

**ANXIOUS BONDAGE  
VERSUS CONFIDENT TRUST**

*The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity*

Sunday, September 9, 2018

## WELCOME TO GOOD SHEPHERD!

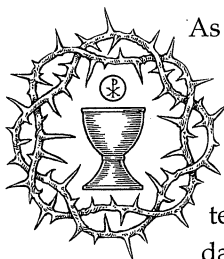
We are so happy you could join us today! If we can assist you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

For your convenience, **Listening Devices** are available for those who need assistance in hearing the service. Please speak with an usher if you need one. A **Large-Print Service Folder** is also available if you are in need of it. A **Nursery** is also available and is equipped with a speaker so that a minimal amount of the service is missed. The nursery is located in the hallway just off the entryway (first door on left).

## SERVICE NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY

*"You cannot serve God and money"* (Matt. 6:24–34), for they require two contrary forms of service. Worry is the worship given to the false god of mammon, an unbelieving anxiousness and focus on the things of this world. Faith is the worship of the true God, a confident trust that He is a loving Father who will care for all of our needs in both body and soul. The widow of Zarephath served God—that is, she believed the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah that the bin of flour would not be used up nor would the jar of oil run dry (1 Kings 17:8–16). He who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers will certainly provide for our daily needs. For He has already provided for our eternal needs, clothing us with Christ's righteousness in Baptism and feeding us His body and blood for our forgiveness. With such confidence we are liberated from worry and freed to do good with our material resources, especially to those who are of the household of faith (Gal. 5:25–6:10).

## HOLY COMMUNION IS OFFERED TODAY



As Christians who believe that the Bible is inspired by God and that every word written in it is God's holy Word, we believe that we receive the body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. While this is something that goes beyond our human understanding, our faith allows us to accept this as true. God warns us in the Bible that anyone who doesn't understand this teaching or who denies this real presence of Christ's body and blood will do damage to his or her soul if not properly taught first (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

As a congregation we care about people and about the spiritual well-being of individuals, especially those attending the Lord’s Table today. If you are a guest and desire to commune, please speak to the pastor before the service. Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are not under church discipline in another congregation, and are members of our congregation, one of our sister congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod [WELS], or a member of our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS].

**SERVING IN THE DIVINE SERVICE**

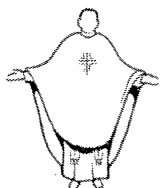
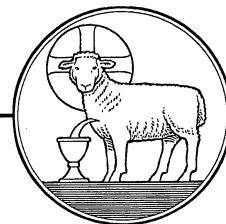
**Preaching & Presiding Minister**.....Pr. Nathanael P. Seelow  
**Keyboardist**.....Michelle Reinsch  
**Greeter**.....Mannie & Shauna Reinsch  
**Ushers** .....Tom Hansen & Logan Hansen

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# THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Common Service — Christian Worship, pg. 15



The **chasuble** is a poncho-shaped garment that is the principal vestment for the celebrant (the minister who speaks the Words of Institution in the service) of the Communion service. Like all vestments, its purpose is to cover the person of the minister and to give glory to Christ. It is adorned with the colors of the season of the Church Year.

## HYMN

If God Himself Be for Me | CW 419

## INVOCATION

Matthew 28:19

Please stand.

- [M]** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.



## CONFESSION OF SINS

- [M]** Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

- [M]** Our help is in the name of the LORD.

Psalm 124:8

- [C]** Who made heaven and earth.

- [M]** I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD.

