



**The Evangelical Lutheran Church
of the Holy Trinity**

Cocoa and Granada Avenues
Hershey, Pennsylvania 17033
(717) 533-2467

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, September 13, 2026**

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

GATHERING

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

Let us prepare for Worship.

GATHERING PRELUDE:

Azmon (Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death) Paul Manz
Bless The Lord, My Soul/Psalm 103 (Sanctuary Choir) Jacques Berthier

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The congregation stands.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

✠ All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

All: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

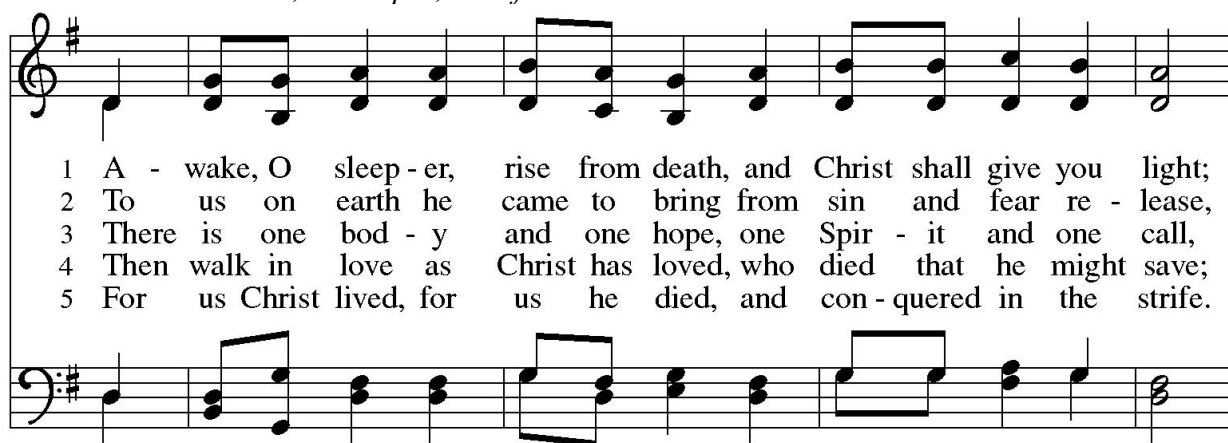
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

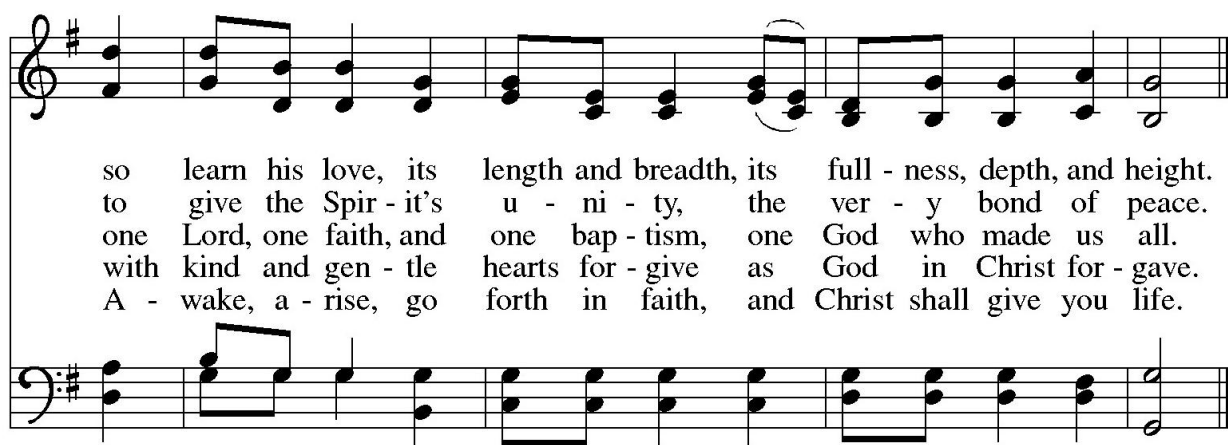
All: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

All: Amen.



