



Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

1187 C.R. 128 & U.S. Rt. 20

Fremont, Ohio 43420

Pastor Tim Miller

Church: 419-332-6820

faithchurch@amplex.net

www.faithfremont.org

93.1FM

10th Sunday after Pentecost

August 17, 2025

Setting 3 with Holy Communion

*Congregation please stand as you are able.

Introduction

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today in worship we are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses.” In the word and in holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

Prelude:

Holy God, We Praise Your Name

Arr. Paul Fey

Welcome & Announcements: Joys and Concerns

Signing of the Pew Register by all present.

Noisy Offering: The Noisy Offering is given so children from our Companion Parish of Bumila Lutheran Church have the opportunity to attend school in the Mpwapwa Region. Thank you for your support of the children of our sister congregation in Bumila, Tanzania.

Blessing of the Quilts and Prayer Shawls

***Opening Hymn:**

Here I Am, Lord

ELW 574

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***Greeting**

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

C: **And also with you.**

***Confession and Forgiveness**

P: In the name of the Father,
and of the ✙ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful God,

**C: you free us to love others,
but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way.
You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace,
but we turn away from the abundant life you offer.
You surround us with patience, kindness,
and generosity,
but we grow weary in doing what is right.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Do not give up on us.
Heal us, break our bonds,
and show us the path of life. Amen.**

P: You belong to Christ Jesus
and you are God's children through faith.
In the cross of ✙ Christ,
and through the power of the Holy Spirit,
your sins are forgiven.
Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.

C: Amen.

*Canticle of Praise

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

***Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

C: O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading:

Jeremiah 23:23-29

Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God's judgment, he suffers rejection. Today's reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God's word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.

R: A reading from Jeremiah, the 23rd chapter.

²³ Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴ Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. ²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, "I have dreamed! I have dreamed!" ²⁶ How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? ²⁷ They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. ²⁹ Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Responsive Reading:

Psalms 82

¹ God stands to charge the divine council assembled,
giving judgment in the midst of the gods:

² **“How long will you judge unjustly,
and show favor to the wicked?**

³ **Save the weak and the orphan;
defend the humble and needy;**

⁴ **rescue the weak and the poor;
deliver them from the power of the wicked.**

⁵ They do not know, neither do they understand; they wander about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

⁶ **Now I say to you, ‘You are gods,
and all of you children of the Most High;**

⁷ nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince.’ ”

⁸ **Arise, O God, and rule the earth,
for you shall take all nations for your own.**

Second Reading:

Hebrews 11:29—12:2

The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this “cloud of witnesses,” we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.

R: A reading from Hebrews, the 11th & 12th chapters.

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned.

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.

³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented ³⁸ of whom the world was not

worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

^{12:1} Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***Gospel Acclamation**

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***Gospel**

Luke 12:49-56

Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God's call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 12th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: [Jesus said:] ⁴⁹ "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided:

father against son
and son against father,

mother against daughter
and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens.

⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

***Sermon Hymn:**

How Firm a Foundation

ELW 796

***Apostles’ 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.**

***Prayers of Intercession**

R: Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near.

A brief silence.

R: Raise up faithful leaders for your church around the world. Inspire global missionaries with a spirit of accompaniment, as they walk alongside our partners in the gospel in solidarity, interdependence, and mutuality. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: Safeguard rivers and lakes from pollution. Sustain the work of conservationists, policy makers, and advocacy groups seeking to protect fresh water sources. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: Bridge divisions across partisan lines. Strengthen cooperative efforts among lawmakers who enact policies that protect our neighbors who are most vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: Embrace all who suffer in isolation: for those who are incarcerated or detained, those who are fleeing from unsafe environments, and those who are sick or homebound, *especially those we name at this time (Pause for people to be named)*. Reassure them of your care in all times and places. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: Guide the leaders of this congregation. In these late summer weeks, inspire their planning for a new program year ahead. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration and support for their work. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: With thanksgiving, we remember the cloud of witnesses who surround us. By the example of their faith, enable us to run with perseverance the race set before us, until that day when we join their unending praise. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

R: Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them; through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion.

C: Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

*Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Special Music:

Onward, Christian Soldiers

Arthur Sullivan/ B.C. Dockery

*Offertory: *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise him, all creatures here below;

Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Offering Prayer

P: Creator God,

in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good
and the harvest is plentiful.

Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth
and our labor,

that we may work for the good of all;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C: Amen.

