

Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

• 216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 • September 10, 2023 •

God's Work, Our Hands Sunday



WELCOME/GATHERING

PRELUDE: *Let Us Enter In*

Church Choir

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

L Trusting that Jesus dwells in our midst and loves us into life, let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

L We give you thanks, Holy One, for washing us and drawing us into your community. We give you thanks for the waters that have shaped and formed your people in every time and place:

For water that washed the earth and brought about your promises;

For water that parted so that your people could dance in freedom;

For water that quenched the thirst of your promised people;

For water that shaped a holy land;

For water that washed a foreigner clean;

For water that satisfied a woman who did not even know she was thirsty;

For water that welcomed an outsider on the road;

For water that cleanses and makes whole;

For water that drenches us and makes us your own.

Holy One, we give you thanks that your love

flows over and into and through us. May your Spirit live in us, that we might live for others.

C Thanks be to God. Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *God Bless the Hands*

Stand & Sing



1 God, bless the hands stretched out in love through floods be - low and
2 Bring com - fort to the hearts that mourn, left bro - ken, emp - tied
3 O God, our strength and ref - uge sure, our hope while storms of



storms a - bove; they search and res - cue, com - fort, calm, give
by the storm. Give hope to those in deep - est grief; em -
life en - dure: teach us to live in har - mo - ny with



shel - ter, of - fer heal - ing balm. Oh, guard them by your
pow - er us to bring re - lief. To you, O God, we
earth and riv - er, sky and sea, pre - serv - ing wa - ters,



stead - fast hand; reach out in love to help us stand.
raise our hands. Save us, we pray, from sink - ing sands.
air, and lands as ho - ly work for hu - man hands.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: MELITA, John B. Dykes, 1823–1876

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GREETING

L Siblings in Christ, beloved children of God: grace, mercy, and peace be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE

Leader

word, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer-cy. Christ, have mer-cy. Lord, have

Help, save, and de-fend us, O God.

mer - cy. A - men.

Text: *Lutheran Book of Worship*, adapt. Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Music: *Now the Feast and Celebration*, Marty Haugen
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SALUTATION

Presider: *Congregation:*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L Let us pray.

O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 33:7-11

A reading from the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel.

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

⁷So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Romans 13:8-14

A reading from Romans, the thirteenth chapter.

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL VERSE

All Stand & Sing

Congregation:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Lord to whom shall we
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal
life: Al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 18:15-20

L The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

L The gospel of the Lord.

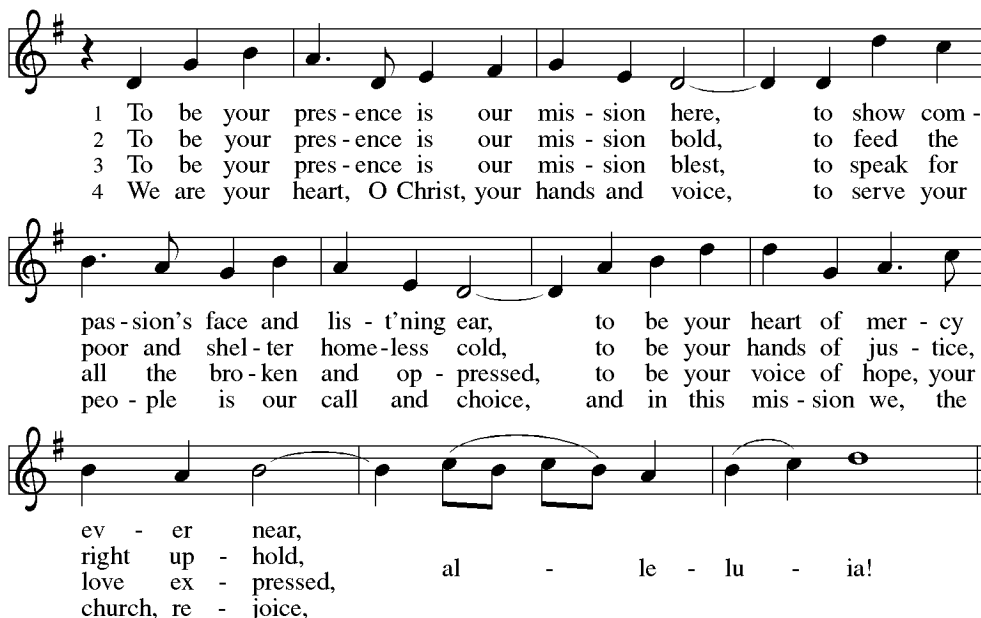
C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Congregation is seated.

Silence is kept for reflection.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *To Be Your Presence*

All Stand & Sing



1 To be your pres-ence is our mis-sion here, to show com-
 2 To be your pres-ence is our mis-sion bold, to feed the
 3 To be your pres-ence is our mis-sion blest, to speak for
 4 We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve your

pas-sion's face and lis-t'ning ear, to be your heart of mer-cy
 poor and shel-ter home-less cold, to be your hands of jus-tice,
 all the bro-ken and op-pressed, to be your voice of hope, your
 peo-ple is our call and choice, and in this mis-sion we, the

ev-er near,
 right up-hold, al-le-lu-ia!
 love ex-pressed,
 church, re-joice,

Text: Dolores Dufner, c. 1939
 Music: ENGELBERG, Charles V. Stanford, 1852-1924
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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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gathered into God's embrace, let us lift our voices on behalf of a weary and wounded world. God of love, send us out filled with your love and life. Be known in our daily living, that your love may be known through our proclamation. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of creation, remind us to be good stewards of your diverse and beautiful world. God, we pray, **open our hands in love.**

