



Online Worship
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2020 at 10 am

Christ Lutheran Church . Woodcliff Lake, NJ
www.clc4u.com

All text in *italics* is spoken by the leader.
Text in **bold** can be spoken by those assembled.

OPENING & WELCOME

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

[Modified from work originally crafted by Sarah Agnew.]

*Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, Love from the beginning,
Word made flesh, Breath of heaven.*

Amen.

*I am weak, God,
help me to love.*

*I see weakness in others
and despise it, for it reminds me
of weakness within.*

*I am weak, God,
help me to love.*

*I see difference in others
and reject it, for it unsettles me,
makes me feel unsure.*

*I am weak, God,
help me to love.*

*I judge others, condemn,
revile, for I cannot bear to think
that it is I who may be wrong.*

I am weak, God,
help me to love.

*I live for myself, and do not live
at all, for I cannot trust in life
and death in Jesus the Christ.*

I am weak, God,
help me to love.

*I kneel before you, God my judge,
for I have not walked your way
of love, and I am sorry.*

I am weak, God,
help me to love.

[A slight pause.]

*As you bow, as you confess,
God runs forward, arms outstretched.
You have turned, returned again:
fall into those wide-flung arms,
the Divine embrace, for you are loved,
your sins are forgiven ✠, you shall have life!
Amen.*

SONG - Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (ELW 631)

[played and sung by Argine Safari and David Scance.]

*Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.*

*Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.*

*Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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. Amen.

A MESSAGE FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN

[By Pastor Marc]

A READING FROM ROMANS 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For

to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

**A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW 18:21-35**

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay

what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

A HOMILY

[By Pastor Marc]

SONG - My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (ELW 596)

[played and sung by Argine Safari and David Scance.]

*My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
no merit of my own I claim,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

Refrain:

*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand,
all other ground is sinking sand.*

*When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale
my anchor holds within the veil. [Refrain]*

*His oath, his covenant, his blood
sustain me in the raging flood;
when all supports are washed away,
he then is all my hope and stay. [Refrain]*

OFFERING

Gratitude is one of the powerful images scripture uses to show us what a full and abundant life looks like. And yet practicing gratitude can be hard. We tell ourselves that we are achievers: setting goals, working hard, and dreaming big dreams. Yet the gift of life itself – all of creation and the entire universe - is not something we can achieve. In the words of Carolyn Helsel, gratitude... “is not a feeling that we have gotten something we deserve or a sense of self-satisfaction. It is not about feeling good about ourselves for something we have done. Gratitude emerges as a gift itself, the experience of knowing one is blessed beyond one’s control or merit.” Gratitude, like a muscle, grows the more we pay attention to what God is doing in the world. And when we learn to say thank you, our generosity grows.

Two weeks ago, I invited you to commit yourself to daily prayer and to tell God one thing you’re thankful for. Last week, I invited you to thank yourself in your prayers. This week, I’m inviting you to say thank you to someone else while you pray. Maybe

someone helped you do something you couldn't do alone. Or maybe they opened your eyes to a different kind of pain and suffering that you didn't really see before. Or maybe they created something that you couldn't create on your own. God brings amazing people into our lives. And one thing we can do is simply say: thank you.

CLC is grateful for your generosity so that we can be generous to others with our ministry. If you would like to support this ministry you can do so on our website or by writing a check and dropping it in the mail to us, and we will use it to generously offer the word of God to all people and serve our neighbors in need.

And now - as a sign of our generosity - let us pray for our needy world. When you hear the words: "O God, you are full of compassion," please respond with: "receive our prayer."

RESPONSIVE PRAYERS OF THE DAY

[modified from work published by the ELCA Worship blog]

God of open arms, make Christians into signs of your gracious welcome, to both members and newcomers, whether meeting physically or digitally. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries, and nurture new ventures for education and growth. Bless bishops, especially Elizabeth and Tracie, pastors, and deacons for their work in this unprecedented time.

O God, you are full of compassion,

receive our prayer.

God of lands and seas, continue your care for your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we ask you to heal and renew your earth. Preserve the lands from fire and storm. Protect the sources of food that your creatures need for life.

O God, you are full of compassion,
receive our prayer.

God of justice, lead the nations away from the ways of violence. Guide the United Nations and other organizations that seek reconciliation across national borders. Show families, neighborhoods, and nations how to welcome diversity while sharing common ground. Give Donald, the President; Philip, NJ's Governor; Gerald, Holly, Robert, our NJ state Senators and Representatives; a willingness to collaborate and seek the common good. We also pray that You preserve our election season from abuse and rancor.

O God, you are full of compassion,
receive our prayer.

