

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 17, 2023 ~ 10:30 a.m.

The Gathering

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE Adagio (For the Glass Harmonica) By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

INTROIT Trust thee, in the Lord forever Arr. By Henry G. Le

INVOCATION

God who calls, it is you who gathers us together and forms us as a community. It is you who makes us uniquely individual and who designs us for companionship. Let us journey together this day in your presence reminded of our interdependence with one another. May we see your glory and be inspired to demonstrate your goodness and care through our lives. Amen.

Gathering Around the Word

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Bless the Holy One with our whole selves. Praise the Maker of our being!

Many: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.

One: The Sovereign One endows us with many gifts and equips us to do good work.

Many: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.

One: Holy Love entered the world without condemnation but with grace and forgiveness, mercy and compassion, redemption and restoration.

Many: Hallelujah! We give thanks for the mighty deeds and the good works of our God!

HYMN There's a Wideness in God's Mercy # 115

Vs. 1 There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice,
Which is more than liberty.

Vs. 2 There is welcome for the sinner
And more graces for the good.
There is mercy with the Savior,
There is healing in His blood.

Vs. 3 For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of one's mind.
And the heart of the Eternal

Is most wonderfully kind.
Vs. 4 If our love were but more simple
We should take God at God's word.
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgmental and hyper-critical of our neighbors, family, and friends. We project our own shortcomings onto others in order to deflect attention from our mistakes. We withhold and condition forgiveness, mercy, and grace from those who wrong us at the same time we seek it for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves.

UNISON PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world in need of an infusion of grace for transformation. In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer, and let us forgive as you forgive. Amen.

Silence is kept.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved, grace has always been part of God's relationship with humanity. God does not want you condemned or held captive by unresolved anger leading to bitterness. Rather, Creator desires you to be released as both forgiven and forgiver so that all may live a life that is whole, free, and flourishing.

PASTORAL PRAYER and THE LORD'S PRAYER ["Sins"]

ANTHEM Let Justice Flow Like a River By Marty Haugen

The Word

SCRIPTURE Romans 14:1-12 & Matthew 18:21-35

Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has

welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord, and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

SERMON

"77."

Responding to the Word

OFFERING

Invitation to Generosity

Romans 14:7 tells us, "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves." We are in covenant with God and joined in community with one another. Let us give of our resources as those who live for the good and well-being of all.

Offertory Surely the Presence of the Lord is in This Place #243 P & W

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel His mighty power and His grace.
I can hear the brush of angel's wings; I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Prayer of Dedication/Offering

Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation. Amen.

HYMN Go Down, Moses (Vs. #1, #3, #5)

Vs. 1 When Israel was in Egypt's land,
let my people go;
oppressed so hard they could not stand,
let my people go.

**Ref.: Go down, (go down) Moses, (Moses)
way down in Egypt's land;
tell old Pharaoh
to let my people go!**

Vs. 3 No more shall they in bondage toil,
let my people go;
let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
let my people go.
(Refrain)

Vs. 5 Come, Moses, you will not get lost,

let my people go;
stretch out your rod and come across,
let my people go.
(Refrain)

Sending the Word

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Recessional on “Austrian Hymn” Based on tune by Franz Joseph Haydn