

First Lutheran Church – ELCA
Worship Bulletin–17th Sunday after Pentecost
September 19, 2021

PRELUDE

WELCOME

GATHER SONG: “Down to the River”

As I went down to the river to pray; Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown; Good Lord show me the way

O sisters let’s go down; Let’s go down, come on down

O sisters let’s go down; Down to the river to pray

O brothers let’s go down; Let’s go down, come on down

O brothers let’s go down, Down to the river to pray

O fathers let’s go down; Let’s go down, come on down

O fathers let’s go down; Down to the river to pray

O mothers let’s go down; Let’s go down, come on down

O mothers let’s go down; Down to the river to pray

O sinners, let’s go down; Let’s go down, come on down

O sinners, let’s go down; Down to the river to pray

CALL TO WORSHIP

Your steadfast love, O God, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies!

Your righteousness is like the mountains, your wisdom as deep as the sea!

How precious is your faithfulness to us, O God.

All may come to take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Come, let us worship God.

OPENING HYMN - “I’ll Fly Away” (TFF 176)

Some glad morning when this life is o’er; I’ll fly away

To a home on God’s celestial shore; I’ll fly away

I’ll fly away oh glory, I’ll fly away; When I die, hallelujah by and by; I’ll fly away

When the shadows of this life have grown; I’ll fly away

Like a bird from prison bars has flown; I’ll fly away

I’ll fly away oh glory, I’ll fly away; When I die, hallelujah by and by; I’ll fly away

Just a few more weary days and then; I’ll fly away

To a land where joys shall never end; I'll fly away
I'll fly away oh glory, I'll fly away; When I die, hallelujah by and by; I'll fly away

PRAYER OF THE DAY: "Cowboy Prayer" Charles Badger Clark

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-cowboy-s-prayer/>

Oh Lord, I've never lived where churches grow. I love creation better as it stood. That day You finished it so long ago and looked upon Your work and called it good. I know that others find You in the light. That's sifted down through tinted window panes and yet I seem to feel You near tonight. In this dim, quiet starlight on the plains.

I thank You, Lord, that I am placed so well, that You have made my freedom so complete; That I'm no slave of whistle, clock or bell, Nor weak-eyed prisoner of wall and street. Just let me live my life as I've begun And give me work that's open to the sky; Make me a pardner of the wind and sun, And I won't ask a life that's soft or high.

Let me be easy on the man that's down; Let me be square and generous with all.
I'm careless sometimes, Lord, when I'm in town, but never let 'em say I'm mean or small! Make me as big and open as the plains, as honest as the hawse between my knees, clean as the wind that blows behind the rains, free as the hawk that circles down the breeze!

Forgive me, Lord, if sometimes I forget. You know about the reasons that are hid.
You understand the things that gall and fret; you know me better than my mother did. Just keep an eye on all that's done and said and right me, sometimes, when I turn aside, and guide me on the long, dim, trail ahead that stretches upward toward the Great Divide.

CHILDREN'S SERMON: "When the Going Gets Rough" <https://sermons4kids.com/roughing-it.html>

FIRST LESSON: Jeremiah 11:18-20

Today's reading tells of the suffering of the prophet Jeremiah, who announced God's word to Judah but was met with intense opposition and persecution. Jeremiah continues to trust in God in the midst of his suffering.
¹⁸It was the LORD who made it known to me, and I knew; then you showed me their evil deeds. ¹⁹But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. And I did not know it was against me that they devised schemes, saying, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will no longer be remembered!" ²⁰But you, O LORD of hosts, who judge righteously, who try the heart and the mind, let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.

PSLAM: Psalm 54

God is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life. (Ps. 54:4)

¹Save me, O God, by your name; in your might, defend my cause.

²**Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.**

³For strangers have risen up against me, and the ruthless have sought my life, those who have no regard for God.

⁴**Behold, God is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life.**

⁵Render evil to those who spy on me; in your faithfulness, destroy them.

⁶**I will offer you a freewill sacrifice and praise your name, O LORD, for it is good.**

⁷For you have rescued me from every trouble, and my eye looks down on my enemies.

