
☞ Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost ☛
ORDER OF WORSHIP • SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 • 9:00 AM

✠ *Indicates the congregation should stand as able.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS & GREETING

✠ OPENING HYMN LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING
LBW #315, stanzas 1 & 2

✠ INVOCATION

WL: In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

✠ CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

WL: Let us confess our sins to God, who loves us with an unending love, whose presence calms our fears, and whose word brings life.

a time of silence for reflection

WL: Steadfast and faithful God,

All: **you have revealed the ways of justice,
yet we fear to follow you.**

We are overwhelmed

by the world's violence and suffering.

**We are afraid to risk what we have
for the sake of others.**

**For the harm we have caused,
known and unknown, forgive us.**

**For the unjust demands we place on others
and your creation, forgive us.**

**For the ways we turn away
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**

Lead us back to you

and set us on the path of your love;

in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

WL: Beloved in Christ, the Almighty God, in mercy, has chosen to suffer and die for us. God's love and justice stretch beyond all understanding. God's mercy and compassion are beyond compare. In Jesus, God loves us unconditionally. In ✠ Christ, your sins are forgiven. Go now and serve our risen Savior with joy and gladness!

All: Amen!

✠ HYMN OF PRAISE

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL
Psalm 103

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me bless his holy name! REPEAT**

The cantor will sing selected verses

✠ PRAYER OF THE DAY

WL: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

WL: 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.

FIRST LESSON

PSALM 103:1-13

R: Our First Lesson for this Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost is from the 103rd Psalm.

Praise the Lord, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
Praise the Lord, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him.

WL: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON

1 JOHN 4:1-10

R: Our Second Lesson is from First John, the fourth chapter.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

WL: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

✠ ALLELUIA VERSE

GOD'S LOVE IS GREATER

Repeat each short phrase that the cantor sings:

God's love is greater than evil triumphant.

God's love is greater than evil triumphant.

Life with its sorrows cannot hinder eternal plans.

We're in God's hands.

Sing alleluia, for Jesus is risen.

Sing alleluia, for Jesus is risen.

Life with its sorrows cannot hinder eternal plans.

We're in God's hands.

✠ HOLY GOSPEL LESSON

LUKE 2:8-12

WL: In our reading today, the great fear of the shepherds is met by news of an even greater love. The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

All: **Glory to You, O Lord!**

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

WL: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to You O Christ!**

TODAY'S MESSAGE

✠ MESSAGE HYMN

DON'T BE AFRAID

*Listen as the choir teaches the song,
then join with the choir as the text takes root within us.*

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
My love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
And I have promised, promised to be always near.**

✠ PROFESSION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed

WL: With the church throughout the ages, let us boldly confess our faith, using the words of the Apostles' Creed:

All: **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

*Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

GATHERING OF TITHES & OFFERINGS

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

✠ PREFACE

WL: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

WL: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

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

All: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

✠ THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

✠ THE LORD'S PRAYER

WL: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

All: **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

WL: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

COMMUNION HYMN

LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE

LBW #198

✠ THE DISMISSAL

WL: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace.

All: **Amen.**

✠ CLOSING PRAYER

WL: Let us pray. Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

All: **Amen.**

✠ BLESSING

WL: 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.

All: **Amen.**

✝ SENDING HYMN

LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING
LBW #315, stanzas 3 & 4

✝ SENDING

WL: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

All: **Thanks be to God.**

TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY

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