



**SING PRAISES TO HIM;
TELL OF ALL HIS WONDERFUL WORKS.**

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Service of the Word with Hymn Sing
July 23, 2017

Christ Lutheran Church
Woodcliff Lake, NJ

WELCOME TO CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

We are glad you are here to join us in singing and worshipping to God's glory!

Breaking the sound barrier! We invite you to try one of our new listening devices, which allows you to sit anywhere in the sanctuary. They are available by speaking to an usher.

Pink Prayer Cards: You may write names for prayer on a pink card found in the pew rack. Please place your card on the altar rail for inclusion in the prayers of the day. If you wish a name to be added to our printed prayer list (for four weeks) please write "Prayer List" on the card. Please be sure this prayer request is approved by the person for whom we are praying.

Nursery Facilities: There is a self-serve Nursery and Infant Room for young children accompanied by their parents. The Infant Room contains a bathroom with a changing table. These rooms are located along the hallway from the side door of the sanctuary.

Need an offering envelope? We have some in the pews for you. Please include your contact information or envelope number so we can thank you for your gift.

Contact Information:

Pastor: Rev. Marc A. Stutzel

Director of Music: Argine Safari

Director of Youth Choirs: David Scance

Administrative Assistant: Doris Crouse

32 Pascack Rd., Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07677

201-391-4224 clc4u2@verizon.net

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Open on Summer Sundays: 9:30 am

PRELUDE

CONGREGATION ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

[Pink prayer cards with your joys or concerns may be placed on the altar rail.]

[For today's worship all *portions in italics will be spoken by our worship leaders.*

Congregational responses are in **bold-faced type.**]

[Please stand.]

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God – you are faithful. God – you are merciful. God – you are love. Hear our prayer as we confess our sins to you.

God, we confess that often we do not place you first in our lives. We confess that we have lived for ourselves and ignored the needs of others. We confess that we have doubted your love and care for us. Some of my sin I know but some are known only to you. In the name of Jesus, forgive us and bring us back to you.

God is faithful. God is merciful. God is love. In the name of ✠ Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

[We share the peace via handshake or the peace sign.]

GATHERING SONG – “Prepare the Royal Highway” [Please remain standing—LBW 26, vs. 1-3]

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

[The congregation may sit.]

THE READING is from Romans 8:12-25

¹²*So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*

¹⁸*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Please remain seated.]

SONG – “All Glory, Laud, and Honor” [LBW 108, verses 1-3]

[Please stand as you are able.]

THE HOLY GOSPEL according to St. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁴*[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field;²⁵ but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away.*

²⁶*So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.*

²⁷*And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’²⁸ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’²⁹ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”*

³⁶*Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one,³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”*

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

[Please remain standing.]

SONG – “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus” [LBW 158, verses 1-2]

SONG – “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” [LBW 229, all verses]

THE APOSTLES' CREED [Please remain standing.]

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 [The congregation may sit.]

Called together in the Spirit's embrace, let us pray for the mending of God's world.

[A brief silence.]

Enliven your church with love for your world, O God. Give undivided hearts to Christians from Africa and the Americas, Asia and Europe. Make us one in faithful witness to your will. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Renew the life of this earth, O God, even as it groans because of misuse and decay. Cultivate in us an eager longing for a healthy and life-giving earth. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Bridge the chasms that divide the nations and all communities, O God. We pray for Elizabeth and Tracie, our bishops. We pray for Donald, the President and Christie, the Governor of New Jersey. Inspire a reconciling vision among the world's leaders, and bring together people of differing commitments for the sake of the world's most vulnerable people. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Embrace those who suffer, O God. Give peace to all who are near death, hope to those who are depressed, shelter to the homeless, and healing to the sick
We pray especially for . . .

Beverly Albert, Dolores Albert, Tyler Cawood, Tony Conboy, Mae Hulburt,

Millie and Roger Hildebrand, Maureen Hutnik, Fred Messner,

Shiloh and Katherine Johnson, George Namendorf, June Rudie, Martha Sriver,

Lorraine and Jack Sadlon, Ron Schoon, Ellie Soehren, Charlie Sorbo

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Embolden our witness to your love, O God. Send us out into the world with courageous hearts, persistence, and holy wisdom. Inspire us to tend to and delight in our children's faith. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Raise up your saints, O God. Inspire us by the lives of all reformers and renewers of your church. Receive our thanks for the saints among us who have recently died. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your care through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SONG – ***“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”*** [LBW 439, all verses]

THE OFFERTORY SONG – ***“Onward, Christian Soldiers”*** [LBW 509, verses 1, 3, 4]

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory 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.

SONG – ***“On Eagle's Wings”*** [Gather 261, all verses]

SONG – ***“Here I Am, Lord”*** [Gather 291, all verses]

BLESSING

*The God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant you to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus.*

Amen.

*The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Amen.

The God of all grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONGS – “Beautiful Savior”

[LBW 518, verses 1-3]

“How Great Thou Art”

[LBW 532, verses 1, 2, 4]

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

[LBW 551, all verses]

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

A REFLECTION: Life Carries On

Pastor Marc

Taking a Sunday off during a sermon series is a little problematic. But like the British band Big Audio Dynamite says, "Life carries on, even when I'm not there." And that's true. Life is happening to other people and in other places even as you read these words. As human beings, we are the centers of our own little universes. People and situations revolve, interact, and move through and around us. We sometimes act as if the possibilities of life are limited to our own experiences, senses, and imaginations. But other people's lives, thoughts, and experiences are not our own. We are all centers of our own little universes, but we are not the center of the entire universe. Yet with God's Spirit, we can see what a full, thriving, and loving life can possibly be.

This passage from Paul's letter to the Romans is amazing because Paul is making a bold claim here. He's telling this small community of two dozen people that they are who the world is waiting for. These men and women, rich and poor, slaves and free, are everything. Now, there is a dangerous way to read this passage. If the Roman community took these words as an excuse to push others away or to act like they are the only people entitled to being with God, then Paul's words create an us-vs-them view of the world that is problematic. The Roman community would seem themselves as "winners" and reject, forcefully, anyone who doesn't fit in. Their relationship with God would be an entitlement that would be for them alone and no one else.

But Paul isn't, I think, doing that here. We need to remember the context of Paul's letter. He is writing to a small community located in the capital city of the Empire that killed Jesus. They are a community that celebrates and worships someone who was killed as a criminal in the worst way possible. They worship and celebrate what should be the epitome of weakness and smallness. And as a mixed community, they are filled with slaves who had no control over the violence inflicted on their bodies. This community is insignificant. Yet, it's this community that Paul says is worth everything. They, through the Spirit, will change the world.

And how will they do that? Paul doesn't go into details here but will later in his letter. The how is rooted in the why because living with the Spirit makes a difference. We can see that in our prayers. When we pray, the Spirit is helping us to believe that our smallness can talk to the everlasting God. In our worship service, that's why each Sunday has a specific prayer of the day. Before we read God's story and share with Jesus a holy and special meal, we ask God to make that Spirit live within us. This Spirit doesn't ask us to create a world of winners and losers. This Spirit asks us to live a life of love that is as complete as God's love for each of us. Because it's this kind of love, a love that even sacrifices itself for its enemies, that all our universes need.