:17-27

The letter of James was intended to provide first-century Christians with instruction in godly behavior. Here, Christians are encouraged to listen carefully and to act on what they hear, especially by caring for those least able to care for themselves.

17 Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

19 You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness. 21 Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. 23 For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; 24 for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. 25 But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

26 If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.

Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.

Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.
Glory to You, O Lord!

Mark’s gospel depicts Jesus as challenging traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. For Jesus, the observance of religious practices cannot become a substitute for godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart.

1Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, 2they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” 6He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me;’ 7in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. 8You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” 14Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.” 21For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ!

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY (ELW p. 592) Just As I Am, Without One Plea

APOSTLES’ CREED

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.
Freed by God in Christ to live and love and serve, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God’s beloved creation.

Gracious God, we pray for all those who labor to bear your word into the world by welcoming the stranger, healing the sick, and caring for the orphan. Embolden your church to take up the cross against the powers of oppression and death. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Creative God, we pray for the earth. Keep watch over those who rescue endangered species and repair scorched landscapes. Make us good stewards of creation. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Sovereign God, we pray for the nations of the world, for governments, leaders, and citizens. Watch over refugees and immigrants. Inspire us to welcome them with glad hearts when they arrive on our shores and in our neighborhoods. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, you call us to serve our neighbors. Bless our vocations as we fill the cups of the thirsty, the plates of the hungry, and the hearts of the lonely. Make our presence your presence for all who sorrow. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O Lord, send calm and perseverance to those who are in trouble or who live daily with great stress; for those that are ill or injured. Fill them with your Spirit and satisfy them with your presence, especially Sadat, David, Sharon, Ellvera, Bobby & Betty, Alex, James, Pauline, Mitch, Roxanne, Shane, Norma, Laquita, Helen, Linda, Jack, Michael, Raymond, Alva, Steve, Evalina, Francis, Ella, Khloe, Kenneth, Eric, Moma, The Ndeh Family, Charles, Leroy, Carly, Eddie, Shanna, Travis, John, Yvonne, Anyemarie, Mary Ruth, Kyle, Cody, and Norma, as well as those that we name out loud or in our hearts... Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

Welcoming God, at tables around the world, through story and meal, strangers become guests and guests become friends. Embolden this congregation to always extend the wide-armed welcome you extend to us. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

With thanksgiving, we remember the cloud of witnesses whose lives inspire us to loving service including Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, renewer of the church. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

As we sow Seeds of Hope, we pray for St. John Lutheran in Westhoff. Guide them to new opportunities and abilities to draw younger people into the congregation. We pray also for St. Peter’s in Elgin that they may have vision, direction, and that God would use them as an instrument of grace in their community. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Into your wide embrace, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your boundless mercy through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you
Meal
God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

The assembly stands.

OFFERING HYMN (ELW p. 186) Create in Me a Clean Heart

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.  Lasst uns beten.
God of life, you give us these gifts of the earth,  Gott des Lebens, du gibst uns diese Gaben der Erde, diese Ressourcen unseres Lebens und
these resources of our life and our labor.  unserer Arbeit. Nehmen Sie, in großen
take them, offered in great thanksgiving,  thanksgiving angeboten, und benutzt Sie, um
and use them to set a table that will heal the whole  einen Tisch zu setzen, der die ganze Schöpfung
creation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Light.  heilt; durch Jesus Christus, unseren Erlöser und

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.  The Lord be with you.
And also with you.  And also with you.

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

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

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:
THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Amen, amen, 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

Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread. Speak to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, and make us one with you.

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION – All are WELCOME at the table of the Lord.

This meal gives you strength for your journey of faith & life. Go forward as the body of Christ in your family, community and the world. Children or anyone choosing not to commune, but wishing to be blessed, may indicate this by folding their arms across their chest. Anyone who is unable to come forward may indicate to an usher that you wish to receive communion where you are seated.
Following Communion, the assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy and compassionate God, in bread and wine you give us gifts that form us to be humble and courageous. May your words come to life in our serving and in our witness, that we might speak a living voice of healing and justice to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our rock and our redeemer.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

God, creator of all things, speaking reformation into being; Jesus Christ, savior of the world, raising the dead; Holy Spirit, living voice, calling and enlightening the church: Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN  (ELW p. 824)  This is my Father’s World

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Sound the good news.

Thanks be to God.

DOXOLOGY  (ELW p. 884)  Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

Welcome!

