NORTHWESTERN
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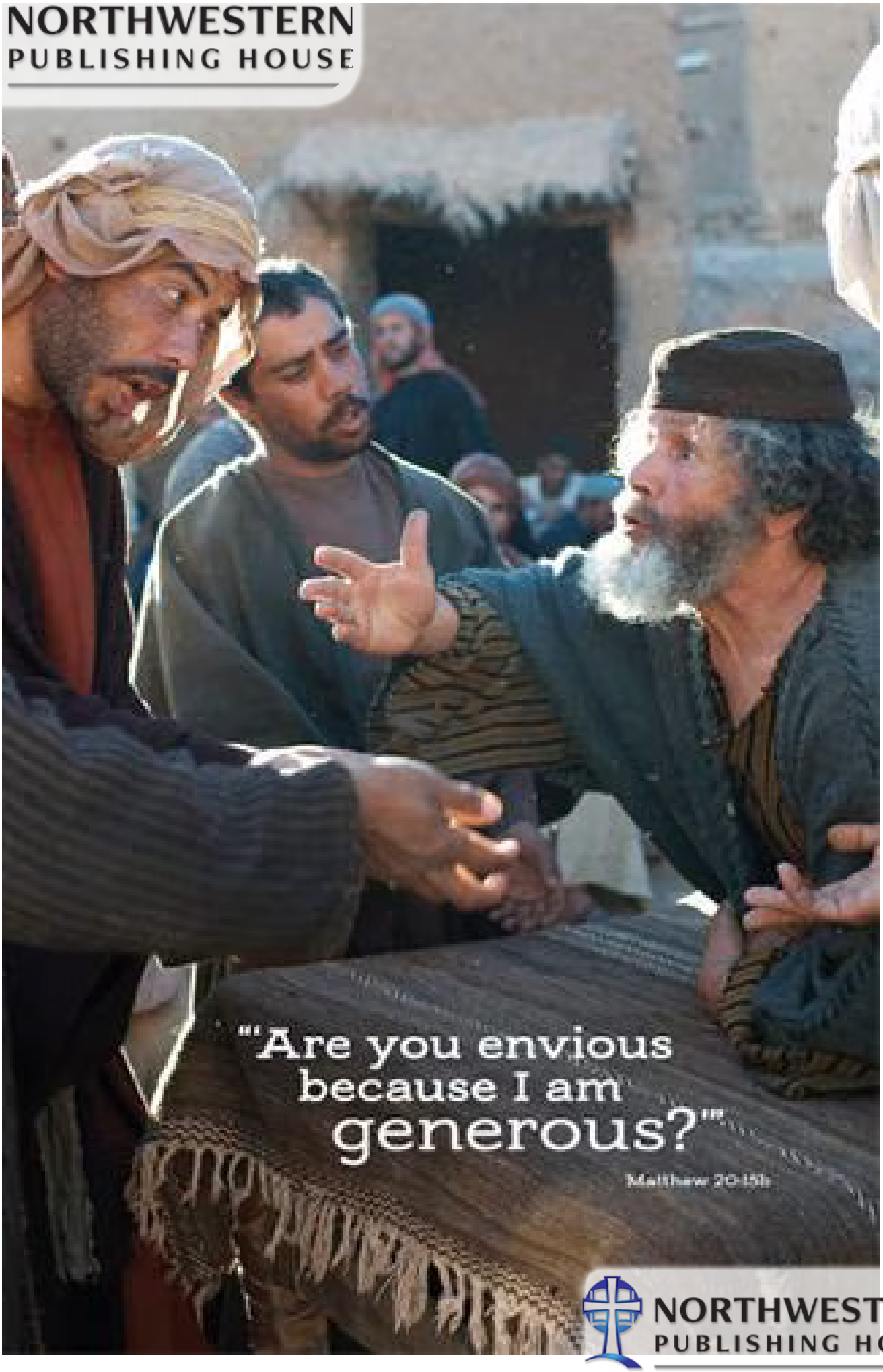

NORTHWESTERN
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Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church

4465 South Blosser Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455
Office: 805-937-0339
www.starlutheran.org
Pastor Michael Foley

Worship Service

Sunday, September 20th, 2026 10:00 a.m.

