

THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
SEPTEMBER 19, 2021  
ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA



PRELUDE

*Father Welcomes*  
Amanda Husberg

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #605

*Father Welcomes*

***Refrain***

Father welcomes all His children  
To His fam'ly through His Son.  
Father giving His salvation,  
Life forever has been won.

- 1 Little children, come to Me,  
For My kingdom is of these.  
Life and love I have to give,  
Mercy for your sin. *Refrain*
- 2 In the water, in the Word,  
In His promise, be assured:  
Those who are baptized and believe  
Shall be born again. *Refrain*
- 3 Let us daily die to sin;  
Let us daily rise with Him,  
Walk in the love of Christ our Lord,  
Live in the peace of God. *Refrain*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;  
**In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.**

My mouth is filled with your praise,  
**And with Your glory all the day.**

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
**And renew a right spirit within me.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation, Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

*(We observe a moment of silence for self-reflection.)*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. In Your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by Your Spirit so that we may live and serve You in newness of life, to the honor and glory of Your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

**Amen.**

*KYRIE*

see p. 168 for music

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE*

p. 171

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**Power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and blessing and glory are His.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.**

**Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:**

**Blessing and honor and glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God, for the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign.**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. O God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness,

**grant us humility and childlike faith that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Jeremiah 11:18-20

The LORD made it known to me and I knew;  
then you showed me their deeds.  
But I was like a gentle lamb  
led to the slaughter.  
I did not know it was against me  
they devised schemes, saying,  
“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,  
let us cut him off from the land of the living,  
that his name be remembered no more.”  
But, O LORD of hosts, who judges righteously,  
who tests the heart and the mind,  
let me see your vengeance upon them,  
for to you have I committed my cause.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 54 (Read responsively)

O God, save me, by your name,  
and vindicate me by your might.

**O God, hear my prayer;  
give ear to the words of my mouth.**

For strangers have risen against me;  
ruthless men seek my life;  
they do not set God before themselves.

**Behold, God is my helper;  
the Lord is the upholder of my life.**

He will return the evil to my enemies;  
in your faithfulness put an end to them.

**With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;  
I will give thanks to your name, O LORD, for it is good.**

For he has delivered me from every trouble,  
and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND LESSON

James 3:13-4:10

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where

jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)*

p. 173

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

*GOSPEL*

Mark 9:30-37

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter  
**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[The disciples] went on from there and passed through Galilee. And [Jesus] did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

*SERMON*

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

Because the school year has just started, I'd like to begin the sermon today by pointing out how today's Gospel reading reminds us of one of the most important things for students to do in school... ask questions. As we know, students oftentimes don't like to do this. They think they might look foolish. They don't want to be embarrassed. But everyone has questions from time to time. It's natural. School is for learning, and questions

need to be asked. Later today I will hold the first confirmation class of the year. As usual, parents have already told me “my child has lots of questions.” But of course! I hope the questions will get asked. I look forward to addressing them.

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus has pulled away from the crowds and is speaking just to his closest disciples. His message is for them alone. He tells them that he is going to be delivered into the hands of men and be killed, and that he would rise again on the third day.

We today know how important this message is. And we know that what Jesus predicted here came true. But at the time, those first disciples didn’t understand the message. And, as we read, they were too afraid to ask about it.

Why would those disciples be afraid? Well, perhaps they remembered the last time Jesus shared this message. It wasn’t that long ago – just before the Transfiguration and the casting out of the unclean spirit we read about last Sunday. At that time, Peter had immediately rebuked Jesus, saying: “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” Jesus, however, then rebuked Peter in return, telling him in the strongest possible terms – with the words “get behind me Satan” – that he should not stand against what Jesus had said.

Certainly, the disciples remembered this. And it probably gave them pause before speaking again. Still, Jesus had often answered their questions before. And Peter had obviously spoken without really thinking things through. So why couldn’t the disciples just ask?

The bigger barrier seems to be the disciples’ lack of understanding. They seem truly perplexed.

And about this, our first reaction is to wonder why. Jesus’ words seem plain enough. They’re pretty straightforward. How could the disciples not understand?

The usual answer to this is that Jesus’ message was so foreign to their thinking, and so emotionally challenging, that they just couldn’t bring themselves to go where Jesus was leading. They couldn’t envision these things. And they didn’t want to.

Coupled with this is the thought that their confusion then points toward the difficulty we all have in believing the message. We don’t like to think that good folks get killed when they’re innocent. And we have a really tough time believing that someone could rise from the dead.