Psalm 32:5

- [C]** And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

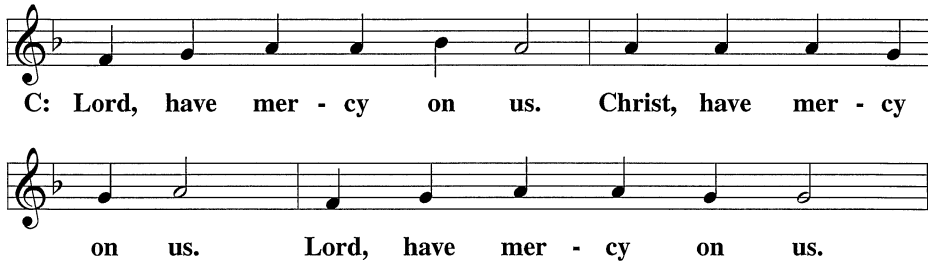
*Silence for meditation on God's Word and for self-examination as you consider your thoughts, words, and actions according to the Ten Commandments.*

- [M]** We confess: **[C]** Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

## LORD, HAVE MERCY — Kyrie

Matthew 20:30; Mark 10:47; Psalm 6:2

Having entered God's presence, the Kyrie (Latin for "Lord") serves as our earnest plea for his grace and peace. Notice how this tune and the tune of the Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God" p. 16) are very similar. Martin Luther composed this setting of the Kyrie based on the melody of the Agnus Dei to foreshadow the climax of the Divine Service in the Holy Supper.



## ABSOLUTION

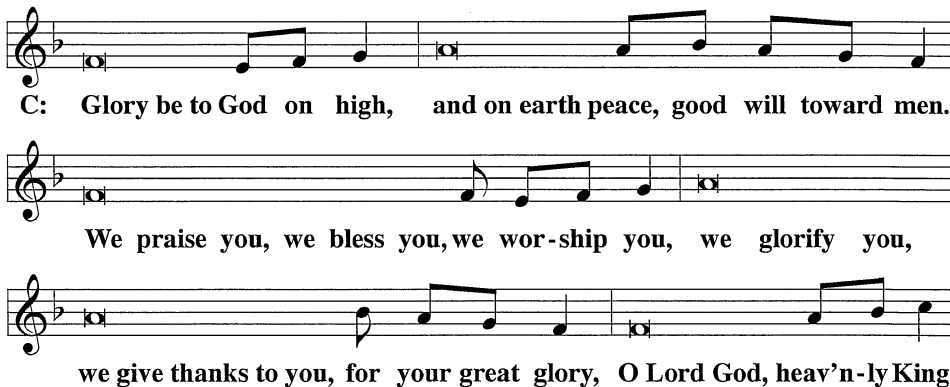
- [M]** God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.



## GLORY BE TO GOD — Gloria in Excelsis

Luke 2:14; John 1:29

- [M]** In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord!



Together with the Opening Hymn and Kyrie, a Hymn of Praise concludes the first part of the Divine Service with a song of joy and praise to God for all the things he has done for us through Jesus Christ. The traditional Hymn of Praise, the "Gloria in Excelsis" (which means "Glory in the highest"), finds its

New Testament roots  
in the Christmas  
song which the  
angels sang to the  
shepherds at the  
birth of Jesus Christ.

God the Fa-ther al - mighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the

sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the

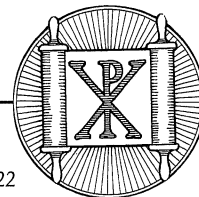
sin of the world; re - ceive our prayer. You sit at the right hand of

God the Father; have mercy on us. For you on - ly are holy;

you on - ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Spirit,

are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## The Service of the Word



### SALUTATION

Ruth 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:22

**[M]** The Lord be with you.

C: And al - so with you.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**[M]** Let us pray.

O Lord, we implore You, let Your continual pity cleanse and defend Your Church; and because she cannot continue in safety without Your aid, preserve her evermore by Your help and goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



*Be seated.*

*The Collect (also called the "Prayer of the Day") is a concise prayer which "collects" the thoughts of the day and presents them to God in his mercy. Most of these prayers have been in use in the Church for more than 1,500 years. By praying these prayers, we join with the great body of believers, the communion of saints, and with the generations yet to come.*

## FIRST LESSON

1 Kings 17:8-16

**T**HEN THE WORD OF THE LORD came to him: <sup>9</sup> "Get up! Go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there. I have commanded a woman there, a widow, to provide for you."

