

GREETING

Gathered in Christ. **We serve with grace.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin and come to God for healing. *Silence is kept for reflection.*
Gracious God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we have honored you with our lips, but have harmed our neighbors with our tongues. The cravings at war within us cause conflicts and disputes. In our desire to be first we make distinctions among ourselves. We place the needs of the poor and the suffering last. In your great mercy, forgive us our sins. Draw near to us with grace in time of need, and turn us to follow in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God promises to forgive our iniquity and to remember our sin no more. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, the source of eternal healing, your sins are forgiven. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG “*For the Beauty of the Earth*”..... #879

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING: DEUTERONOMY 4:1-2, 6-9

¹So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ²You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you. ⁶You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” ⁷For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? ⁸And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? ⁹But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children. Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 15

¹Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill?

²**Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,
who speak the truth from their heart;**

³they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends;
they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

⁴**In their sight the wicked are rejected,
but they honor those who fear the Lord.**

They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.

⁵They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

SECOND READING: JAMES 1:17-27

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. ¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. ²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. ²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

KIDS TALK

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! **God gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would become a kind of first fruits of creation. Alleluia**

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Glory to you, O Lord. ¹Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing

the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’ ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” ¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile. ²¹“For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON *“Is It About Hand Sanitizing or Heart-felt Loving and Serving?....*Deacon Ro

HYMN OF THE DAY *“Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil”.....* #512

PROFESSION OF FAITH

C: We believe in one God, Creator of all that is known and unknown, Holy mystery beyond our comprehension, Savior of the world, The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last above and beyond time yet entering into Creation to be known to us even now. We believe in the Word of God offering promise of God’s presence given to the Israelites in the law, spoken through the prophets to the people taking on flesh to dwell with us bringing salvation to all. We believe in the reign of God that Jesus proclaimed on earth two thousand years ago, the rejection of evil’s power, the embrace of the poor, the imprisoned, and the brokenhearted, the forgiveness of sins, the reconciliation of all things at the last day. We believe in the Holy Spirit, who moved over the waters of creation, who breathes now life in us today, who calls us to be the church, who inspires us to pray. We profess the mystery of faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. In the church, we are knit together as the body of Christ by the gift of faith, by the waters of baptism and in the sharing of communion. In Christ, we are a new creation, renewed by the Spirit and sealed in the promise of eternal life. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God’s good creation, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.* God of every generation, give the church a sense of purpose and belonging. Sustain and build up

leaders and lay people as we accompany one another in our life with Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of creation, you named humans as co-creators with you. Where the earth cries out in pain, bring wholeness. Guide governments and industry, that environmental laws and practices seek to heal and not harm. Bring relief and justice to people and places suffering from climate catastrophe (*especially*). Merciful God **receive our prayer.**

Sovereign God, we pray for local communities of every kind: rural and urban; established and new. Lead those in authority to seek the good of all through their words and actions and to mentor others in honest and generous ways. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Healing God, you draw near to all who are hurting. Be with all who desire relief from chronic and acute illness, cancer, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Strengthen health care workers, therapists, and caregivers. Tend to those who are close to our hearts (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

On this Labor Day weekend we remember and give thanks for all who have fought for workers' rights around the world. Continue to improve working conditions and establish fair wages so that all people may thrive. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Comforting God, console us as we mourn our departed (*especially*). We hold fast to the promise that death has been defeated by our Savior Jesus Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY SONG "*Give Thanks*"

Give thanks with a grateful heart. Give thanks to the holy one. Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son. And now let the weak say I am strong. Let the poor say I am rich; because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

DEDICATION OF COMMUNION CUP TRAYS AND COMMUNION WARE
LARRY REDDEN MEMORIAL

"For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

This favorite scripture of Larry Redden's plays a big part into the gifts we dedicate to God's glory for the nurture of this congregation. God gave His Son, Jesus Christ to the world to receive God's gifts of grace and love. Jesus, gave of His life that we might all receive forgiveness and eternal life. Something that was so important and fed Larry's life of faith was the gift of the Last Supper, bread and wine, body and blood which Jesus gave to all of us. Today we offer to the glory of God these trays that wash our individual cups and these patens that serve the bread into service for this congregation to be fed and nurtured in the love of Jesus.

Let us pray: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, You have enriched our lives with every good and perfect gift; you have commanded us to show your splendor to our children and to praise you with lives of love, justice, and joy. Accept these patens and cup trays which we offer in thanksgiving; may all who receive food and drink be sustained by your grace and power. Bring us all at length to your perfect kingdom, where you live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, source of every gift of your creation. By these gifts and with our lives, help us to serve one another and all in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HYMN "*Holy, Holy, Holy*" Setting 4, p153

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will. He is your Word, inseparable from you. Through him you created all things, and in him you take delight. He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb. He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary. It is he, our Lord Jesus, who fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hand in suffering in order to free from suffering those

who trust you. It is he who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said: "Take and eat; this is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This is my blood poured out for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we lift this bread and this cup before you, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people. And we ask you: Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church; gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish your faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ. Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church both now and forever. **AMEN, AMEN, AMEN.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray the words Jesus taught us. **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus welcomes you to this table. There is a place for everyone to receive nurture and life. Come, here is your God.

