



THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 27, 2026



Pre-service Music

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship: He Healed the Darkness of My Mind

Original text: Fred Pratt Green, Text Revisions: John Perovich, Tune: W. Walker Smith

Performed by Saint Johns' Adult Choir

Confession and Absolution

Invocation

- L** In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Confession and Absolution

- L** The Lord loves, cares for, and protects us. He commands his angels concerning us, to guard us in all our ways. Therefore, let us go to our God and confess our sins knowing that,
- C** **our God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

- C** **Gracious and merciful God, we confess that while we have been made new creations through the waters of our baptism, we still live ensnared by sin, and are unable to free ourselves. We have not always lived our lives in accordance with the identity that you have given us in Jesus. We have not always done the things that you have called us to do. We have not always loved you above all else and with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. We have not always loved our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us all our sins. Renew our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that our lives would show the identity you have given us in baptism, and the new creations that you have made us to be. Amen.**
- L** Bless the Lord! With all that is within us, let us bless His holy name. In mercy, Almighty God has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. Because of Jesus, all of your sins have been forgiven and removed from you as far as the East is from the West. Go in peace. Your sins are forgiven.
- C** Amen.

Peace of the Lord

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C** And also with you.

Service of the Word

Gathering Hymn

LSB 662 Onward, Christian Soldiers

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.
Christ, the royal master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle
See His banners go! Refrain

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.

Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod.
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity. Refrain

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
Constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail. Refrain

Onward, then, ye faithful,
Join our happy throng,
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph song:
Glory, laud, and honor
Unto Christ, the king;
This through countless ages
Men and angels sing. Refrain

Text: Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, alt.
Text: Public domain

Salutation and Collect of the Day

L The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

L Let us pray.

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Children's Message

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32

A The Old Testament reading is from the eighteenth chapter of the book of Ezekiel.

¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die. ²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Psalm 25:1-10

L To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

C **O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.**

L Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

C **Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.**

L Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

C **Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

L Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

C **Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

L He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

C **All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.**

L Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

C **as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Epistle

Philippians 2:1–4, 14–18

A The Epistle reading is from the second chapter of the book of Philippians.

¹ If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmuring and arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. ¹⁶ It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you— ¹⁸ and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

L He will command his angels concerning you

C to guard you in all your ways.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul,

C and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

Gospel Acclamation

C Halle, halle, halle_lujah!
Halle, halle, halle_lujah!
Halle, halle, halle_lujah!
Hallelujah! Halle_lujah!

Text: arr. Mark Sedio

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Verse

L Alleluia. All authority in heaven

C And on earth has been given to me. Alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 21:23–27

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day

LSB 655 Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing Your praise eternally.

O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.
Text: Public domain

Apostles' Creed

- L** We make confession of our faith together in the words of the creed.
- C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

- L** Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
- L** Loving and Gracious God, you have gathered us together to be your people in this world. You give us your Holy Spirit, your word, and the sacraments. Work through Your means of grace to transform our lives, so that they would always show your love and forgiveness and grace. Lord, in Your mercy,
C **hear our prayer.**
- L** Merciful Lord, You founded Your Church upon the proclamation of the good news of the forgiveness of sins. Bless the proclamation of this message by Your servants, that those who hear this good news may change the way they think and act, turn to You and have their sins washed away. Lord, in Your mercy,
C **hear our prayer.**
- L** Merciful Lord, encourage us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may not lose heart. Make us to be of one mind and will, that we may serve You with gladness, doing the works of Your kingdom here and throughout the world. Increase our joy and zeal for living as your disciples who join you in your work in this world. Lord, in Your mercy,
C **hear our prayer.**

- L** Merciful Lord, sustain all fathers, mothers and children; husbands and wives; friends and neighbors; laborers and employers; and teachers and students. Enable us all to serve our neighbors in godly vocations, delighting in the Lord's lovingkindness. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- L** Merciful Lord, all the might of humanity is nothing before You, yet You have appointed earthly realms and leaders to punish evil and honor good. Give us faithful leaders who will serve honorably and well. Bless also those who serve in the armed forces to defend us and protect our liberty. Bless all firefighters, police officers, first responders, EMTs and emergency room workers in their work to keep us safe. Allow justice, mercy, peace, and compassion to grow and increase in us, among us, and through us. And heal our world from the evils of injustice, prejudice, inequality, and hatred. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- L** Merciful Lord, grant the encouragement of Christ and the comfort of His love to those who suffer *[especially to those we love who need your healing and care that we name before you now, out loud or in our hearts_____]*. In every affliction, prove Yourself a ready and worthy Savior, especially to those who believe. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** **hear our prayer.**
- L** All these things and everything else for which we should ask, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

Offering

- C** **Offer, offer, offering, we give our gifts to say,**
"Thank you Lord for loving us and blessing us each day."
Time to share our gifts and say,
"Thank you Lord for each new day."

Offertory Prayer

- L** Lord of the harvest, You came into this world not to be served but in order to serve. You love, care for, and serve us in many and various way. For that, we give You our thanks and praise. You invite us to join You in the work that You are doing in our neighborhoods and around our world. Accept the offerings that we give in the various ways that we give them throughout the week, as part of our work of joining You in Your work. Increase and grow our trust in You through the giving of our offerings. Be glorified in the giving of them as we give them in thanksgiving and with gratitude for all Your blessings and gifts to us. Use them to further the work that You are doing in this place and all around our world. In Jesus' name we pray,
- C** **Amen.**

Offertory

- C** **What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?**
I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

The Lord's Prayer

- L** God, remember us in your love and teach us to pray:
- C** **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.**

Pax Domini

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

Benedicamus

- L** The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.
- L** Bless we the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.
- L** As we depart from this place, we celebrate the ways God has blessed us in this service.
We have received forgiveness of all our sins and remembered the identity given to us in our baptism.
C Our God has equipped us for life lived in His kingdom.
- L** We have heard the good news of the gospel and the word of God read and proclaimed.
C Our God has encouraged us in discipleship and following Jesus.
- L** We have received the gifts of love and mercy.
C As our God has served us, so we go from this place to be engaged in service to God, to one another and to our neighbors.
- L** As we depart from this place, we go as people who have been equipped for life, encouraged in discipleship, and who engage in service.
C We go as people who have been invited by God to join God in the work that He is doing in this place.
- L** As you go, receive the blessing of our God: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.
C Amen.

Sending Hymn

LSB 917 Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise

Savior, again to Thy dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
Once more we bless Thee ere our worship cease,
Then, lowly bending, wait Thy word of peace.

Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way;
With Thee began, with Thee shall end, the day.
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
That in this house have called upon Thy name.

Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the coming night;
Turn Thou for us its darkness into light.
From harm and danger keep Thy children free;
For dark and light are both alike to Thee.

Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

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St. John's Lutheran Church + 113 Lotus Street + 302-734-7078 + sjldover.com St. Johns is a congregation in the Southeastern District of the LCMS