

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 10, 2023

10:15 am

Prelude

Welcome

Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.

Announcements

Confession and 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.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #731 "Earth and All Stars!"

- 1. Earth and all stars! Loud rushing planets! Sing to the Lord a new song! Hail, wind and rain! Loud blowing snowstorm! Sing to the Lord a new song!**

Refrain: **God had done marvelous things. I too sing praises with a new song!**

- 2. Trumpet and pipes! Loud clashing cymbals! Sing to the Lord a new song! Harp, lute and lyre! Loud humming cellos! Sing to the Lord a new song!**
Refrain

- 3. Engines and steel! Loud pounding hammers! Sing to the Lord a new song! Limestone and beams! Loud building workers! Sing to the Lord a new song!** *Refrain*

4. Classrooms and labs! Loud boiling test tubes! Sing to the Lord a new song! Athlete and band! Loud cheering people! Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*

5. Knowledge and truth! Loud sounding wisdom! Sing to the Lord a new song! Daughter and son! Loud praying members! Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*

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Prayer of the Day

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.

Readings and Psalm

First Reading: Ezekiel 33:7-11

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

⁷So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" ¹¹Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Psalm: 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

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The 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, "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. *Alleluia.* (2 Cor. 5:19)

The Holy Gospel according to the book of Matthew, beginning with the Tenth chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW #603 "God, When Human Bonds are Broken"

1. God, when human bonds are broken and we lack the love or skill to restore the hope of healing, give us grace and make us still.
2. Through that stillness, with your Spirit come into our world of stress, for the sake of Christ forgiving all the failures we confess.
3. You in us are bruised and broken: hear us as we seek release from the pain of earlier living; set us free and grant us peace.
4. Send us, God of new beginnings, humbly hopeful into life. Use us as a means of blessing: make us stronger, give us faith.
5. Give us faith to be more faithful, give us hope to be more true, give us love to go on learning: God, encourage and renew!

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Apostle's 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.**

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Offering Hymn: ELW #686 "We Give Thee I Own" (1st verse)

1. We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;

all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

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Offering Prayer

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.

Prayers of Intercession

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

Blessing

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

Sending Hymn: ELW #836 "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

- 1. Joyful, joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love! Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee, praising thee, their sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away. Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.**
- 2. All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heav'n reflect thy rays, stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flow'ry meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird, and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in thee.**
- 3. Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest, well-spring of the joy of living, ocean-depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine!**

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Dismissal

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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