

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, September 10th, 2023
THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST / 10:00 AM

*** CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, ✚ Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete. **Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Steadfast and faithful God,

you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In ✚ Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen.**

*** OPENING SONG**

As We Gather at Your Table



- 1 As we gath-er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
- 2 Turn our wor-ship in - to wit-ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
- 3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum-mon oth-er guests to share that feast



help us know, O God, your pres-ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
send us forth to love and serve you, bring-ing peace where there is strife.
where tri - um-phiant Love will wel-come those who had been last and least.

... song continues ...

* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)



Nour-ish us with sa-cred sto-ry till we claim it as our own;
Give us, Christ, your great com-pas-sion to for-give as you for-gave;
There no more will en-vy blind us nor will pride our peace de-stroy,



teach us through this ho-ly ban-quet how to make Love's vic-t'ry known.
may we still be-hold your im-age in the world you died to save.
as we join with saints and an-gels to re-peat the sound-ing joy.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: IN BABILONE, *Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse Boerenlities en Contradansen*, 1710

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* GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

And also with you.

Let us pray: O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy.

Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 33:7-11 (*for text of reading, see back of bulletin*)

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 119:33-40

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,
and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for that is my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to your decrees
and not to unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood;
give me life in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise to your servant,
which is for those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach that I dread,
because your judgments are good.

⁴⁰**Behold, I long for your commandments;
by your righteousness enliven me.**

SECOND READING: Romans 13:8-14 (for text of reading, see back of bulletin)

*** HYMN OF PRAISE**

I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me



1 I'm so glad I'm so glad
2 Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me. Sa - tan had me bound,
3 When I was in trou - ble, When I was in trou - ble,



Je - sus lift - ed me. I'm so glad
Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me,
When I was in trou - ble,



sing - ing glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Je - sus lift - ed me.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: JESUS LIFTED ME, African American spiritual

*** THE WORD OF GOD: Matthew 18:15-20**

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew:

(for text of reading, see back of bulletin)

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

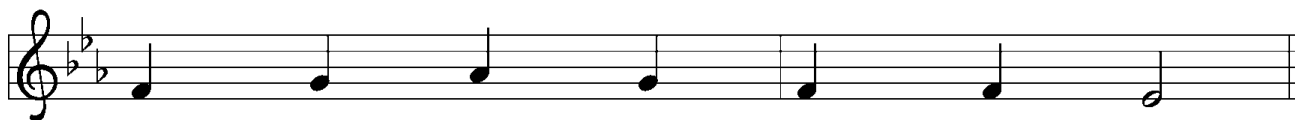
God, When Human Bonds Are Broken



1 God, when hu - man bonds are bro - ken and we lack the
2 Through that still - ness, with your Spir - it come in - to our
3 You in us are bruised and bro - ken: hear us as we
4 Send us, God of new be - gin - nings, hum - bly hope - ful
5 Give us faith to be more faith - ful, give us hope to



love or skill to re - store the hope of heal - ing,
world of stress, for the sake of Christ for - giv - ing
seek re - lease from the pain of ear - lier liv - ing;
in - to life. Use us as a means of bless - ing:
be more true, give us love to go on learn - ing:



give us grace and make us still.
all the fail - ures we con - fess.
set us free and grant us peace.
make us stron - ger, give us faith.
God, en - cour - age and re - new!

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823–1889

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* APOSTLE'S 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

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

A brief silence.

Hold us accountable, O God. Show your church where repentance is needed and lead us in paths of intentional compassion and listening. Help us extend hands of reconciliation and care, especially in relationships with other Christians and people of other faiths. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Reveal your miracles to us, O God. Move us to cherish you as we behold the wonders of creation. Renew the seas and the soil, the forests and the creatures that live in them. Turn us to ways of living that seek Earth's thriving. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Inspire us to lead with honor, O God. Guide judges and legislators, police, and government officials to create and uphold just laws. Move us to treat all people with dignity and guide our conversations with one another. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Help us comfort those who suffer, O God. Reassure any who are harmed by the wicked acts of others. Bring peace to all who are vulnerable, frightened, despairing, or sick (*especially*). Guard their waking and their sleeping. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Awaken us, O God. Challenge and encourage your people to value the vocation to which each is called. We pray for all discerning new possibilities or changing employment (*especially*). In all our diverse callings, teach us to love our neighbor above all else. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Be our hope, O God. We remember with thanksgiving your disciples who died in faith (*especially*). May their trust in your promise be our protection and our hope. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