This explanation for the disciple’s confusion is completely possible, of course. And probably true. But I’ve always wondered if there wasn’t something else going on as well. And so have others. Specifically, we wonder whether the disciples were tripped up by Jesus’ use of the term “Son of Man.” Jesus was certainly using the term here to speak about himself, but the disciples may not have been clear about this yet. The term had a long history in both Old Testament and Intertestamental use and it brought many thoughts to mind. That’s one of the reasons Jesus used it – to say multiple things about himself. And its cryptic nature allowed him to “fly under the radar” a bit. But it could also lead to confusion. Perhaps the disciples were holding out hope that the “Son of Man” was actually someone else. Or that it simply referred to people in general.

The disciples were probably over-thinking. At any rate, they should have asked Jesus their questions. Instead, they started talking about something else – something that was easier to grasp, and more focused on themselves too. They started to talk about who among them was the greatest.

As we know, this is a topic that people tend to talk about frequently. Think of all those rankings we've seen of restaurants, sports teams, presidents, etc. People love to weigh in on this kind of thing.

What's more, the disciples had just experienced a time when three of them had seen the Transfiguration, while the rest couldn't cast out an unclean spirit. Might this suggest some kind of hierarchy or pecking order? And yet, the disciples also knew they shouldn't be talking about such things, for when Jesus approached them about it, they wouldn't own up to it.

Jesus then used the opportunity to teach. He said: "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." Then, to illustrate his point, he took a child and put him in the midst of them. The child, according to size, learning and social stature, was last in that group. But Jesus took the child into his arms – receiving him as an equal – and said: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

Jesus teaches here that the way to true greatness is to be humble and to serve others. It is also to see people as equals and not obsess over rank, title and authority like most people do. Jesus' disciples aren't to be concerned with who gets to go up the mountain and witness

extraordinary visions, or who has power to cast out demons. Rather his disciples are to welcome and serve all, especially those who, like a child, have no status whatsoever.

When Jesus calls us to receive people in his name, he means for us to show interest, care and to give of our time. Over the years I've seen many beautiful examples of this at church, as one person gives to another in a completely selfless way. Such acts inspire us all. And they will no doubt be rewarded by God.

One example that comes to mind is when the congregation tolerates a noisy child in worship. The child is learning, just as we all are. And some children need a little extra patience. We are called to give it. Our first hymn today reminded us that "Father welcomes all his children." So should we.

And let me say, too, that this inclusivity is not necessarily the same as the trendy version of it that so many in our world promote. The call of Christ is much more than the avoiding of things that might possibly offend or adopting the most progressive ideas. No, it is real inclusivity – receiving people, giving equal opportunity, recognizing challenges, treating people as equals under the law.

In our second reading today, James affirms the teaching of Jesus by coming at it from the opposite direction – mentioning two things we should avoid. He says: "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice."

James calls us to put away our jealousy of other's success. Some people will succeed more than others and that needs to be accepted. If we follow God's ways, he will grant us success in ways that he knows to be best.

James also calls us to put away selfish ambition. We can be ambitious, yes, but not in ways that leave others out. The Christian will want everyone to do well, while also maintaining the integrity of hard work and achievement.

Followers of Jesus are called to serve. And this serving will not be the kind that draws attention to itself but the kind that is done behind the scenes; the kind that is steady, constant and true. Serving is a difficult thing. It

means we will often be inconvenienced and perhaps even taken advantage of. But it doesn't mean we are to give up the principles God has taught.

Think of it this way. What if the child placed in our midst is annoying? We are of, course, to still receive the child. Some of that receiving will involve our suffering through the annoyance.

But what if the child was not just annoying, but also doing something wrong – like arguing that they were the greatest, for example. We are still to receive the child, but correction will be important too – just like Jesus corrected his disciples.

And what if the child was not only annoying and wrong but also persisted in their wrong, ignoring your correction and screaming: “you can't tell me what to do!” We are still to receive the child, but also continue in the path of correction, and add some consequences too.

That's what was happening in our first reading today. Jeremiah the prophet had been called to tell the people that God was not pleased with the way they were living and that there would be consequences. But the people ignored him and persisted in their sin. What's more, in their anger and arrogance the people also devised schemes to kill Jeremiah. The prophet then poured out his frustrations to God in the words of a lament (or complaint) regarding the difficulty of his task. He had questions for God, and he expressed these in his prayer. By the end of the prayer, however, we see that he re-committed himself to his task in faith, trusting that God would care for him.

True serving is difficult. It won't always be appreciated. But God sees. And God bestows his blessing.

If there is any doubt about this, we should hear again the words of Jesus. “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.”

Jesus knew that even though he would die, he would also rise from the dead. And we know this too. Jesus' resurrection is a sign that death is defeated. Now, all who put their faith in him can join him in his victory. We can be sure that because Jesus lives beyond the grave, we will too.

Jesus' resurrection is also a sign that what is good and right won't be overcome. God's servant path leads to life, not death; success, not failure. We may not always see it and it may not happen right away, but it will come about in due time.

