

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

**Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**THE SIXTEENTH 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**

**Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven**

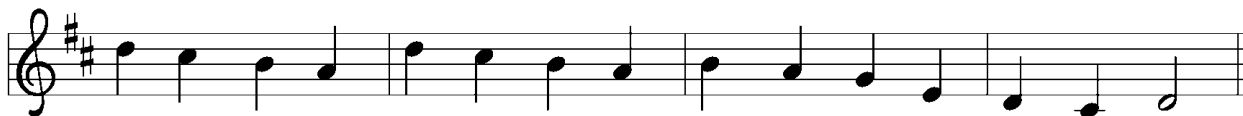


- 1 Praise, my soul, the King of heav - en; to his feet your trib - ute bring.
- 2 Praise him for his grace and fa - vor to our fore-bears in dis - tress.
- 3 Tend - er - ly he shields and spares us; well our fee - ble frame he knows.



Ran-somed, healed, re - stored, for - giv - en, ev - er - more his prais - es sing.  
Praise him, still the same for - ev - er, slow to chide and swift to bless.  
In his hands he gent - ly bears us, res - cues us from all our foes.

*... song continues ...*



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise the ev - er - last - ing King!  
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Glo - rious in his faith - ful - ness!  
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Wide - ly as his mer - cy flows.

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847

Music: PRAISE, MY SOUL, John Goss, 1800–1880

### \* 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, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

**FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21** (*for text of reading, see back of bulletin*)

### RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13

- [ <sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.
- <sup>2</sup>**Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all God's benefits—**
- <sup>3</sup>who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases;
- <sup>4</sup>**who redeems your life from the grave  
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**
- <sup>5</sup>who satisfies your desires with good things  
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
- <sup>6</sup>**O LORD, you provide vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.**
- <sup>7</sup>You made known your ways to Moses  
and your works to the children of Israel.
- ] <sup>8</sup>**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**
- <sup>9</sup>you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.
- <sup>10</sup>**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**
- <sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

*(psalm continues...)*

<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

**SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12** (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 18:21-35**

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

## Let Us Break Bread Together



1 Let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees;  
2 Let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees;  
3 Let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees.  
let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees.  
let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees.



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing



sun, O Lord, have mer-cy on me.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: BREAK BREAD TOGETHER, African American spiritual

### \* 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.*

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world (*like Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, whom we commemorate today*). 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.**