The Seventeenth Sunday after PENTECOST

Theme of the day: What is God like? Over the next four Sundays, the Church hears Jesus tell four parables which reveal characteristics of our God. Today's lesson causes us to ask: Is God fair? No, he's not. He doesn't give us what we deserve, and that's called mercy. In fact, he gives us what we don't deserve, and that's called grace.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Families are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of "HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE." This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God's inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

HYMN: # 752 **"Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings"**

♫ **Gracious God, you send great blessings**
new each morning all our days.
For your mercies never ending,
for your love we offer praise.
Lord, we pray that we, your people
who your gifts unnumbered claim,
through the sharing of your blessings
may bring glory to your name.

By your Word you formed creation
filled with creatures large and small;
as we tend that endless treasure
may our care encircle all.
Lord, we pray that we, your people
who your gifts unnumbered claim,
through the sharing of your blessings
may bring glory to your name.

In his earthly life, our Savior
knew the care of faithful friends;
may our deeds of dedication
offer love that never ends.
Lord, we pray that we, your people
who your gifts unnumbered claim,
through the sharing of your blessings
may bring glory to your name.

Please stand for last verse:

Heav'nly Father, may our caring
bear the imprint of your grace;
with the Son and Holy Spirit,
praise be yours in ev'ry place!
Lord, we pray that we, your people
who your gifts unnumbered claim,
through the sharing of your blessings
may bring glory to your name.

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: And also with you. *(spoken)*

M: God invites us to come into his presence to worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: ♫ Lord, have mercy.

M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: ♫ Christ, have mercy.

M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: ♫ Lord, have mercy.

M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

C: ♫ Amen.

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

♫ O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.
Almighty God, merciful Father,
you crown our life with your love.
You take away our sin; you comfort our spirit;
you make us pure and holy in your sight.

You did not spare your only Son, but gave him up for us all.
O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name in all the earth.
O Son of God, eternal Word of the Father,
you came to live with us;
you made your Father known;
you washed us from our sins in your own blood.
You are the King of glory; you are the Lord!
O Lord, our Lord,
how glorious is your name in all the earth.

M: Lord God, you call us to work in your kingdom and promise to reward us according to your grace. Help us to rid our minds of worldly expectations and rejoice that you freely pour out the blessings of salvation to all people; through the merits of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♫ Amen. *Please be seated.*

FIRST LESSON: Romans 9:6-16

[6]This does not mean that God's word has failed, because not all who are descended from Israel are really Israel, [7]and not all who are descended from Abraham are really his children. On the contrary, "Your line of descent will be traced through Isaac." [8]This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are counted as his descendants. [9]For this is what the promise said: "I will arrive at this set time, and Sarah will have a son."

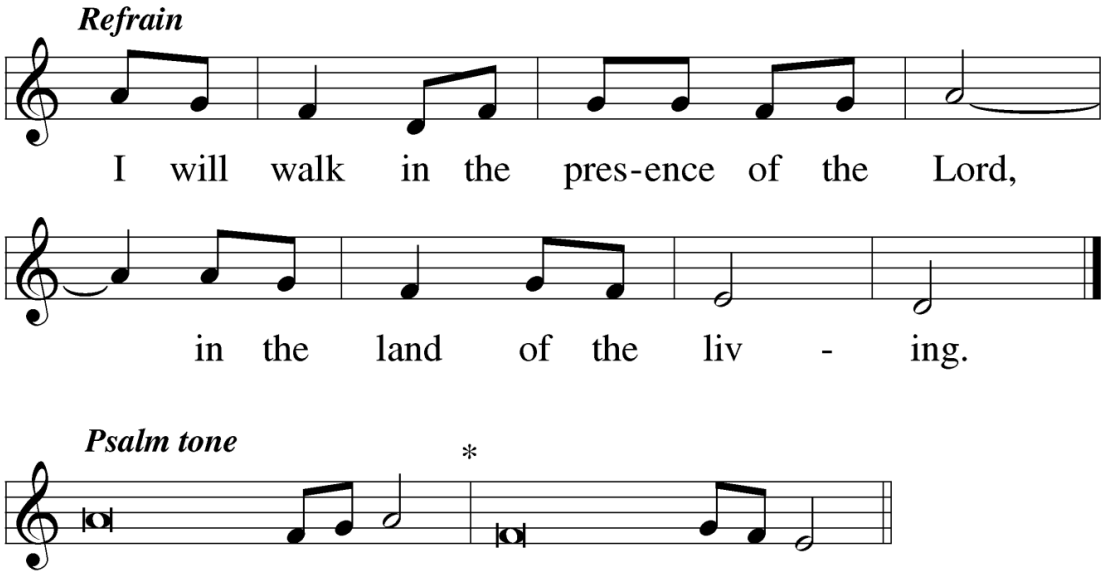
[10]Not only that, but Rebekah also had children by one man, our forefather, Isaac. [11]Even before the twins were born or did anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in election might continue—[12]not by works but because of him who calls us—it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." [13]Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

