

WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

THE BIBLE – We believe that EVERY word in the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore the whole Bible is the true, unalterable Word of God, clearly teaching the way of salvation. (2Ti. 3:15-17).

GOD – We believe that God is ONE (Dt. 6:4) and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons (Mt. 3:13-17), the Father, our Creator and Preserver; the Son, Jesus, Who is both God and Man, and our only Saviour; the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts and enables us to live a God-pleasing life.

MAN – We believe that God created man with body and soul, in His image, but man of his own free will lost this image through sin. (Gn. 1:27; 2:7; 3.)

SIN – “Sin is the transgression of the Law.” (1Jn 3:4). There are two kinds of sin: original (inherited) sin (Ps. 51:5) and actual sin (sin in thought, word and deed) (Mt. 15:19). Man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

REDEMPTION – We believe that God out of pure love and mercy redeemed mankind from sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection shows that God was satisfied with the work of Christ. (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Ro. 4:25).

FAITH – We believe that the sinner must personally receive the merits of Jesus for salvation and trust that, “Jesus died for me.” (Jn 17:3; Ja 1:21; Ps. 31:14).

THE CHURCH – We believe that the church, established by Christ is the whole number of believers in Christ, for only believers are members of the church. Jesus Christ is its one and only foundation (Ep. 2:19-22). The church is found wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution.

SACRAMENTS – We believe that Christ instituted two sacraments, and when Baptism is administered to infants and adults, according to the command of Christ, God offers His grace and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). In the Lord’s Supper communicants receive in, with and under the bread and wine also Christ’s body and blood. Communicants believing this word of promise receive this for the forgiveness of sins (1Co. 11:24-25).

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST – We believe that Christ will return visibly to earth (Acts 1:11) on the Last Day (Mk. 13:32) to judge the world (Acts 10:42). The believers will go to heaven, to be with God forever (1Th. 4:13-18). The unbelievers will go to hell, eternally separated from God (Mt. 25:32, 46).

RESURRECTION – We believe that on the Last Day believers in Christ will rise from the dead, their souls reunited with their earthly bodies and glorified by Christ (Jn 14:19; 17:24).

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 18 A)

September 10, 2023

INTROIT

Psalm 92:1-4 (antiphon: Psalm 92:5)

*How great are your works, O LORD!
Your thoughts are very deep!
It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,
to the music of the lute and the harp,
to the melody of the lyre.
For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.*

**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.**

*How great are your works, O LORD!
Your thoughts are very deep!*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P *O God, from who all good proceeds. grant to us, Your humble servants, Your holy inspiration, that we may set our minds on the things that are right and, by Your merciful guiding, accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

C *♪[Amen]♪*

GRADUAL

Psalm 34:9, 19

*Fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing!
Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P *Lord, in Your mercy*
C **hear our prayer.**

Next Week's Readings from God's Word:
September 17 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 50:15-21; Psalm 103:1-12 (v.13);
Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

Ezekiel 33:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ “So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸ If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹ But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

Romans 13:1-10 (ESV)

^{13:1} Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Matthew 18:1-20 (ESV)

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³ and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

⁷ “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! ⁸ And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

¹⁰ “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two

or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Proper 18 A

Ezekiel 33:7–9

Romans 13:1–10

Matthew 18:1–20

Living as Humble Little Children of the Father

True greatness is not self-sufficient strength, but humility like that of a little child. The greatness of child-like faith receives all good things as gracious gifts from our Father in heaven. Apart from such faith, “*you will never enter the kingdom of heaven,*” but whoever is humbled like a little child will be “*the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 18:3–4). Though in our sin we deserve to be “*drowned in the depth of the sea*” (Matt. 18:6), we have instead been drowned (“buried”) with Christ in Baptism and then raised to the new, humble life of a child of God. The Lord sends His watchman to warn us with a word from His mouth, in order that we may not die in our iniquity, but be turned from our pride and selfishness to live (Ezek. 33:7–9). Thus we live in humility and faith before God as well as in love for our neighbor, which “*is the fulfilling of the law*” (Rom. 13:10). In the reverent fear of God, we do no harm to our neighbor, but we “*pay to all what is owed to them*” (Rom. 13:7) and we “*owe no one anything, except to love each other*” (Rom. 13:8).