1 A - wake, O sleep - er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
 2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
 3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
 4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
 5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.



so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.
 to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.
 one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.
 with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.
 A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895–1984
 Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829
 Text © 1980 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

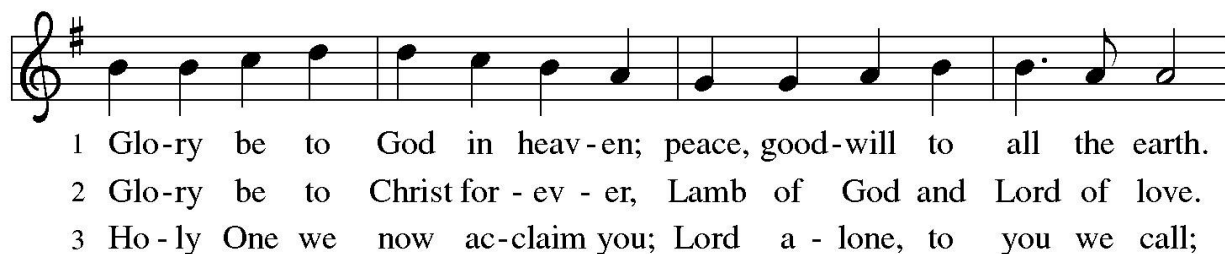
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GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you.

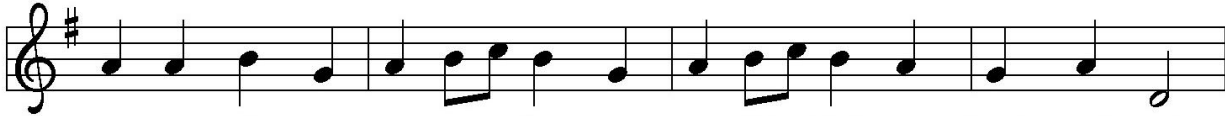
HYMN OF PRAISE: *Glory be to God*



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
 2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
 3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: 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.

All: Amen.

The congregation sits.

WORD

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

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.

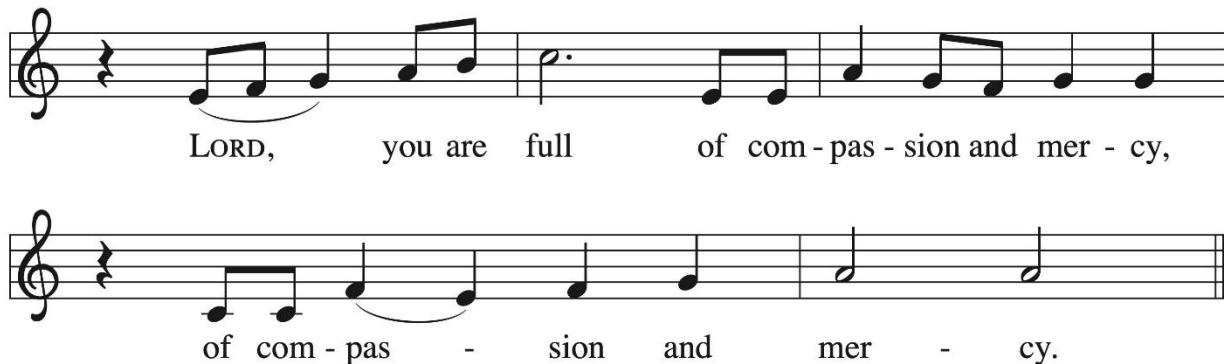
¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive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

L: Word of God, word of life.