<sup>10</sup> So he got up and went to Zarephath. He came to the city gate, and there he saw a widow gathering sticks. He called to her and said, "Please give me a little water in a jar, so that I can have something to drink."

<sup>11</sup> When she went to get it, he called to her, "Please bring me a piece of bread."

<sup>12</sup> She said, "As surely as the LORD your God lives, I have no food except a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a pitcher. See, I am gathering a couple of sticks so that I can go and prepare it for myself and my son, so that we can eat it and then die."

<sup>13</sup> Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go and do just as you said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from the flour and bring it out to me. Then go and make another for you and your son. <sup>14</sup> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says. The jar of flour will not run out and the pitcher of oil will not become empty until the day the LORD sends rain to water the surface of the ground."

<sup>15</sup> So she went and did exactly as Elijah said. He and she, as well as

*Faith is the worship of the true God, a confident trust that He is a loving Father who will care for all of our needs in both body and soul. The widow of Zarephath served God—that is, she believed the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah that the bin of flour would not be used up nor would the jar of oil run dry.*

her household, were able to eat for many days. <sup>16</sup> The jar of flour did not run out, and the pitcher of oil did not become empty, just as the LORD had said through Elijah.

**M** The Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God!

## PSALM OF THE DAY

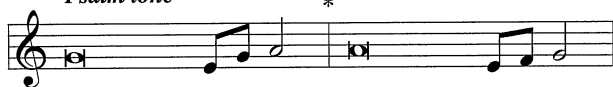
*Psalm 146* | CW p. 120

### *Refrain*



I will praise your name for - ev - er, my King and my God.

### *Psalm tone*



### *Refrain*

Praise the LORD, | O my soul.

I will sing praise to my God as long | as I live.

Do not put your trust in | princes,  
in mortal men, who | cannot save.

Blessed is he whose hope is in the | LORD his God,  
the maker of hea- | ven and earth.

### *Refrain*

The LORD gives food to the | hungry,  
the LORD sets | prisoners free.

The LORD gives sight | to the blind,  
the LORD lifts up those who are | bowed down.

The LORD watches over the | outcast  
and sustains the fatherless and the | widow.



The LORD remains faithful for- | ever.  
He upholds the cause of | the oppressed.

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

*Refrain*

## SECOND LESSON

*Galatians 5:25–6:10*

**I**F WE LIVE BY THE SPIRIT, let us also walk in step with it. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another and envying one another.

<sup>6:1</sup> Brothers, if a person is caught in some trespass, you who are spiritual should restore such a person in a spirit of humility, carefully watching yourself so that you are not also tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> For if someone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> Let each person test his own work, and then he will take pride in regard to himself and not his neighbor. <sup>5</sup> For each man will bear his own burden.

<sup>6</sup> Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with his teacher.

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. To be sure, whatever a man sows, he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, the one who sows for his own sinful flesh will reap destruction from the sinful flesh. But the one who sows for the spirit will reap eternal life from the spirit. <sup>9</sup> Let us not become weary of doing good, because at the appointed time we will reap, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup> So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who belong to the household of faith.

*Christ has already provided for our eternal needs, clothing us with His righteousness in Baptism and feeding us His body and blood for our forgiveness. With such confidence we are liberated from worry and freed to do good with our material resources, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

**M** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God!

## VERSE OF THE DAY

*Psalm 95:1*

*Please stand.*

- [M]** Alleluia! Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Alleluia!



## HOLY GOSPEL

*Matthew 6:24-34*

- [M]** The Holy Gospel, from the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter six.



*"You cannot serve God and mammon," for they require two contrary forms of service. Worry is the worship given to the false god of mammon, an unbelieving anxiousness and focus on the things of this world. Faith is the worship of the true God, a confident trust that He is a loving Father who will care for all of our needs in both body and soul. He who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers will certainly provide for our daily needs.*

**N**O ONE CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon.

<sup>25</sup> "For this reason I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

<sup>27</sup> "Which of you can add a single moment to his lifespan by worrying? <sup>28</sup> Why do you worry about clothing? Consider how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin, <sup>29</sup> but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not clothe you even more, you of little faith?