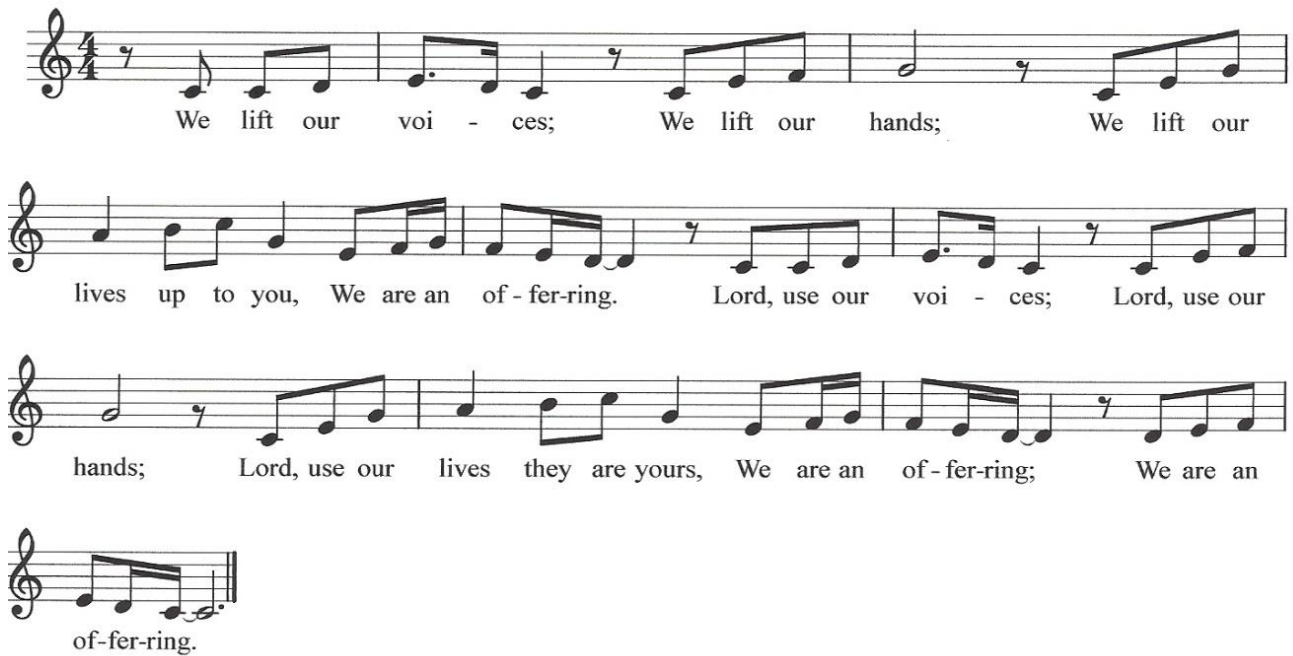
## \* SHARING OF THE PEACE

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.**

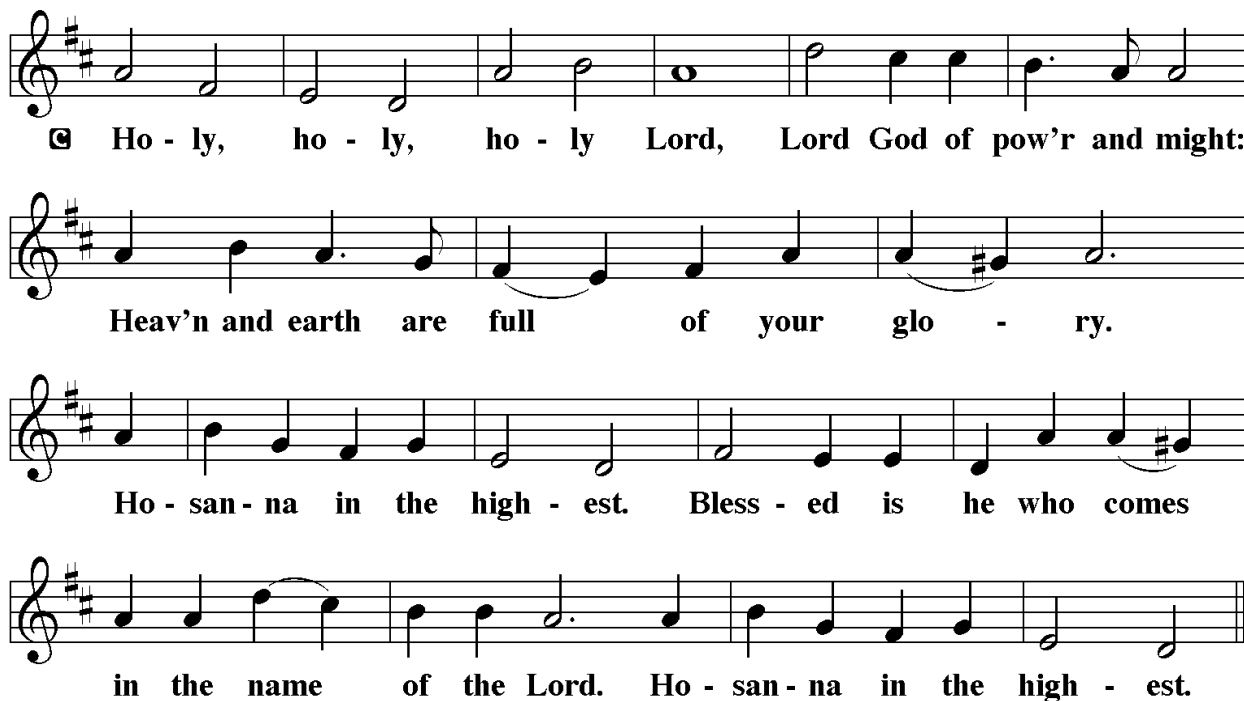
Lift up your hearts.

**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



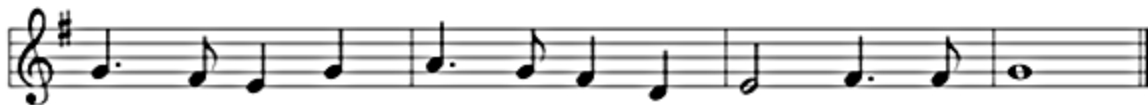
3 "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me.



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."

**\* 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**

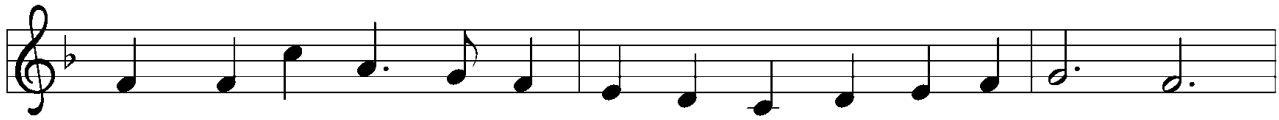
And now a blessing: The God of glory, ✝ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**CELEBRATIONS!!!**



\* CLOSING SONG

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty



1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre - a - tion!  
2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won-drous-ly reign - ing  
3 Praise to the Lord, who will pros - per your work and de - fend you;  
4 Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me a - dore him!



O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and sal - va - tion!  
and, as on wings of an ea - gle, up - lift - ing, sus - tain - ing.  
sure - ly his good - ness and mer - cy shall dai - ly at - tend you.  
All that has life and breath, come now with prais - es be - fore him!



Let all who hear now to his tem - ple draw near,  
Have you not seen all that is need - ful has been  
Pon - der a - new what the Al - might - y can do  
Let the a - men sound from his peo - ple a - gain.



join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion!  
sent by his gra - cious or - dain - ing?  
if with his love he be - friend you.  
Glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore him!

Text: Joachim Neander, 1650–1680; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.  
Music: LOBE DEN HERREN, *Ernewerten Gesangbuch*, Part II, Stralsund, 1665

\* SENDING

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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