

# EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Bethel & Hemnes Lutheran Churches

July 26, 2020



*In baptism God promises that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith, ancient yet ever new. In today's gospel reading Jesus offers images drawn from ordinary life that reveal something of the reign of God. It is like a tree that becomes a safe and sheltering home, like yeast that penetrates and expands, like a treasured pearl, like a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first.*

## ✠GATHERING✠

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as we begin.*

P. We are gathered in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C. Amen.

P. Trusting God's promise of forgiveness, let us confess our sin against God and one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

P. Loving God,

C. we confess that we have not loved You with our whole hearts; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have failed to worship You with our whole being and to share the abundance of grace You give us. We have acted out of selfish ambition rather than the interests of others; we have nursed grudges rather than seeking reconciliation and peace. Forgive us and renew in us the mind of Christ Jesus, that we may live according to Your will. Amen.

P. Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. In the mercy of Almighty God, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; and for His sake, I declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sin, in the name of the Father, and the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit. (*Rom. 5:1a, 5b, 8b*)

C. Amen.

### GREETING

P. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C. And also with you.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of Your Son You bring us into Your kingdom of justice and mercy. Open our hearts and minds to You, that we may live in harmony with Your will and receive the gifts of Your Spirit; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Amen.

## † WORD †

### FIRST READING: I Kings 3:5-12

*Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.*

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup>And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to Your servant my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward You; and You have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup>And now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup>And Your servant is in the midst of the people whom You have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give Your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern Your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this, Your great people?"

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the LORD that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup>I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."

The Word of the Lord.      Thanks be to God.

### Psalm 119:129-136

Your decrees are wonderful;  
therefore I obey them with all my heart.

<sup>130</sup>When Your word goes forth it gives light;  
it gives understanding to the simple.

<sup>131</sup>I open my mouth and pant;  
I long for Your commandments.

<sup>132</sup>Turn to me in mercy,  
as You always do to those who love Your name.

<sup>133</sup>Steady my footsteps in Your word;  
let no iniquity have dominion over me.

<sup>134</sup>Rescue me from those who oppress me,  
and I will keep Your commandments.

<sup>135</sup>Let Your countenance shine upon Your servant  
and teach me Your statutes.

<sup>136</sup>My eyes shed streams of tears,  
because people do not keep Your law.

**SECOND READING: Romans 8:26-39**

*These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.*

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those whom He justified He also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not with Him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, Who died, yes, Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.      **Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL: St. Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

*Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and His disciples proclaim the good news that “the kingdom of heaven is near!” Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.*

**C. (spoken) Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus] put before the crowds another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but

when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

<sup>33</sup>He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

<sup>44</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup>on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup>when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup>So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup>and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup>And He said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

P. The Gospel of the Lord. C. (*spoken*) Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son,  
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the  
Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was  
crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated  
at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen

## ✠ PRAYER ✠

### OFFERING

If you have not signed up for electronic giving, you can mail your offering in to Bethel (P.O. Box 126, Porter, 56280), you may drop it in the offering box at the church, or you may make your offering online at our website ([www.bethelofporter.com](http://www.bethelofporter.com)).

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

P. Gracious God,

C. You open Your hand, filling our lives with all good things and renewing the face of the earth. We offer our gifts in thanksgiving for all that we have received from Your bounty. Accept them for the sake of Him who offered His life for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Confident of God's care for us in the midst of the world's sufferings, we join together in the power of the Spirit to pray for the church, the earth, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Merciful God, Your reign is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a fishing net. Open Your word to Christians around the world. Reveal Yourself to us in ways both traditional and surprising, in places old and new. Bless our bishops, pastors, deacons, and other church leaders, as they face their challenging tasks. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

When your Word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of Your creation: Bless the efforts of scientists and researchers, especially those seeking a vaccine. Give to plants and animals the water and land they require. Form us into grateful and healing caretakers of Your earth. We thank You for all the scientific discoveries that You grant to humankind. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations of the world into the welcoming shade of Your merciful reign. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and to resist the ways of violence. Stifle the lust for conquest. Bring peace to the Middle East. Be with the people of Hong Kong. Move us away from divisive attitudes and policies. Lead our president, governor, and legislators to speak with honesty, to strive for justice, and to work to alleviate the nation's needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

Your Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for the saints according to Your will. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice to those who are oppressed and healing to the sick, we pray especially for Merv, Emily, Angie, Shirlee, Lynette and Brenda. Comfort the countless thousands who are dealing with the coronavirus. Accompany those living with anxiety and despair. Form us to be Your arms of mercy. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

You show steadfast love and direct us to ask of You what we need. Give to the Youth of afflicted nations an inspiring dream of what their future might be. Give them patience to await a time of safety. Direct all schools from daycare through graduate school to find an acceptable way forward. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

In You our lives are never lost. In gratitude for the lives of our beloved dead, we pray that You would strengthen us by the inspiring witness of Your people in all times and places. Embolden our witness now and on day gather us with all Your saints in light everlasting. Lord, in Your mercy,

C. hear our prayer.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from Your love, we offer these prayers to You; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Amen.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Praise and thanks to You, holy God, for by Your Word You made all things: You spoke light into the darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being.

By Your Word You called Your people Israel to tell of Your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life.

Through Jesus, Your Word made flesh, You speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of Your self-giving love.

Send Your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle Your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of the world in need; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom, with You and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

C. Amen.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

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  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.

## ✠ SENDING ✠

### BLESSING

P. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. May you be rooted and grounded in His love.  
Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C. Amen

### DISMISSAL

P. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

### Those who Serve:

Ministers: All the People of God

Presider: Pastor Ellen Munter

Camera: Josh Sumption

### How to reach us:

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Offering:** During this period of suspended in-person worship services, Bethel and Hemnes continue to have recurring expenses. Please remember to give financially to support the ministry of our congregations. For Bethel, you may mail your offering to the church office or give online at <http://bit.ly/givebethel>



Merv Anderson Emily Morton  
Angie Denelsbeck Anderson Shirlee Gabbert  
Lynette Christie Brenda Knutson

# Bridal Shower



**Bridal Shower for Megan Sumption August 9<sup>th</sup>!**  
Everyone is invited to an Open House Bridal Shower for Megan at the Café August 9<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am-12:00pm.

## Acknowledgements

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