SECOND LESSON: James 3:13-4:3,7-8a

The wisdom God gives unites our hearts and minds. Instead of living to satisfy our own wants and desires, we manifest this wisdom in peace, gentleness, mercy, and impartiality toward others.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. ^{4:1}Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ²You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ^{8a}Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

GOSPEL: Mark 9:30-37

Jesus' teaching and action in this text are directed to the church whenever it is seduced by the world's definition of greatness: prestige, power, influence, and money. The antidote to such a concern for greatness is servanthood.

³⁰[Jesus and the disciples went on] and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." ³²But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. ³³Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" ³⁴But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

MESSAGE "The Code of the West"

First chronicled by the famous western writer, Zane Grey, in his 1934 novel *The Code of the West*, no "written" code ever actually existed. However, the hardy pioneers who lived in the west were bound by these unwritten rules that centered on hospitality, fair play, loyalty, and respect for the land. Ramon Adams, a Western historian, explained it best in his 1969 book, *The Cowman and His Code of Ethics*, saying, in part:

"Back in the days when the cowman with his herds made a new frontier, there was no law on the range. Lack of written law made it necessary for him to frame some of his own, thus developing a rule of behavior which became known as the "Code of the West." These homespun laws, being merely a gentleman's agreement to certain rules of conduct for survival, were never written into statutes, but were respected everywhere on the range.

Though the cowman might break every law of the territory, state and federal government, he took pride in upholding his own unwritten code. His failure to abide by it did not bring formal punishment, but the man who broke it became, more or less, a social outcast. His friends 'hazed him into the cutbacks' and he was subject to the punishment of the very code he had broken."

Though the Code of the West was always unwritten, here is a “loose” list of some of the guidelines:

- *Don't inquire into a person's past. Take the measure of a man for what he is today.
- *Never steal another man's horse. A horse thief pays with his life.
- *Defend yourself whenever necessary.
- *Look out for your own.
- *Remove your guns before sitting at the dining table...
- *...Don't make a threat without expecting dire consequences.
- *Never pass anyone on the trail without saying “Howdy”.
- *When approaching someone from behind, give a loud greeting before you get within shooting range.
- *Don't wave at a man on a horse, as it might spook the horse. A nod is the proper greeting.
- *After you pass someone on the trail, don't look back at him. It implies you don't trust him.
- *Riding another man's horse without his permission is nearly as bad as making love to his wife. Never even bother another man's horse.
- *...A cowboy doesn't talk much; he saves his breath for breathing.
- *No matter how weary and hungry you are after a long day in the saddle, always tend to your horse's needs before your own, and get your horse some feed before you eat.
- *Cuss all you want, but only around men, horses, and cows.
- *Complain about the cooking and you become the cook....
- *...Do not practice ingratitude.
- *A cowboy is pleasant even when out of sorts. Complaining is what quitters do, and cowboys hate quitters.
- *Always be courageous. Cowards aren't tolerated in any outfit worth its salt.
- *A cowboy always helps someone in need, even a stranger or an enemy.
- *Never try on another man's hat.
- *Be hospitable to strangers. Anyone who wanders in, including an enemy, is welcome at the dinner table. The same was true for riders who joined cowboys on the range.
- *Give your enemy a fighting chance.
- *Never wake another man by shaking or touching him, as he might wake suddenly and shoot you.
- *Real cowboys are modest. A braggart who is “all gurgle and no guts” is not tolerated.
- *Be there for a friend when he needs you.
- *Drinking on duty is grounds for instant dismissal and blacklisting.
- *A cowboy is loyal to his “brand,” to his friends, and those he rides with.
- *Never shoot an unarmed or unwarned enemy. This was also known as “the rattlesnake code”: always warn before you strike. However, if a man was being stalked, this could be ignored.
- *Never shoot a woman no matter what.
- *Consideration for others is central to the code, such as: Don't stir up dust around the chuckwagon, don't wake up the wrong man for herd duty, etc.
- *Respect the land and the environment by not smoking in hazardous fire areas, disfiguring rocks, trees, or other natural areas.
- *Honesty is absolute – your word is your bond, a handshake is more binding than a contract.
- *Live by the Golden Rule.”