<sup>31</sup> "So do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the unbelievers chase after all

these things. Certainly your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

**[M]** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

## NICENE CREED

**[C]** We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation,  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
and became fully human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance  
with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

Dt. 6:4

2 Cor. 6:18

Is. 51:13

Col.1:16

1 Cor. 8:6

Jn. 3:16

Heb. 1:2,5

Jn. 1

Jn. 10:30

Jn. 1:3

1 Th. 5:9

Jn. 6:38

Lk. 1:35

Gal. 4:4

Mk. 15:15

1 Cor. 15:3-4a

1 Cor. 15:4b

Ac. 2:33-34

Heb. 1:13

Mt. 25:31

2 Tim.4:1

Lk. 1:33

*The Nicene Creed is the great Confession of the Christian faith professed by all Christian denominations. In the Lutheran Church, we hold the Nicene Creed as the second Confession or Symbol of our faith in the Book of Concord. The Creed originated at the First Council of Nicaea (c. A.D. 325) and was finalized at the First Council of Constantinople (c. A.D. 381), which are respectively known as the First and Second Ecumenical Councils of the Church. The Creed itself was crafted as a confession of Scripture in opposition to the Arian heresy, which denied that the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit are God.*

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
 who in unity with the Father and the Son  
 is worshiped and glorified,  
 who has spoken through the prophets. *Job 33:4*  
*Jn. 15:26*  
*Jn. 4:24*  
*2 Pet.1:25*  
 We believe in one holy Christian *Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19-20*  
 and apostolic Church.  
 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. *Eph. 4:5; Ac. 2:38*  
 We look for the resurrection of the dead *1 Cor. 15:21-22*  
 and the life ♣ of the world to come. Amen. *Rev. 22*

*Be seated.*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing* | CW 443

## SERMON

*Matthew 6:24-34* | Worrying about Worrying

## OFFERTORY

*Psalms 51:10-12*

*Please stand.*

C: Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -  
 new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -  
 way from your pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it  
 from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of your sal - va -  
 tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it. A - men.

For more  
 information about  
 this hymn, see the  
 insert.

Using the words of  
 the Psalmist (Psalm  
 51), we pray in the  
 Offertory that God  
 use the Word on  
 which we have just  
 listened and  
 mediated to "create a  
 pure heart" inside of  
 us. We pray that he  
 "does not cast us  
 away," but instead  
 show us his  
 salvation—which he  
 is about to do in the  
 Holy Supper.

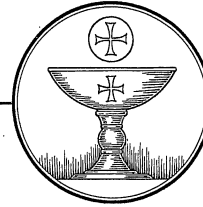
## OFFERING

*Be seated.*

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*Please stand.*

# The Service of the Sacrament



## SALUTATION

**[M]** The LORD be with you.

*Ruth 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:22*



## PREFACE

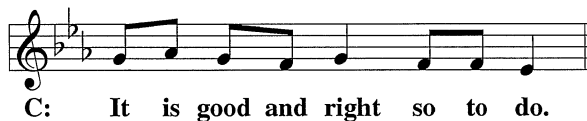
**[M]** Lift up your hearts.

*Lamentations 3:41*



**[M]** Let us give thanks to the LORD our God.

*Psalms 136*



**[M]** It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, *who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock till he comes again in glory.* Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

*The members of Good Shepherd Lutheran have joined together to proclaim the Gospel in this community. These offerings support that work. While our guests are welcome to participate in the offering if they choose, they should not feel at all obligated to do so.*

*The Service of the Sacrament begins with the **Salutation** (as did the Service of the Word). Once again, the congregation assents that the Pastor has their approval to speak on their behalf. Additionally, the Pastor encourages the congregation to "lift up their hearts" and "to give thanks" as he gives thanks on their behalf in the Preface and, if used, the Eucharistic Prayer.*

*The opening words of the **Preface** are among the oldest sentences in the Christian liturgy.*