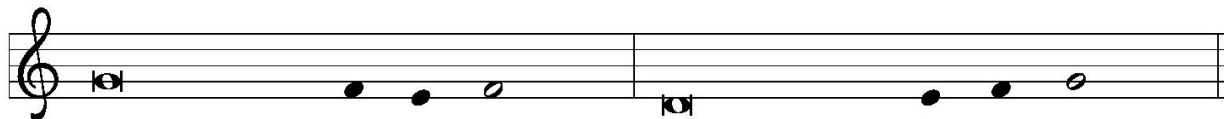
All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 103: 1-13 (*Congregation sings the refrain and **bold** verses*)

Refrain:



Verse:



- ¹ Bless the LORD, | O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's | holy name.
- ² **Bless the LORD, | O my soul,**
and forget not | all God's benefits—
- ³ who forgives | all your sins
and heals all | your diseases;
- ⁴ **who redeems your life | from the grave**
and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy; R
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires | with good things
so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle's.
- ⁶ **O LORD, you provide | vindication**
and justice for all who | are oppressed.
- ⁷ You made known your | ways to Moses
and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.
- ⁸ **LORD, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,**
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love; R
- ⁹ you will not al- | ways accuse us,
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.
- ¹⁰ **You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,**
nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.
- ¹² **As far as the east is | from the west,**
so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion | for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O LORD. **R**

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.

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those 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. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves 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.

⁵ Some 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. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If 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. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why 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. ¹¹ For it is written,

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

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

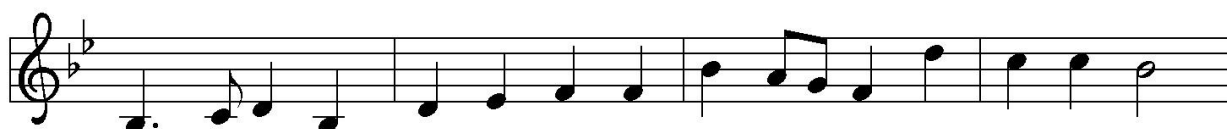
L: Word of God, word of life.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

The congregation stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Alleluia

Refrain:



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.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 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.

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But 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.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

The congregation sits.

SERMON

Silence is kept for reflection.

The congregation stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive* **ELW 605**



1 “For - give our sins as we for - give,” you taught us, Lord, to pray;
2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart;
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
how tri - fling oth - ers' debts to us; how great our debt to you!
then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

Text: Rosamond E. Herklots, 1905–1987, alt.
Music: DETROIT, *The Sacred Harp*, Philadelphia, 1844
Text © Oxford University Press 1969.

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.**

The congregation sits.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: Hear us O God,
All: Your mercy is great.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The presiding minister and the congregation greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.
All: And also with you.

Thank you for your generous support of our ministry at Holy Trinity. Offering can be placed in the Offering Plates at the entrance to worship or in the narthex. Or scan the QR Code.



OFFERTORY HYMN: *Strengthen for Service, Lord* ELW 497
(Join in singing from the red ELW hymnal in the pew.)

The congregation stands.

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

A: Let us pray... God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.

All: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P: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



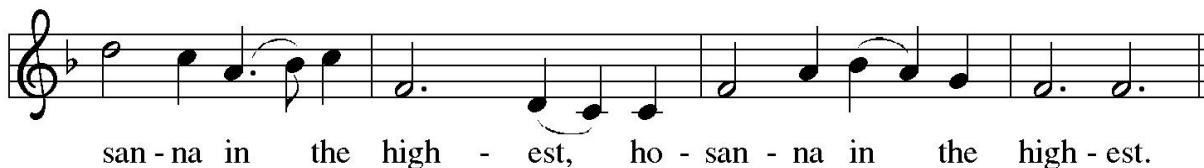
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign...
For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.

All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And
believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great
and promised feast.