God of peace, fill the hearts of those who rule, govern and lead. Give them and us compassion to guide the peoples of this world in the ways of truth, justice, equity and peace. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of healing, visit those who yearn for your wholeness, especially those whose names and needs we lift up now. Encourage all those who bear another's burdens. Give wisdom and perseverance to all who work in health care professions. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of service, give us strength and humility. In our service to those near and far, whose needs are visible or invisible, may we find you in the faces of our neighbors. God, we pray, **open our hands in love.**

For what else do we pray? God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

Everlasting God, support us in this life. As we remember those who have gone before as examples of faithful living and honor those whose faith was known only to you, inspire us to follow their example of baptismal life until we join with them in worship. God, we pray, **open our hands in love.**

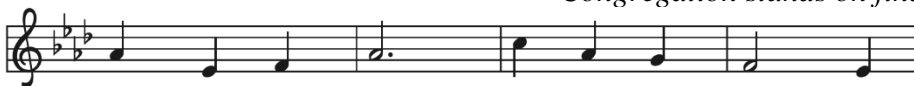
PEACE

L The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *God's Work, Our Hands*

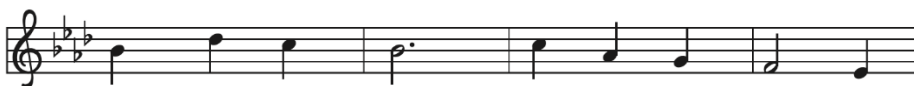
*All Sing
Congregation stands on final verse*



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
3 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,
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,
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.
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 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.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson, 1922–1987
Text © 2019 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, admin. Augsburg Fortress
Music © 1968 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress

OFFERING PRAYER

L Let us pray.

C Holy God, giver of all good things, receive the gifts we bring, fruit of the earth and the work of human hands, that they may be used to your purposes for life and love in the world.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

Presider: The Lord be with you. And also with

Congregation: you. Lift up your hearts. We

Presider: lift them to the Lord. Let us give

Congregation: thanks to the Lord our God. It is

right to give God thanks and praise.

PREFACE

L ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and
might; heav - en and earth are filled with your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is the one who comes in your name. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

The musical score is written on five staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff ends with a double bar line, and the second staff begins with a repeat sign. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

L ... and in whom we live, Jesus Christ.

Congregation:
Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the
u - ni - ty of the Spir - it, all glo - ry and hon - or is
yours, O God, now and for ev - er.
A - men.

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 6/8 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff begins with the word 'Congregation:' in italics. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

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

L Christ invites you to this table. Come, taste and see.

C Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION


During communion the congregation is invited forward by rows, beginning in the back, and will receive the bread and wine at the front of the aisle. You may either eat and drink then, or return to your seat to do so, and place the cups in the bin in your pew.

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

C Amen.

LAMB OF GOD.....All Sing

Congregation:



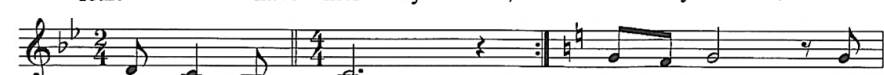
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

Congregation:




world:


have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you



take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION *Come Now, You Blessed*

All Sing

1 "Come now, you bless - ed, eat at my ta - ble,"
2 When did we see you hun - gry or thirst - y?
3 "When you gave bread to earth's hun - gry chil - dren,
4 Christ, when we meet you out on life's road - ways,

said Je - sus Christ to the righ - teous a - bove.
When were you home - less, a strang - er a - lone?
when you gave wel - come to war's ref - u - gees,
look - ing to us in the fac - es of need,

"When I was hun - gry, thirst - y, and home-less,
When did we see you sick or in pris - on?
when you re - mem - bered those most for - got - ten,
then may we know you, wel - come and show you

sick and in pris - on, you showed me your love."
What have we done that you call us your own?
you cared for me in the small - est of these."
love that is faith - ful in word and in deed.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: MATTHEW 25, Emily R. Brink, b. 1940

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Music © 1994 Faith Alive Christian Resources

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L Let us pray.

C Holy Jesus, in this meal you have fed and nourished us to work in your beloved world. Send us now, filled with yourself and strengthened by your Spirit to live your love for others.

BLESSING OF OUR WORK

L Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God and seek God's blessing as we are sent out in service to others.

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. You made the whole earth for your glory; all creation praises you. We lift our voices to join the songs of heaven and earth in thanksgiving for the many blessings you have given us. Renew in us the commitment to use our gifts in the service of others, and especially of those in need.

Let us be your hands to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, comfort the weary and outcast, welcome the stranger, care for creation, and be loving neighbors to all people. Bless those who go out from here to labor in your name. Prosper the work of their hands. Bless those who receive them and the fruits of their labor, and may those who are sent receive blessing in return. May the gifts they use and share be signs of your love to all people.

C Amen.

BLESSING

L Siblings in Christ, both our work and our rest are in God. Will you endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ, in gratitude to God and in service to others, at morning and evening, at work and at play, all the days of your life?

C I will, and I ask God to help me.

L Almighty God, by the power of the Spirit you have knit us your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look with favor upon us in our commitment to serve in Christ's name. Give us courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: *Go to the World*

Stand & Sing



1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.

2 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;

3 "Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,

Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth,

the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.

for I am with you till the age shall end,

bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.

As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ's own way.

when all the hosts of glo - ry cry, A - men!"

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: SINE NOMINE, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958

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SENDING

L Go in peace. You are God's hands at work in the world!

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: *Allegro*

Brahms

*Thank you to our lector, Jim Buell.

*Special thanks to Julia Gunter, our resident flutist, accompanying our service of worship.