*The responses are followed by the Proper Preface (italics), which are specific to the "proper" season of the church year. The entire liturgy is composed of ordinary elements, which remain the same from week to week, and propers, which change from week to week or season to season.*

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY — *Sanctus*

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9

The *Sanctus* (Latin for “holy”) is the song the Seraphim sing without ceasing before the Throne of God in Heaven. In the Divine Service, it is joined with the *Benedictus*, the song with which the Hebrew believers greeted Jesus upon his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Combined, the *Sanctus* and the *Benedictus* represent the meeting place of Heaven and Earth; the song of the saints on earth joins with the praise of the hosts of heaven to greet the King of Kings and Lord of Lords as he deigns to dwell among us in the Holy Supper.

C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:  
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san -  
 na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.  
 Bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who  
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -  
 na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**M** All glory and splendor, thanks and praise are yours, O Lord, heavenly Father. Bless our reception of your Son's body and blood that we may shine with the joy of faith. Use this most Holy Sacrament to illumine our lives and minds with Christ's forgiveness, peace, and comfort. Refresh our faith, and help us to reflect his truth and grace to the world. We ask this that you may receive endless honor, glory, and praise from every tribe and language and people and nation.

**C** Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER — *Pater Noster*

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

**[M]** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**[C]** Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us ♣ from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.

*The Pater Noster, Latin for "Our Father," is the prayer by which Jesus teaches us to pray. It is not a personal prayer, but rather a prayer of a Christian for his or her fellow man (Notice the 1st person plurals "us" and "our").*

*Worshippers may make the sign of the cross in the seventh petition as they pray to be "delivered from evil." This action serves as a remembrance of baptism and its connection to Christ's death on the cross, the means by which God has delivered us all from evil.*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION — *Verba*

Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-24;  
Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

**[M]** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is ♣ my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you; this is ♣ my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

*With the body and blood of our Lord Jesus in his hands, the Celebrant speaks the Pax Domini (Latin for "peace of the Lord") to those assembled. The Pax is drawn from Jesus' greeting to the Apostles after his resurrection from the dead: "Peace be to you" (John 20:19). The Pastor, as Christ's called servant, offers us the same peace in the presence of the risen Christ.*

PEACE OF THE LORD — *Pax Domini*

John 20:19

**[M]** The peace of the Lord be with you always.



The **Agnus Dei** (Latin for "Lamb of God") is based on John the Baptist's acclamation of Christ: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" This canticle recollects the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on Good Friday, reminding us that, through the Holy Supper, we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11).

Good Shepherd confesses and practices the Biblical teaching of a **Closed Communion**. We ask that only members of the Wisconsin Synod [WELS] or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS] join us at the Lord's Table. If you have questions concerning our communion practice, or would like to inquire about how you, too, can commune with us, please speak with the Pastor following the service.

## LAMB OF GOD — *Agnus Dei*

John 1:29

C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,  
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
grant us your peace. A - - men.

*Be seated.*

## DISTRIBUTION

Those who will be receiving Holy Communion today may wish to read **Personal Preparation for Holy Communion**, found on page 156 in the front section of the hymnal. This page helps us put into practice what the Bible encourages: "Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28)

*Prayer suggestions for before and after receiving the Lord's Supper can be found in the hymnal on pages 10-11 and 134-139.*

*In dismissing the communicants, the minister says:*

**[M]** This true body and blood will strengthen and keep you in true faith unto life everlasting. Your sins ✠ are forgiven. Go in peace. Amen.



*Please stand.*

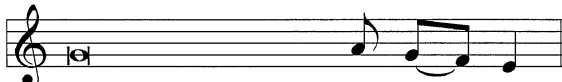

C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing  
to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre-  
pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the  
Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of your peo-ple Is - ra - el.

*The words of the Nunc Dimittis (Latin for "Now you dismiss") are appropriately sung after receiving the Lord's Supper because we held in our hands the body and blood of Christ, the Son of God. Like Simeon, we now depart this place in peace because we have (tasted and) seen the salvation of all people.*

## POST-COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Psalm 107:1*

**[M]** O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.



C: And his mercy endures for - ev - er.