(<https://www.legendsofamerica.com/we-codewest>, Compiled and edited by Kathy Weiser/Legends of America, updated September 2020, Accessed September 14, 2021)

These rules might make us chuckle, but, considering the time and reality, they mostly make sense. Today, our second reading is from the Book of James. As Lutherans, we tend to not spend a lot of time looking at the book of James. As a Lutheran, it feels strange to preach on the book of James because Martin Luther, the reformer who led to our denomination, was openly very critical of the book. He felt that the book didn't speak much about Jesus and certainly didn't emphasize being saved by faith alone instead of by the works. As maybe Luther was getting at, I do think it is important to read the book of James and today's passage remembering the entirety of the Bible, just as that is important when reading any passage of the Bible. This passage encourages us to live like Jesus lived. However, we know that we often don't. We know that we still have grace even when we don't live like God wants us to. God's grace and mercy poured out on undeserving people is, in my opinion, one of the strongest, most profound themes throughout the entire Bible.

This being said, God's guidance and rules about how to live with each other are not insignificant. Just because our salvation doesn't depend on us living perfectly, doesn't mean our daily well-being and the well-being of those around us isn't, obviously, highly dependent on how we live. The code of the west existed so that people would be able to live together reasonably well despite a lack of law enforcement and resources. The early church, too, was trying to figure out what it meant to be a church together in the middle of all sorts of internal and external pressures. The book of James offered guidance at a crucial time. The words in this book, though, are still applicable and helpful today. God wants us to have abundant life right here and now, and God equips us with encouragements and rules to help us live in this ways. James L Boyce describes the book of James like this:

[The opening verses of James] in produce these which are then revised in the rest of the letter: joy, wisdom, creation, word, first fruits, faith, blessing, growth, endurance. These themes give powerful encouragement for responsible Christian action amid the complex realities of daily life. Christians are urged to conduct their lives according to the wisdom "from above," from God who is the giver of "every perfect gift"... Empowered by God's "implanted word" Christians are called to be not only "hearers" but "doers," whose faith shows forth in specific acts of love that sustain the neighbor and community. The reminder of the letter illustrates aspect of this practice "wisdom from above"... showing mercy rather than partiality...; using speech to bless rather than harm the neighbor....; being humble before God and preventing conflicts and disputes...; living by God's mercy today rather than worrying about tomorrow....; working for justice for the poor and needy....; and, finally, praying constantly and confidently for healing, forgiveness, and life in community... (Lutheran Study Bible, James Boyce, Augsburg Fortress Press, p. 1992)

This week, may the words of James be like our code of the west. Are our works done with gentleness and born of wisdom? Are we bitter? Are we selfish? Do we allow our greed to affect our actions and relationships?

James words can feel like a list of things we are trying to live up to, but today's passage leaves us with a promise. The Code of the West was a promise that, if you lived in this way, things were more likely to go well for you, at least in regards to relating to others. The book of James offers an even better promise: As we serve trying to reflect God's goodness, God draws closer to us. I might state that God is always close to us, but as we live practicing love and goodness, we become more aware of the God who is always blessing us.

As we finish a weekend of festivities and celebration, may we also use this time to think about how we want to continue to share and live in goodness. May we also dwell and rest in God's goodness that is always waiting abundantly for us!

HYMN OF THE DAY: Amazing Grace

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
- 3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

CREED: A NEW CREED (United Church of Canada)

We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy God, Creator of all, we thank you for all the gifts that you have given us. With thankful hearts we offer our gifts for the care of your creation and the healing of your world. Use our gifts and bless all that they may touch. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. (United Church of Canada)