[14]What will we say then? Does this mean that God is unjust? Absolutely not! [15]For God says to Moses:

I will show mercy to whom I show mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

[16]So then, it does not depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

PSALM of the Day: Psalm 116



**I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;*
he heard my cry for mercy.**

**Because he turned his ear to me,*
I will call on him as long as I live.**

**The LORD is gracious and righteous;*
when I was in great need, he saved me.**

Refrain

**For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death,*
my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.**

**How can I repay the LORD*
for all his goodness to me?**

**I will lift up the cup of salvation*
and call on the name of the LORD.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain

Verse of the Day:

M: Alleluia. Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from ourselves, it is the gift of God. Alleluia.
(Ephesians 2:8)

C: ♫ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
These words are written that we may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 20:1-16

"Indeed the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.
[2]After agreeing to pay the workers a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.
[3]He also went out about the third hour and saw others standing unemployed in the marketplace. [4]To these he said, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is right.' So they went.
[5]Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour and did the same thing. [6]When he went out about the eleventh hour, he found others standing unemployed. He said to them, 'Why have you stood here all day unemployed?'
[7]"They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.'
"He told them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' [8]When it was evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last group and ending with the first.'
[9]"When those who were hired around the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. [10]When those who were hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But they each received a denarius too. [11]After they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner: [12]'Those who were last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who have endured the burden of the day and the scorching heat!'
[13]"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not make an agreement with me for a denarius?
[14]Take what is yours and go. I want to give to the last one hired the same as I also gave to you. [15]Can't I do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' [16]In the same way, the last will be first, and the first, last."

HYMN: # 581 **"Lord, 'Tis Not That I Did Choose You"**

♫ **Lord, 'tis not that I did choose you;**
that, I know, could never be,
for this heart would still refuse you
had your grace not chosen me.
You removed the sin that stained me,
cleansing me to be your own;
for this purpose you ordained me, that I live for you alone.

It was grace in Christ that called me,
taught my darkened heart and mind;
else the world had yet enthralled me,
to your heav'nly glories blind.
Now I worship none above you; for your grace alone I thirst,
knowing well that, if I love you, you, O Father, loved me first.

Praise the God of all creation,
praise the Father's boundless love.
Praise the Lamb, our expiation,
Priest and King enthroned above.
Praise the Spirit of salvation, him by whom our spirits live.
Undivided adoration to the great Jehovah give.

SERMON: Jonah 3:10-4:11

3 [10]When God saw their actions, that they had turned from their evil way, God relented from the disaster which he said he would bring on them, and he did not carry it out.

4 But to Jonah all this seemed very bad, and he became very angry.
[2]He prayed to the LORD, "LORD, wasn't this exactly what I said when I was still in my own country? That is why I previously fled to Tarshish, because I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and you relent from sending disaster. [3]So now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."
[4]But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"
[5]Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city. He made a shelter for himself there and sat in the shade under it, waiting to see what would happen in the city.

[6]Then the LORD God provided a plant and made it grow up over Jonah to provide shade over his head, to relieve him from his discomfort. So Jonah was very happy about the plant. [7]But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, and it attacked the plant so that it withered. [8]When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, so he said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

[9]But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" Jonah said, "I do have a right to be angry—angry enough to die!"

[10]So the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant. You did not work for it or make it grow. It grew up in one night and perished after one night. [11]So should I not be concerned for Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left—and also many animals?"

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING

Holy Communion, will be celebrated in today's service. The Bible teaches us that Jesus offers us his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins in the Lord's Supper. The Bible also instructs us that receiving the Lord's Supper together is a public expression of our complete "oneness," or unity of faith.