We have all come to St. Paul’s by different paths, and from various walks of life. Through worship, study, prayer and fellowship we each seek to deepen our faith, comfort and encourage one another and dedicate our lives more fully to sharing Christ in our homes, our community and the world. All are welcome at St. Paul’s. We are eager to know you, and we invite you to get to know us. If you are unable to hear, require a bulletin, or need any other assistance, please signal an usher.
For Prayerful Consideration

**Ill, Injured or Otherwise Struggling:** Sadat Abrihim, David Anaba, Sharon Baumann, Ellvera Boehm, Bobby & Betty Busselman, Alex Caballero, James Castillo, Pauline Davidson, Mitch Dorn, Roxanne Dorn, Shane Edens, Norma Foreman, Laquita Gibbens, Helen Grimm, Linda Henning, Jack Hockey, Michael Janysek, Raymond Jenkins, Alva Jonas, Steve Kelly, Evalina, Francis Kempe, Ella Manka, Khloe Martinez, Kenneth Matthews, Eric Montemayor, Charles Pierce, Leroy Polderick, Carly Rosenboon, Eddie Salas, Shanna Swierc, Travis Tessman, John Tackitt, Yvonne Watkins, Anyemarie, Mary Ruth Witte, Kyle Worthy, Cody Zaiontz, and Norma Zamzow

**For those in the military:** Nick Adams, Anthony Alvarez, Allen Bowles, Justin Chandler, Justin Elkins, Rodney Foreman, Jamaica Goodhue, Jacob Jones, Felipe Leal, Jr., Garrett Peterson, Jon Wayne Schulz, James Skinner, Chris Sustaita, Kassie Thompson, John Vasquez, and Delmiro Villanueva

**Anniversary and Birthdays:**
Marvin & Mary Ruth Witte (Sept. 3), Jordan Buehring, Sam Kerlick (Sept. 5), Jaycee Polasek (Sept. 7)

**Contribution Corner:**

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**Coming Events**

Let’s join together and PARTICIPATE!

The Women of the Church will be purchasing and putting together school kits for Lutheran World Relief. Anyone who would like to donate to this cause can do so at any time. We will be accepting monetary donations to help pay for the school kits. Place your donation in a marked envelope that says Women’s Group. Thank you!

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday will be Sunday, September 9, 2018. This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God’s grace.

You work every day to make your community a better place. Let us continue doing this work together in 2018!
**Women’s Bible Study Group: “Seamless” by Angie Smith.** Wednesday evenings at 6:00 In seven sessions, *Seamless* covers the people, places and promises of the Bible, tying them together into the greater story of Scripture. Each week of study features key information that ties all of scripture together into the seamless truth of the gospel message and is accompanied by maps, general Bible facts, and word studies. For more information, contact Rita Jordan. A sign up sheet is located in the Fellowship Hall.

**Rita Jordan has 20 tickets to the MercyMe Concert** to be held at Freeman Coliseum in San Antonio on October 14, 2018, 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $35.00 each. See Rita if interested in tickets. This would be a great opportunity, especially for our youth, to attend a contemporary Christian concert! Tell them to invite friends!
Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

At the end of this week I will finish my third term as the Bishop of the Southwestern Texas Synod. As I pondered a Scripture passage that might encapsulate my feelings, I settled on Ephesians 3:20-21: “Now to God, who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

It has been an honor to serve these eighteen years. It has been filled with blessings and heartaches, joys and sorrows. I have been blessed to experience the width and depth of this church, visiting all the ministries in our synod, as well as the churchwide office on many occasions, all eight seminaries, other synods, our Companion Synod – The Lutheran Church in Costa Rica, and Lutheran partners around the world. The good far outweighs any difficult times.

I thank my wife, Debbie, and our children, Daniel and Rebecca, who were 15 and 11 when I was first elected, for their continued support and patience with my busy schedule and being away from home so often. Also, Debbie and I thank you for your generous gifts to the Tiemann Endowment for Leadership Development. The synod’s leaders will be truly blessed with over $60,000 in that fund already, and we pray that this will be a continual blessing to all types of leaders in our synod.

I especially thank our pastors and deacons, lay leaders and youth ministers, Deans and Synod Council, synod officers and synod staff, Lutheran social ministry organizations and agencies, colleagues in the ELCA Conference of Bishops and churchwide offices, and ecumenical and interfaith partners. We have worked together to “accomplish abundantly far more (together) than all we can ask or imagine.”

I plan to “take a deep breath” until the end of the year with just some supply preaching, home projects, and relaxation, but when you see me in the future, call me “Pastor.” The title of “Bishop” now belongs to Pr. Sue Briner, and I will remember her as my Bishop in my daily prayers. She has many gifts that will serve this synod well, and I ask you to support her in that important calling as you supported me.

God’s peace,

Bp+ Ray Tiemann