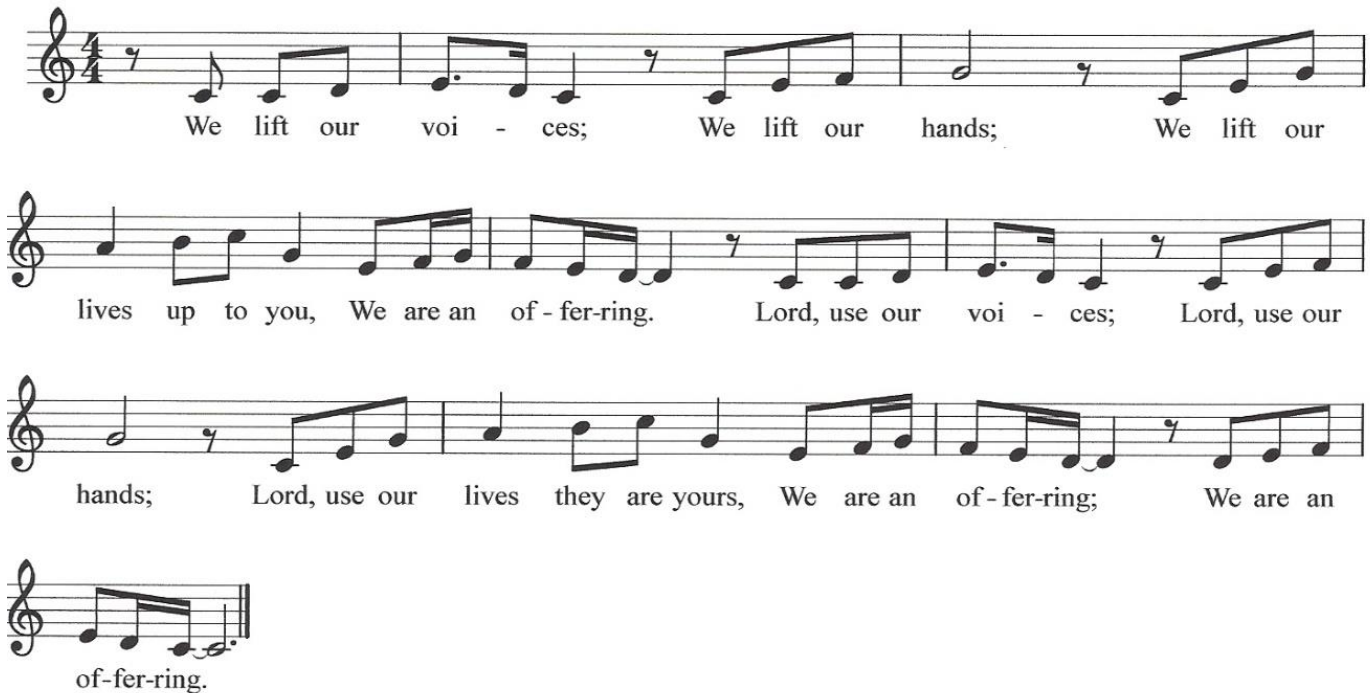
*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

* OFFERING SONG



We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our
lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our
hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an
of - fer-ring.

* OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray: God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
 Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.
 We come.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

*** POST COMMUNION HYMN**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.
Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free.
Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com-fort stilled you.
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free."

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written in a simple, accessible style. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes. The lyrics are: "3 'Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me. Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free. Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com-fort stilled you. Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free.'"

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

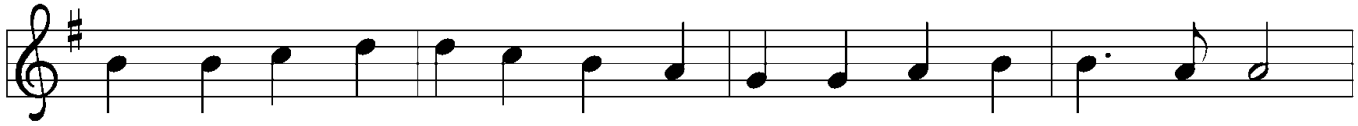
*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: The God of glory, ✝ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

CELEBRATIONS!!!

* CLOSING SONG

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee



1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1922

Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

* SENDING

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God.

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