All: **Amen. Come, Lord, Jesus.**

P: Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we who share in Christ's body and blood may live to
the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

All: **Amen. Come Holy Spirit.**

P: Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with
the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all. Through
him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty
Father, now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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

P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

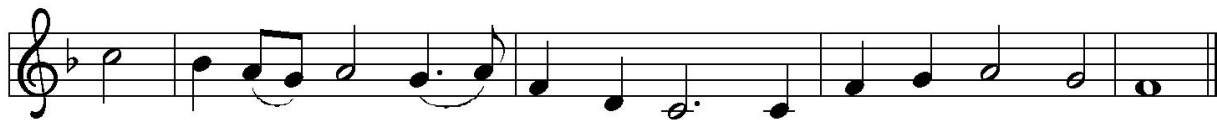
All: **Thanks be to God.**

The congregation sits.

LAMB OF GOD



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

COMMUNION MUSIC: *I Come with Joy* **ELW 482**
(Join in singing from the red ELW hymnal in the pew.)

The congregation stands.

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A: Let us pray . . . Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

All: Amen.

SENDING

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

BLESSING

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

All: Amen.

P: The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

All: Amen.

P: The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

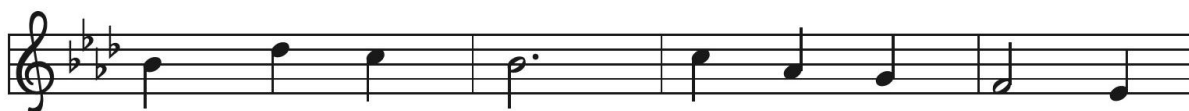
All: Amen



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
 2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
 3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
 4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
 fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
 prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
 seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
 walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
 pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
 Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
 run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
 claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
 gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
 Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
 Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
 Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson, 1922–1987

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Music © 1968 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress

BLESSING OF THE SCHOOL KITS AND BACKPACKS

P: Gracious God, in love, we prepared these school kits; bless them... as you love and lead them, all this we pray in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

DISMISSAL

A: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Faith Begins by Letting Go* Timothy Albrecht

IN THE CHURCH TODAY

The bulletin is given in memory of Meg and Erik Lunde, parents of Beth Dunham, by Derek and Beth Dunhman. The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in celebration of God's Work, Our Hands Sunday.

SERVING TODAY

Presiding Minister: Rev. Susan E. Scott
Director of Music Ministries/Organist: Alan Hair
Assisting Minister: Ruth Gardner
Reader: Sarah Hancock
Altar Guild: Lisa Buettner
Communion Set-up: Mary Ann Kelly
Communion Assistants: Rodney Gross and Mark Mariano
Communion Presenters: Rodney Gross and Mark Mariano
Livestream Team: Kirk Sponaugle, Jordan Paul, and Adam Gardner

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH TODAY

Prayer Concerns: Joe Brittain (friend of the Dunham's), Sharon Ellis (friend of the Dunham's), Linda Goldhart (relative of the Bishops), Christine Hall, Ben Housman, Andrea Hospodar, Ann Jonell (friend of the Dunham's), Matthew Kulbacki, Brian Lutz, Carol Miller, Jessica Noeske (Derek Dunham's cousin), Geri Phillips (Sister-in-Law of Sherry Welty), Chris Ruff, Edward Sellard, Josh Snyder (nephew of Linda Lubold), Kathy Spitler (cousin of Marilyn Layman), Vicki Sponaugle, Carolyn Underkoffler (Vicki Sponaugle's Aunt).

DAILY PRAYERS

Michael Fox, Virginia Frank, Dean Huebner, Sharon Murray, Bob Warden (friend of Mary Ann Kelly), Vwawa Congregation of the Konde Diocese in Tanzania and all our **Homebound members:** Shirley Espenshade, Bill Fosnacht, Herb Huebner, Evadne Kopp, John and Ruth Knol, Carol Longenecker, Dennis Lubold, Chip Murray, Toookie (Delores) Peterson, Joyce Schroeder, Kay Smith, Susanne Wiest and Nila Wiley.

Members of Armed Forces and their families: Evan Briggs, Marshal Fox, Michael Kristian, Riley Litman, and Tory Young.

We invite you to pray for all on our prayer list. Please contact the office by email at htluth@comcast.net or leave a message on the office phone (717-533-2467) if you have any changes to the prayer list.