

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2020 (Real Church Virtual)



Greeting and Prayer of the Day

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!**

A: Let us pray together,

C: **God of love, 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.

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

Verse 1

Lord, whose love in humble service bore the weight of human need, who upon the cross, forsaken, worked your mercy's perfect deed; we, your servants, bring the worship not of voice alone, but heart; consecrating to your purpose ev'ry gift which you impart.

Verse 2

Still your children wander homeless; still the hungry cry for bread; still the captives long for freedom; still in grief we mourn our dead. As you, Lord, in deep compassion healed the sick and freed the soul, by your Spirit send your power to our world to make it whole.

Verse 3

As we worship grant us vision till your love's revealing light in its height and depth and greatness dawns upon our quickened sight, making known the needs and burdens your compassion bids us bear, stirring us to ardent service, your abundant life to share.

Verse 4

Called to worship to your service, forth in your dear name we go, to the child the youth, the aged, love in living deeds to show; hope and health, good-will and comfort, counsel, aid and peace we give, that your servants, Lord, in freedom may your mercy know and live.

First Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion 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 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 was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly

exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of 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 out 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

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

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.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – Pastor Paul

Apostles Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace / Interlude

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 deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Final Blessing

P: Mothering God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.
C: Amen.

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Remember the poor.
C: Thanks be to God.

Blessed Are Those

Chorus:

Blessed are those who do believe. Blessed are those who do believe. Though they have not seen they trust God faithfully.
(Sing twice)

Verse 1:

Some people doubt what they have not seen. They will not blindly follow what is said. Others view this as a weakness but it can authenticate instead. See my nail pierced hands. Come touch my wounded side. I give what you need for faith as you give your trust completely my Spirit will guide.

Chorus:

Blessed are those who do believe. Blessed are those who do believe. Though they have not seen they trust God faithfully.
(Sing twice)

Verse 2:

As I've been given so I give you to the world, forgive the sins of all, bringing hope to doubting faces, tearing down where hatred builds a wall. And as you bring life to places here and far, always keep in mind you are not loved for what you do but for whose you are.

Chorus:

Blessed are those who do believe. Blessed are those who do believe. Though they have not seen they trust God faithfully. (Sing twice)



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Blessing of the Animals is coming next Sunday, October 4th after the Greenspace worship

"2.0" is here! We are excited to announce that a new experience is now here for our online worship, and we're calling it "2.0"! On **Wednesday Nights**, join Pastor Paul and others for an online **Holden Evening Prayer or Taize service**, as we begin melding some of our typical "Celebrate!" content, along with footage from outdoor communion and other gatherings into a new Wednesday experience. We may also look to YOU for help with readings if you are willing/able!

The SEPTEMBER issue of the STAR is here! The STAR is no longer being subsidized by anonymous donors. We thank them for the generosity for 3 months and their hard work in preparing it for mailing. (There is even a rolling pin involved!!!) They are continuing to complete the lion's share of the work after it is printed, collated, and stapled, but now the cost of postage is being taken from the membership budget. If you read the STAR on line and have not told us, please make certain you contact the office or tell the Sunday greeter or hospitality team so we are not sending out copies needlessly. Printed STARs will also be available in the "Shooting Star box" outside the church entry later this week. Feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>

With the recent rescinding of Gov. Whitmer's full stay-at-home order and new guidelines by the Governor regarding different "phases" of safety for re-opening gathering venues, **we continue this week with our "Greenspace Worship" on the West Lawn. You are encouraged to B.Y.O.C. (Bring your own chair). Safety is our primary concern.**

The outdoor **"Shooting STAR Dispenser" at BLC is now full** with several paper publications, including the September STAR. If you would like a copy of a DVD, please contact the church and one will be produced for you.

Christ in Our Home Devotionals for Oct, Nov, Dec have arrived. They can be picked up at the name tag table on Sunday mornings, from the STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. The newest *Living Lutheran* magazine is also available in the same locations.

Altar flowers have returned to our worship services. If you would like to sign up for a particular weekend, you can call Sharon at 231-947-9880 or email her at admin@bethlehemtc.org – the cost is \$40 per week.

Today's altar flowers are donated by: *Karen Feahr in memory of her parents, Gordon and Dorothy Peterson, and to the Glory of God.*

"Help the Children School Supplies Project": During the changed times that the children in our schools have been enduring, Bethlehem would like to help. With the help of our member, Donna Novak, we have identified more than one school: Blair Elementary which is a school for at-risk students as is Traverse City High School. We are in the process of contacting a third school. Because students cannot share materials, EACH student will need their own school supplies, such pencils, markers, erasers, crayons and more. We will be collecting money to buy these much needed items. We have matching funds up to \$250 so we will have \$500 (or more) to help these young members of our community. For donations, please send a check made out to BLC and mark it "Good Samaritan Fund/School Supplies". **Today we will have a "noisy coin collection for the kids" during the service.** The items will then be purchased from a list provided by the schools.

Art & Craft Show at Bethlehem - Due to the unpredictable status of Current COVID-19, the October 10,2020 Show will not be taking place this year. With it being an indoor event, it would be difficult to keep the 50 creative artist/crafters and the many eager shoppers the required distance. Our goal is to make the fundraiser enjoyable and safe for all who enter our church. Please join us in 2021!

Enjoying God's gift of creation: Some members of the Monroe Small group have decided they really want to take advantage of the great outdoors in the fall before it gets too cold, and invites anyone to come along and join us. Cheryl Wegener is leading this mini-adventure on Sunday Sept. 27. Those in town should gather at the Church parking lot at 11:30 and bring a chair and a lunch. We will be heading to the Seven Bridges Area in the Rapid City/Kalkaska area (For those of you who get the Record Eagle, there was a picture from Seven Bridges on page 1, section B of Thursday 9/10.). Cheryl suggests this plan: The walk there takes about 5 minutes, and we can spend up to 1/2 hour there enjoying the scenery. From there, we can head to Freedom Park. Everyone should bring a lawn chair and their own lunch which we'll eat at Freedom Park while getting caught up on what everyone has been doing. Then we'll walk the trail at Freedom Park which takes about a half hour. If the weather is bad we will attempt to reschedule in October.

Share your name please! It can be hard to think of someone's name when you do not see the entire face because of a mask and when someone is wearing sunglasses. If you have an old name tag at home, please consider wearing it. If not, please stop at the greeter's table when you come for the greenspace service and you or the greeter can make you a tag. Even though we are mainly at a distance of 6 feet, it is still nice to hear you own name especially when you come forward for communion.

The BLC book club will be meeting by ZOOM on Thursday Oct 27 at 5:30. We will discuss *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes which is fiction based on the real women who rode horseback to deliver library books in a program developed by Eleanor Roosevelt. If you are not already on the list to receive the ZOOM link just send an email to Cindy Monroe at cmonroe@chartermi.net.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to *Pastor Paul* at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org or *Sharon* at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!