God of our homeland, visit the American cities that are addressing local racism. Stand with both protesters and police, that civil society may be preserved and improved. Bring both healing and justice to our land.

*O God, you are full of compassion,
receive our prayer.*

God of the sufferers, visit prisons and care homes with health and hope. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor. Deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger and provide safety to migrants. Protect firefighters and first responders. Heal the sick, especially those we name here before you in this moment of silence.

*O God, you are full of compassion,
receive our prayer.*

God of goodness, once more we beg for a way through the pandemic. Comfort the afflicted. Support medical workers. Prepare a vaccine.

*O God, you are full of compassion,
receive our prayer.*

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have led us in the faith. Hold us with them in your everlasting love.

*O God, you are full of compassion,
receive our prayer.*

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

THE PEACE

If you are not by yourself right now, I invite you to take a look at all who surround you in your sacred space. Send them a blessing - wishing that the peace of Christ may be with them.

Let us now think about those who are participating in our in-person worship and all our friends who are worshipping with us online or via conference call. In our hearts, let's send them a blessing and wish that the peace of Christ may be with them.

Finally, let the blessing we offer each other go out to our families, friends, neighbors, and to the entire world. With God's help, our hearts are big enough to extend peace that far. Let us embody the peace of Christ after we leave this place today.

HOLY COMMUNION

[We invited you to gather a bit of bread (or similar item), drink (wine or grape juice). The elements used during communion remind us of a substantial meal we would eat during a celebration.]

Merciful God, we do not presume to come to your table trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat and drink the body and blood of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that we may live in him and he in us, now and forever.

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 our thanks and praise.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Amen.

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit across phone lines, social media, and the internet - let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.

You are here, not because you are perfect, but because, through Christ Jesus, you are welcomed and loved.

This is the body of Christ, given for you.

This is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

[After consuming the elements.]

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.

Amen.

SONG - Mighty to Save

[played and sung by Argine Safari and David Scance.]

*Ev'ryone needs compassion,
Love that's never failing.
Let mercy fall on me.
Ev'ryone needs forgiveness,
The kindness of a Savior.
The hope of nations.*

*Savior, He can move the mountains.
My God is mighty to save.
He is mighty to save.
Forever, Author of Salvation.
He rose and conquered the grave.
Jesus conquered the grave.*

*So take me as You find me,
All my fears and failures.
Fill my life again.
I give my life to follow,
Ev'rything I believe in.
Now I surrender.*

*Savior, He can move the
mountains.
My God is mighty to save.
He is mighty to save.
Forever, Author of Salvation.
He rose and conquered the
grave.*

Jesus conquered the grave.

*Shine your light, and let the
whole world see.
We're singing for the glory of
the risen King.
Jesus.*

*Shine your light, and let the
whole world see.
We're singing for the glory of
the risen King.*

*Savior, He can move the
mountains.
My God is mighty to save.
He is mighty to save.
Forever, Author of Salvation.
He rose and conquered the
grave.
Jesus conquered the grave.*

BLESSING OF GRANDPARENTS

Grandparents are cherished members of our family. They come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. Some are connected to us by

biology while others become our grandparents through marriage and friendship. They bring gifts of wisdom, experience, and love. We thank God for their faithful example and so let us bless them on this national observance of Grandparents Day.

[Based on a prayer by Pastor John Rickert]

Creator God, who brought into existence the first family in the Garden of Eden and through that family established all the vocations that come with being part of a family, we remember the witness of the grandparents in the Bible, like Abraham and Sarah, who were the grandparents of Jacob and Esau, Obed and his wife, the grandparents of King David, and Adam and Eve, who were the grandparents of Enos, who carried the promise of the seed that would redeem the world. To this day grandparents continue to carry the vocation to love, support, advise and encourage their grandchildren, while also supporting their children who have gained the vocation of being a parent. Strengthen their health. Bless their time together. Where relationships are fractured, bring reconciliation. Where turmoil exists, bring peace. And give them the grace to walk in your ways while demonstrating your love in all their family relationships.

Amen.

BLESSING

And now - know this:

*Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,*

*will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.
God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.*

Amen

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1) Our Prayer meeting via conference will Tuesday and Thursday this week at 12:30 pm.
- 2) If you need help, please don't hesitate to reach out at pastormarc@clc4u.com
- 3) Our Chancel/Adult Choir has scheduled a gathering for Sunday, September 20th after outdoor worship. If you're interested in singing this year - and learning more how that will work - please speak to Argine Safari or make plans to attend worship on that day.
- 4) Worship next Sunday, September 20, will be via online/conference call at 10 am or in-person at 10 am. If you plan to attend outdoor worship, please contact the church office by Thursday to let us know you will be there.