COMMUNION HYMN "*Lamb of God*" Setting 4,#154

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you have welcomed us to this meal and fed us with dignity at your table. Send us now to welcome others and to be at peace with one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God all mighty, God most merciful ✠ bless you, keep you, and give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG "*Take My Life That I May Be*" #583

RINGING OF THE BELLS

SONG OF PEACE

My peace I give unto you. It's a peace that the world cannot give. It's a peace

that the world cannot understand; peace to know; peace to live. My peace I give unto you.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Follow Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deacon Ro will be traveling to Iowa Thursday, September 5 and returning Saturday, September 7 to attend the ordination of Elizabeth Day, a friend for over 20 years, first meeting while serving together on a Via de Cristo retreat weekend.

Elizabeth has accepted a call to an ELCA two-point parish in Kansas. Lake Forest, IA is where she completed her internship while attending Wartburg Seminary.

God's Work Our Hands Sunday!

NEXT SUNDAY! GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS SUNDAY!!!! Two-fold service opportunity with our "Bowls of Love" project! 1. Bring a gift of either cookies, candy, salty snack or fruit to put in the bowls during Come and Celebrate! 2. Take a bowl to someone you know in your life who needs a bowl of love spending a moment with them sharing stories! **DON'T FORGET TO DIG OUT YOUR YELLOW "GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS" SHIRT TO WEAR TO CHURCH!** Yep, it's shirts and jeans Sunday! There will also be shirts available on Sunday!

Prairie Parish Gathering

Saturday, September 7, Peace Lutheran, Sterling. Breakfast provided at 9:00am Pastor Sonja finishes Discovering Spiritual Gifts training beginning at 9:30am.

An in-person opportunity for all who have done Zoom training with Spiritual Gifts, this time together determines "WHAT NOW?" This will be a great time to discuss with everyone in the Prairie Parish congregations how spiritual gifts might be developed and work together!!! Don't miss this one!

Prairie Parish Prayer Teams

Prairie Parish Prayer Teams (those who attended Prayer in Our Daily Lives training) have now been formed to offer prayers during the next 10 months as Prairie Parish discerns its direction, its mission and vision, its organization, and God's will for the congregations on the northeastern plains. Eight teams of 3 to 4 members from each congregation will be praying throughout the months ahead regarding joys, challenges, God's plan, how we respond to God's will, trials, service, what delights God with Prairie Parish, our resistance to God's call, what energy and life we might have together as Prairie Parish. Teams may also pray for anything they feel led to pray on by the Holy Spirit. The teams will also be journaling to share with us what God is sharing with them. All members of our congregations are invited and encouraged to begin petitions in daily prayers for

Prairie Parish.

BIBLE STUDY begins Saturday, September 21! 9:00-11:00am In-person at Bethlehem or ZOOM. Please register and include if you will attend in-person or on-line needing the Zoom link. Prairie Parish congregations are invited to participate. Study will meet every third Saturday of the month to finish of 2024!

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES! How Church got started, leaders led, and the mission spread!

Materials will be provided. Bring your favorite version of the Bible!

Spiritual Teasers (The Complete Book of Bible Trivia, J. Stephen Lang)

1. Who advised young Christians to stop thinking like children?
(1 Corinthians 14: 20)
2. What king made a wise decision about a child claimed by two prostitutes?
(1 Kings 3:16-28)
3. What king grieved and wailed over his wayward son? (2 Samuel 18:33)

Churchy Chuckles

(More Holy Humor by Cal and Rose Samra)

1. A boy being tucked into bed by his mother, looked up and said, "I'm very tired, Mommy. Will you say good night to Jesus for me and tell him I went to bed?"
2. Some people just can't enjoy life; the first half of their lives are spent blaming their troubles on their parents and the second half on their children.
3. A new member sharing his life of faith with his pastor, "at the age of ten, I had accepted Jesus as my Savior, and had promised God at that time that I would go to Bible College and serve Him, but as a teenager I decided to flirt with the devil and ended up getting married and living in sin instead."

For the Beauty of the Earth



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
 hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
 for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
 for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

Refrain



Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o - pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un - der - stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.



Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Take My Life, That I May Be

Toma, oh Dios, mi voluntad

Refrain/Estribillo



To - ma, oh Dios, mi vo - lun - tad, y haz - la tu - ya, na -
Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord,



da más; to - ma, sí, mi co - ra - zón
to thee; take my mo - ments and my days;



y tu tro - no en él ten - drás. ten - drás.
let them flow in cease - less praise. less praise.



1 Que mi vi - da en - te - ra es - té
1 Take my hands and let them move
2 Take my sil - ver and my gold,
3 Take my voice and let me sing,
4 Take my will and make it thine;



con - sa - gra - da a ti, Se - ñor;
at the im - pulse of thy love;
not a mite would I with - hold;
al - ways, on - ly for my King;
it shall be no lon - ger mine;



que a mis ma - nos pue - da guiar el im -
take my feet and let them be swift and
take my in - tel - lect and use ev - 'ry
take my lips and let them be filled with
take my heart, it is thine own; it shall



Refrain/Estribillo
pul - so de tu a - mor.
beau - ti - ful for thee.
pow'r as thou shalt choose.
mes - sag - es from thee.
be thy roy - al throne.

- 2 *Que mis pies tan sólo en pos de lo santo puedan ir, y que a ti, Señor, mi voz, se complazca en bendecir.* Estribillo
- 3 *Que mis labios al hablar hablen sólo de tu amor; que mis bienes dedicar yo los quiera a ti, Señor.* Estribillo

- 4 *Que mi tiempo todo esté consagrado a tu loor; que mi mente y su poder sean usados en tu honor.* Estribillo

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, adapt.; Spanish text: Vincent Mendoza, 1875-1955
Music: TOMA MI VOLUNTAD, William Dexeimer Pharris, b. 1956
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