## PRAYER FOR GRACE

**[M]** O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*This prayer, which we often pray, was included in a version of the Divine Service written by Martin Luther in 1526. We ask God to work powerfully in our lives through what he has just given to us in the Supper.*

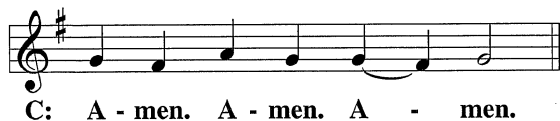
The blessing of Aaron has been spoken over God's people for over 3,500 years. The Lord said, "So they will put my name on [them], and I will bless them."



## BLESSING

Numbers 6:22-27

- [M]** The LORD bless you and keep you.  
 The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
 The LORD look on you with favor and ✚ give you peace.



*Be seated.*

## CLOSING HYMN

*In God, My Faithful God* | CW 438

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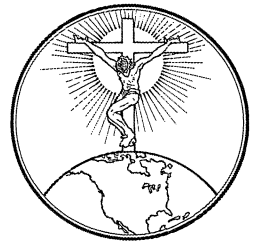
## SEPTEMBER 14 — HOLY CROSS DAY

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THE FEAST OF HOLY CROSS DAY IS A relatively recent addition to the church

calendar for most Lutherans. Perhaps it remains unfamiliar to many Lutherans in our day. Nevertheless, Holy Cross Day is actually a rather ancient observance in the history of the Christian Church, and there were some Lutherans who retained its observance in the centuries following the Reformation.

The Feast of the Holy Cross has similarities to Good Friday in its focus on the Passion of Christ and His death by crucifixion. Celebrated, though, outside the penitential solemnity of Holy Week, the focus of this festival day is more exuberant in its exaltation of the Cross as the instrument by which our Lord has achieved His victory over all the enemies of God and His people. Here He is raised as the ensign of the nations, by which He draws all people to Himself (as He declares in the Holy Gospel of the day). One of the chief hymns appointed for this feast, *"Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle"* (CW 122), is also used on Good Friday, but there it is restrained by the reverent sobriety with which we deeply mourn and bewail our sins and iniquities, for which the Lord of Glory was crucified. Here on Holy Cross Day, the same hymn enables us to sing the keynote of the feast: We hail the *"faithful cross"* as a *"true sign of triumph."* It is *"the noblest tree,"* excelling all others in foliage, blossom and the abundant fruit of Christ (stanza 4). Thus do we exhort ourselves and others: *"Now above the cross, the trophy, sound the loud triumphant lay; tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, as a victim won the day"* (stanza 1).



Although there will always be some question concerning the origins of Holy Cross Day, this festival invites an appropriate and salutary focus on the Cross as the means by which our Lord Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of the world, defeated death and the devil, reconciled the world to God, obtained our salvation and glorified the Father's name. Though His Cross is a foolish scandal to the world, to us who are being saved it is the power and wisdom of God, unto salvation. Thus, with St. Paul, we know nothing but the Cross, preach nothing but the Cross, and boast in nothing but the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it is by His Cross that we are crucified, dead and buried with Him in Holy Baptism and in daily repentance, and from the same Cross that we receive the absolution or forgiveness of all our sins, by which we also rise with Christ unto newness of life. This Cross is lifted up and exalted in our lives by self-sacrificing love for our neighbor, as it is first of all lifted up for us by the preaching of the Gospel, by which we are drawn to Christ in faith and through Him, our great High Priest, brought into the holy of holies made without hands, to our Father in heaven.

Holy Cross Day is another opportunity for the Cross of Christ to be portrayed before our very eyes, preached into our ears, planted in our hearts, and proclaimed with the very lips that have received His Body and His Blood, sacrificed for us upon the Cross, given and poured out for us in the Feast by which His holy and life-giving Cross is commemorated, and by which this holy day is celebrated.



*[www.goodshepherdkearney.org](http://www.goodshepherdkearney.org)*