In his lament, Jeremiah said that he felt like a “gentle lamb led to the slaughter.” When we take the servant path, there will be days we feel like this too. When those days come, let us remember the victory we have in Jesus, the gentle lamb of God, led to the slaughter to take away the sins of the world. Jesus made himself last of all, but he was raised in glory as the first fruits for all who believe. Because of this, we, too, will be sustained upon the servant path until we join him in the blessed life to come.

May God keep us in this faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- 1 Love in Christ is strong and living,  
Binding faithful hearts in one;  
Love in Christ is true and giving.  
May His will in us be done.
- 2 Love is patient and forbearing,  
Clothed in Christ's humility,  
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring,  
Reaching out in charity.
- 3 Love in Christ abides forever,  
Fainting not when ills attend;  
Love, forgiving and forgiven,  
Shall endure until life's end.

*APOSTLES' CREED*

**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**

*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH*

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

O Lord of hosts, You oppose the proud and give grace to the humble. Help us by Your Spirit to submit ourselves to You and to trust in your goodness and care. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of hosts, give to your church the wisdom that comes down from above, that it may be peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. Let it sow your word of peace among us, and grant to it a harvest of righteousness. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of hosts, pacify our passions by Your Spirit, that we may not be ruled by the jealousy and selfish ambition that give rise to disorder and vile practice, but instead live lives of generosity and self-control, reflecting your love and goodness. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of hosts, uphold this world in Your order. Preserve the preaching of Your Word against all enemies. Bless our homes, that parents and children may serve one another faithfully and grow in faith until life's end. Give health and wisdom to all who serve in public office and cause their authority to be exercised for the benefit of all people. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



Lord of hosts, look with kindness on the sick and those in any need [*especially \_\_\_\_\_*], granting them healing and strength as you know to be best. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of hosts, give us faith to draw near to Your altar this day in repentance, that we may receive Your Son with cleansed hands and purified hearts as He draws near to us in His body and blood. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord of hosts, grant that what we ask from You may not be squandered toward the passions which war against us but sought rightly in faith, that we may receive them and put them to service for You and our neighbors; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. **Amen.**



*THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION*

*PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION* (Stand)

p. 178

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 Him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

*SANCTUS*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r 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.**

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING*

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*THE 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.**

*THE WORDS OF OUR LORD*

*PAX DOMINI*

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

*AGNUS DEI*

**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

*DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)*

*The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all communicants. Masks should be kept on except for the moment of consuming the elements. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.*

*COMMUNION MUSIC*

*The Tree of Life (LSB 561)*

Matthew Machener

*NUNC DIMITTIS (Stand)*

p. 182

**Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace;**

**Your word has been fulfilled.**

**My own eyes have seen the salvation**

**which You have prepared in the sight of ev'ry people:**

**A light to reveal You to the nations**

**and the glory of Your people Israel.**

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

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

*POST-COMMUNION COLLECT*

*BENEDICTION*

*SENDING HYMN #851*

*Lord of Glory, You have Bought Us*

- 1 Lord of glory, You have bought us  
With Your lifeblood as the price,  
Never grudging for the lost ones  
That tremendous sacrifice;  
And with that have freely given  
Blessings countless as the sand  
To the\_unthankful and the evil  
With Your own unsparing hand.**

- 2 Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give You  
Gladly, freely of Your own.  
With the sunshine of Your goodness  
Melt our thankless hearts of stone  
Till our cold and selfish natures,  
Warmed by You, at length believe  
That more happy and more blessed  
'Tis to give than to receive.**
- 3 Wondrous honor You have given  
To our humblest charity  
In Your own mysterious sentence,  
"You have done it all to Me."  
Can it be, O gracious Master,  
That You deign for alms to sue,  
Saying by Your poor and needy,  
"Give as I have giv'n to you"?**
- 4 Lord of glory, You have bought us  
With Your lifeblood as the price,  
Never grudging for the lost ones  
That tremendous sacrifice.  
Give us faith to trust You boldly,  
Hope, to stay our souls on You;  
But, oh, best of all Your graces,  
With Your love our love renew.**

*ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)*

*DISMISSAL*

*POSTLUDE*

*Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us*  
Paul Manz

Those serving:

Sunday September 19, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Christine M. Bell

Comm. assist: Judy Koucky

Reader: Judy Koucky

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Jim Easterly

Comm. assist: Janice Sebring

Reader: Charles Fisher

#### Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2021 Concordia Publishing House.

Father Welcomes Text & Tune: © 1986 Kevin Mayhew Ltd. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005326

Love in Christ Is Strong and Living Text and tune: © 1979 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005326

Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us Text & Tune: Public domain