Because the Lord's Supper is an expression of our unity in faith, we invite to the Lord's Supper only those who have expressed that unity with us through membership in our congregation or one of our sister congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), or our sister church body, the ELS.

If you are a guest from another Christian church, we kindly ask that you simply refrain from participation in our celebration of the Lord's Supper today. We don't want to be presumptuous and put you in the position of declaring your agreement with our beliefs before you have had a chance to learn more.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE HOLY SACRAMENT

M: The Lord be with you.

C: ♫ And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: ♫ We lift them up to the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: ♫ It is right to give him thanks and praise.

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He sends the Holy Spirit to testify that we are his children and to strengthen us when we are weak.

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

♫ **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.**
The whole earth is full of your glory.
You are my God, and I will exalt you.
I will give you thanks, for you have become my salvation.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glory.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C: ♫ Amen.

♫ **O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN: # 575 "By Grace I'm Saved"

♫ **By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;**
my soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why waver at this word of promise?
Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?
So then this word must true remain:
by grace you, too, shall heav'n obtain.

By grace God's Son, our only Savior,
came down to earth to bear our sin.
Was it because of your own merit
that Jesus died your soul to win?
No, it was grace, and grace alone,
that brought him from his heav'nly throne.

By grace! O mark this word of promise
when you are by your sins oppressed,
when Satan plagues your troubled conscience,
and when your heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend
God by his grace to you did send.

By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
in tribulation's furnace tried,
by grace, despite all fear and trouble,
the Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
if grace were not my anchor sure?

By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;
in Jesus' promise I rejoice,
for though I know my heart's condition,
I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad, all grief has flown
since I am saved by grace alone.

THANKSGIVING

Please stand.

♫ **Thank the Lord and sing his praise.**
Tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice
and proudly bear his name.
He renews his promises and leads his people forth in joy
With shouts of thanksgiving.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♫ Amen.

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace.
Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: ♫ Amen. Amen. Amen.

HYMN: # 718 **"Though Thoughtless Thousands Choose the Road"**

♫ Though thoughtless thousands choose the road
that leads the soul away from God,
this happiness, dear Lord, be mine:
to live and die entirely thine.

In Christ, by faith, I wish to live,
from him my life, my all, receive,
to him devote my fleeting hours,
serve him alone with all my pow'rs.

Christ is my everlasting all,
to him I look, on him I call;
he will my ev'ry need supply
in time and through eternity.

Soon will the Lord, my life, appear;
soon shall I end my trials here,
leave sin and sorrow, death and pain.
To live is Christ; to die is gain.

Soon will the saints in glory meet,
soon walk through ev'ry golden street
and sing on ev'ry blissful plain,
"To live is Christ; to die is gain."

Christian Questions

prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament

1. Do you believe that you are a sinner? Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.

2. How do you know this?
From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.

3. Are you sorry for your sins?
Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.

4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?
His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation.
See Romans 6:21, 23.

5. Do you hope to be saved? Yes, that is my hope.

6. In whom then do you trust? In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Who is Christ? The Son of God, true God and man.

8. How many Gods are there?
Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?
He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

10. Did the Father also die for you?
He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.

11. How do you know this?
From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.

12. What are the words of institution?
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament? Yes, I believe it.

14. What convinces you to believe this?
The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that.

Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious.

Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7.

Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

From Luther's Small Catechism © 2019 Concordia Publishing House, cph.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS: Remember to pray for: little Elias, Dennis Douglas, George Caravana, Molly Webb, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Rylan Downs, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Marlene Washburn, Helen Cummings, Delores Bass, Rick Stovall, Suzy Garvin, Linda Wilkinson, Kathie Stillwater, Louise Perry, Phil Schaaf, and Ilene Trevarrow.

LWMS RALLY October 10, Crown of Life Lutheran, Yucaipa; registration starts at 8:30 a.m.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday	**ESL** (English as a Second Language), **6:00 p.m.**
Thursday	**Bible Class, 10:00 a.m.**
	ESL, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Sunday	**Bible Class & Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.**
	Worship, 10:00 a.m.

Joint Reformation Service

St Paul's First Lutheran Church
5244 Tujunga Ave
North Hollywood, CA 91601

Sunday, October 25 - 4:00 p.m.

Speaker: MLC Professor
Paul Koelpin

www.starlutheran.org