PRAYERS

Lord, we give you thanks for another weekend of great celebration. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, be with our Sunday school as they gather together for their first Sunday of classes. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for the continued efforts of rebuilding and recovering from those who were affected by hurricanes, tropical storms, tornados and fires. Provide for them. Foster generosity in all of us to care for our neighbors in need. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, we pray for our first ecumenical Sunday school that will be gathering today. Bless their conversations and help us to continue to find ways to support each other. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of community, we pray for the church around the world. Unite us in our love for you. Help us overcome our divisions, that we are encouraged to work together for your sake. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of cooperation, we pray for nations of the world embroiled in conflict (especially). Inspire leaders to listen to each other and work towards peaceful solutions to disagreements. Protect the vulnerable, especially children, who cannot find safety in their home or country. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of comfort, we pray for all who live with mental or physical illness. Help them find appropriate care. Bring healing and wholeness when the path forward seems bleak. We especially remember **Members:** Dave Livingston, Linda Towne, Al Luig, Janice Berger, Sandy Rogers, Todd Hallstrom, Charlene Wachter, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson; **Members in Nursing Homes:** Bob Dieter, Don Grant, Albert Mattisen, Bobbie Elvin, Sandra Marsh; **Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender; **Family Members & Friends:** Arlene (Fern Burmeister's sister), Rita Zinnel (Natalie's mom), Butch Zeiner (Valerie Veen's brother), Maverick Thalberg (Fern Burmeister's great-grandson), Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son); **Our service men and women and Love INC.** Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of consolation, we give you thanks for our loved ones who have died and pray for all who grieve today (especially). Shine your grace on all your saints. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.** Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, 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.

BLESSING

May the rains fall on your pastures and the grass grow belly high. May your calves get fat and sassy and none of your cows be dry. May your horses be sure footed and blessed with good cow sense. May your neighbours lend a hand when it's time to fix the fence. May the sun shine on your crops when you harvest in the fall. May your handshake be considered your word by one and all. When your life is filled with laughter or when it's sad and grey, may those you love be with you to share each blessed day. – Anne Slade, 1998

SENDING SONG: "Do Lord" (TFF 178)

Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me
Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Look away beyond the blue.

You're my light and my salvation, I won't be afraid!
You're the stronghold of my life, by You all things were made.
Foes attack me, hassle me, but I will never fade, For I move in the strength of the Lord.

Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me
Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Look away beyond the blue.

Though a host encamp against me, I will never fear!
Even though a war surrounds me, You are always near.
One thing I have asked of You that I will seek for sure; Is to live in the house of the Lord.

Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me
Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Look away beyond the blue.

You will hide me in Your shelter in the day of strife;
You'll conceal me in Your tent or set me on the height.
Now my head is lifted up above the storms of night, So I'll sing to the name of the Lord.

Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me
Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Look away beyond the blue.

Glory be to God the Father and to God the Son;
Glory be to God the Spirit, ever Three in One.
As it was in the beginning, till our race is won; We can live in the light of the Lord.

Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me
Do, Lord, O do, Lord, O do remember me; Look away beyond the blue.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

FELC SCHEDULE FOR September 20-26, 2021

Monday - 20	9:00AM	BULLETIN DEADLINE
	2:00PM	Meadow's Bible Study
Tuesday - 21	7:00AM	Early Risers Bible Study
	2:00PM	GriefShare
	5:00PM	Stewardship Team
	6:00PM	Finance Team
	7:30PM	Church Council
Wednesday - 22	3:30PM	KFC
	5:15PM	Meal
	6:00PM	Worship
	6:30PM	7 th & 8 th Grade Confirmation
	6:30PM	Sanctuary Choir
	7:30PM	Youth Group
Thursday - 23		<i>Autumn Begins</i>
Friday - 24		Pastor's Day Off
Saturday - 25		
Sunday - 26	9:00AM	Worship – 18 th Sunday after Pentecost
	10:00AM	Sunday School

Harvest Dinner at Grace Lutheran has been cancelled.

Women Seeking God - A Multi-denominational Weekend Event will be held on Friday, September 24 from 6:00-9:00 pm and Saturday, September 25 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at St. Matthews Lutheran Church. Early bird cost is \$49! After September 10-\$59 To register go to www.womenseekinggodbloom.eventbrite.com, call Love INC. at 507-727-7290 or stop at 1505 Dover Street, Worthington, MN. Price includes: evening treats, light breakfast and catered lunch.