

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

09/27/2026

Greg Fetzer, Pastor

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor Emeritus

P In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for our sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

GATHERING HYMN: [ELW#532 "Gather Us In"](#)

P From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE: [ELW#858 “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”](#)

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. God of love,

C **giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

FIRST READING Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

L A reading from Ezekiel: ¹The word of the Lord came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die. ²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you

die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 25:1-9

L ¹To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

C ²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

L ³Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

C ⁴**Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.**

L ⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

C ⁶**Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.**

L ⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

C ⁸**You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

L ⁹You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

SECOND READING Philippians 2:1-13

L A reading from Philippians: ¹If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he existed in the

form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped,⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human,⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name,¹⁰so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling,¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

L The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

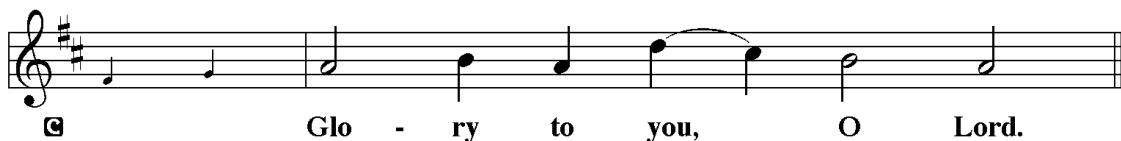
Please stand, as you are able.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL READING Matthew 21:23-32

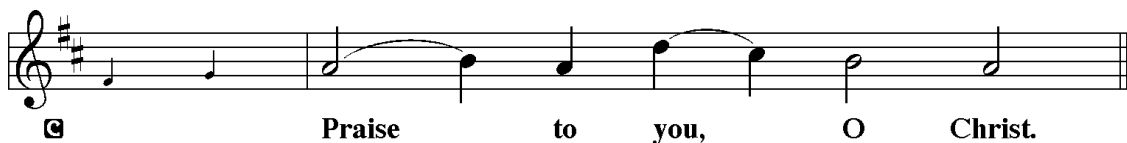
L The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.



P ²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.



HYMN OF THE DAY: [ELW#806 “O God, My Faithful God”](#)

SERMON: [\(Sermon Audio Link\)](#)

Please stand, as you are able.

- L** Reminded of God’s gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

- L** Center your church in humility as we strive to follow in your way. Help us listen to the cries of those who have been unfairly hurt by the church and dare to name difficult truths. Show all your love. Hear us, O God.
- C** **Your mercy is great.**
- L** You call us to care for your creation. Lead us into your promise of a better world through sustainable practices and respect for your handiwork. Hear us, O God.
- C** **Your mercy is great.**
- L** Inspire all in positions of authority to act honorably. Remind them of their call to use their authority for the sake of the common good. Give them the gift of humility. Hear us, O God.
- C** **Your mercy is great.**

- L** Comfort those who come before you in fear and trembling. Calm troubled hearts with your forgiveness. Help all those in need. We pray for Barbara Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Rebecca Brennan, Rhina Chroniger, the Elshafei family, Jeff Fultz, Bob Hardy, Mark Hughes, Charlotte Leer, John McCarthy, Wendy Neumann, Rick Newman, Peter Olsen, Claudia Schober, Esther Trautwein, and Pastor Jack. Grant us your salvation. Hear us, O God.
- C Your mercy is great.**
- L** Change this congregation's heart when we say no to your call. Open us to courageous learning and service in our community, especially in new or challenging places. Hear us, O God.
- C Your mercy is great.**
- L** For whom or what else shall we pray?
- *For peace and reconciliation among the nations, especially in Iran, Gaza, Ethiopia, Yemen, South Sudan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine, and Myanmar...*
 - *For an end to genocide across the world...*
 - *For flooding in southwestern Ohio and all those affected by natural disasters...*
 - *For Luther Seminary and all seminaries navigating reimagination or relocation...*
 - *For the United Nations General Assembly and for all agencies working for peace...*
 - *For victims of gun violence, especially in Ontario, Canada and Durban, South Africa...*
 - *For immigrants and all marginalized populations who live in fear of violence*
 - *For those in the path of Tropical Storm Nolo...*
 - *For all in need of access to affordable healthcare...*
- L** Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Hear us, O God.
- C Your mercy is great.**
- L** Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.
- C Amen**

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

C **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

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C **Amen**

OFFERING*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

SENDING HYMN [ELW#818 "O Master, Let Me Walk with You"](#)

P Go in peace. Love and serve God and neighbor.

C **Thanks be to God.**

*Offering to be sent to

Robert Brackbill

10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

ANNOUNCEMENTS and Upcoming Events

- Saturday October 3, 9a – 2p, Fall Fair & Flea Market, Salem Lutheran Church, 3825 Norrisville Rd, Jarrettsville, MD

READER SCHEDULE

First Sunday	Heidi and Bob
Second Sunday	Julie and Dave
Third Sunday	Ron
Fourth & Fifth Sunday	Greg

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