St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
“God’s Work. Our Hands.” Sunday
Rally Sunday
September 9, 2018

Rev. Arden Dorn, Transitional Minister
Mike Tessman, Assistant Minister
Randy Witte, Lay Reader

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Gathering

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

James tells us to stop showing favoritism in the assembly, treating the rich visitor with more honor than the poor one. Jesus himself seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophoenician woman in today’s gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don’t deserve the goods meant for God’s children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings her or his need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING HYMN

(ELW p. 731)  Earth and All Stars

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!

HYMN (ELW p. 595) Jesus Loves Me!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.

The assembly is seated
**Word**

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

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:4-7a**

These verses are a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon. Chapter 34 portrays God’s vengeance on Edom, Israel’s age-old enemy, which makes the path from Babylon to Zion safe for the exiles’ return. The desert itself will flow with water to give drink to the returning exiles.

4Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

5Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

7a the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.

Word of God, word of life.

*Thanks be to God.*

**RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 146**

R: *I will praise the Lord as long as I live.*

1Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2*I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

3Put not your trust in rulers, in mortals in whom there is no help.

When they breathe their last, they return to earth, and in that day their thoughts perish. R

4Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God;

5who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;

who keeps promises forever;

7who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.

The Lord sets the captive free.

8*The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.* R

9The Lord cares for the stranger; the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

10*The Lord shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!* R

Faithful Christians do not show partiality to the rich and powerful of the world, especially at the expense of the poor and weak. Likewise, faith does not pay mere lip-service to God’s will. Instead, a living Christian faith expresses itself in acts of compassion and mercy for those in need.

1My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? 2For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, 3and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Have a seat here, please,” while to the one who is poor you say, “Stand there,” or, “Sit at my feet,” 4have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? 6But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? 7Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

8You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 9But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. 11For the one who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

14What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? 15If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, 16and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? 17So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al-le-lu-ia! Lord and Saviour: open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Al-le-lu-ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.
THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO: Mark 7:24-37

Glory to You, O Lord!

In Mark’s gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus’ ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophoenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.

24 Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. 25 Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 26 He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” 27 But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” 28 Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” 29 So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

30 Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 31 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 32 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 33 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” 34 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 35 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 36 They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ!

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY (ELW p. 726) Light Dawns on a Weary World

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.
PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The assembly shall kneel as they are able.

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, you call your church to proclaim the love of Christ to a needy world. Embolden us to be your risen body by welcoming strangers and serving our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Creative God, Protect your creation and teach us to cherish it. We praise you for the rain that has fallen during the past week, for the crops that have been harvested, and the livestock, wildlife and pets that inhabit our community. Thank you for the ways they sustain us and for our place among them to tend and watch over what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Sovereign God, you draw order from chaos. Watch over the nations of the world. Bless citizens and leaders who strive toward the beloved community for which you long. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

O God of wisdom, in your goodness you provide faithful teachers for your church. By your Holy Spirit give all teachers insight into your holy word, lives that are examples to us all, and the courage to know and do the truth. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, you give us all that we need. When your children suffer from hunger, poverty, loneliness, persecution, injury, or illness, send generous helpers and companions. We pray especially for Sadat, David, Sharon, Ellivera, Bobby & Betty, Alex, James, Pauline, Mitch, Roxanne, Shane, Norma, Laquita, Helen, Linda, Jack, Andy, Michael, Raymond, Alva, Steve, Evalina, Francis, Ella, Khloe, Kenneth, Eric, Moma, The Ndeh Family, Charles, Leroy, Carly, Shanna, Travis, John, Yvonne, Anyemarie, Mary Ruth, Kyle, Cody, and Norma, as well as those that we name out loud or in our hearts... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Welcoming God, you set a table for us. Embolden this congregation to seek new ways of inviting others to the feast of all creation. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

You bless us with throngs of saints who witness to your compassion. With gratitude, we recall the lives and deeds of those who proclaim lovingkindness to a needy world. We ask that you comfort all that mourn, especially the family of Lucille Seiler. 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.
God of life, you give us these gifts of the earth, these resources of our life and our labor. Take them, offered in great thanksgiving, and use them to set a table that will heal the whole creation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Light. Amen.

Lasst uns beten.

GREAT THANKSGIVING
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.
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:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.
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

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.

O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

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

May God who has created you in rich community, to love, to learn, to share and to serve, be with you as you go out. May God who meets you, in grace, in challenge, in beauty and in patience, greet you outside these walls. And may God who walks with you, in water and wine, in friend and stranger, watch over you and bring you joy. Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless and guide you today and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN  (ELW p. 538)  The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Sound the good news.

Thanks be to God.

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

For Prayerful Consideration


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

Our sympathy to the family of Lucille Seiler. Lucille passed away September 2.

Helen Grimm will be having surgery tomorrow, September 10 in Sequin; and Alva Jonas will be having surgery on Tuesday, September 11 at Methodist on Sonterra in San Antonio!

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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.

Today at St. Paul’s

Love God. Love People. No Limits.

Expanding God’s Work Our Hands from a Day of Service to a Life of Faith

God’s Work Our Hands is an opportunity “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.” As the ELCA website says, the intent is to reinforce the reality that “You work every day to make your community a better place.” Without careful reflection and equipping, we can leave the impression that our call to participate in God’s work is fulfilled on this one day of service each year, and then we return to our workaday world where God is largely absent.

Rally Day

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!

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.

The pastor’s of our conference will be meeting at St. Paul’s on Tuesday, September 18 at 9:30AM. We need men and women to prepare a light breakfast for them. Talk to Pastor Dorn if you are available.

St. Paul’s will be hosting 5th Quarter on Friday, September 28. This is an event for the high school children after the football game. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please mark your check or envelope with 5th Quarter Donation, and place it in the offering plate. Volunteers are needed the night of September 28. We also need donations of cookies, brownies, and rice crispies. Thank you for your continuing support! For more information please contact Barbara or a Council Member.
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!