*The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

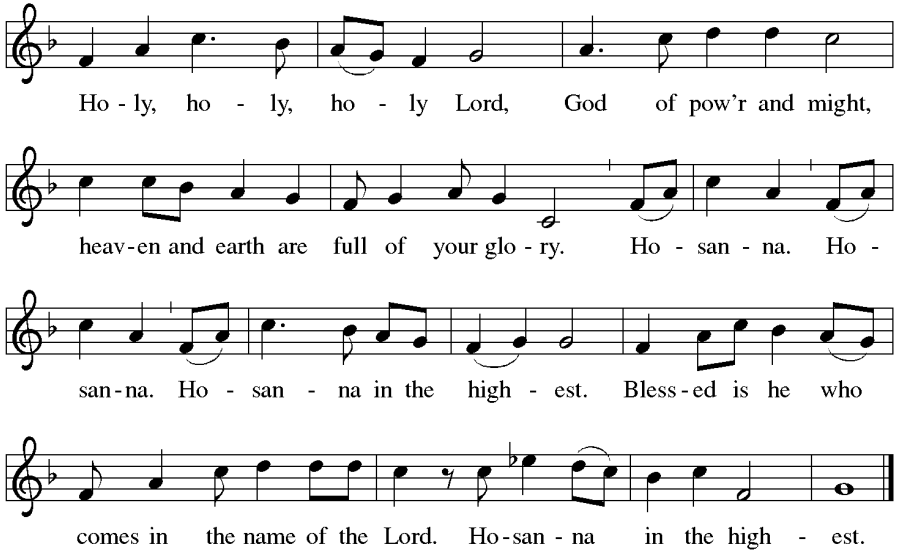
P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
 that we should at all times and in all places
 give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
 through our Savior Jesus Christ;
 who on this day overcame death and the grave,
 and by his glorious resurrection opened to us
 the way of everlasting life.
 And so, with all the choirs of angels,
 with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
 we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



***Thanksgiving at the Table**

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
 who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
 who preached good news to the poor,
 and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

P: In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

- P: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
- P: Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.
- P: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.
- C: Amen.**

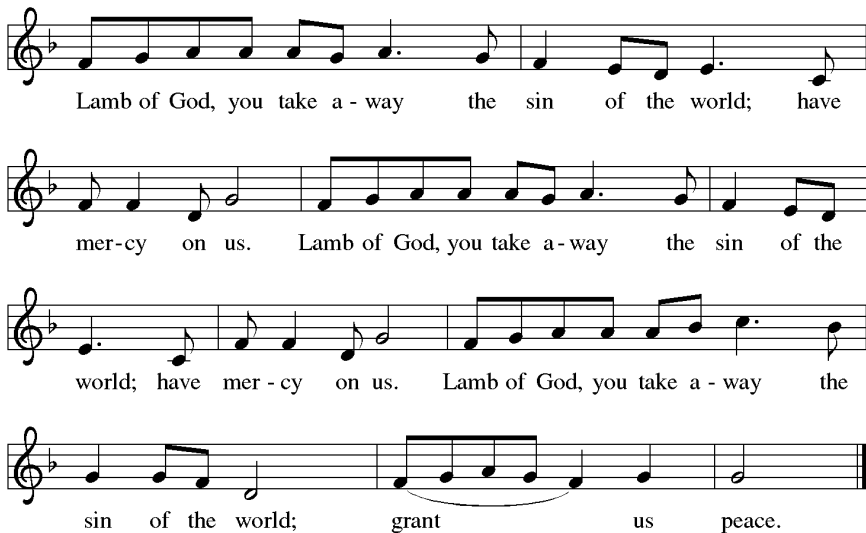
***Lord's Prayer**

- P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.
- C: 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**

- P: The kingdom of God is set before you. Come, eat and rejoice.

Lamb of God



Distribution of Communion

Communion will be continuous. The ushers will invite you to come forward by the center aisle. You will be handed the bread with the words, "The Body of Christ given for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!". Step to the Communion Assistant and take the cup. They will speak the words, "The Blood of Christ shed for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!" Empty cups may be placed in the basket as you return to your seat by the side aisle.

If you prefer gluten- free bread, please let the Pastor know. If you prefer grape juice, please let the Communion Assistant know. If you prefer not to receive or have children who have not yet received, please let the Pastor know and he will offer a blessing.

Communion Hymns:

ELW 715 *Christ, Be Our Light*

ELW 474 *Bread of Life from Heaven*

***Post Communion Blessing**

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

***Prayer After Communion**

P: Mothering God,
you gathered us to your table
and we drank deeply of your grace.
Send us out by your Spirit
to love our neighbors as ourselves
and proclaim your love in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***Blessing**

P: The love of God abound in you;
the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts;
and the life of the Spirit
✠ bless you and give you peace.

C: Amen.

***Closing Hymn:**

Borning Cry

ELW 732

***Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Live by the Spirit.

C: Thanks be to God.

***Postlude:**

Trumpet Fanfare in C. Major

Paul Fey

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AS WE WORSHIP — INDEED, AS WE LIVE —
we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ. So we can lay aside every weight and sin (Hebrews 12:1-2). Welcome.

ALTAR FLOWERS today are given with Thanks to God for the Sandusky County Fair and the opportunity to come together to showcase the talents of all participants by Paul Hirt and Sarah Wilson.

DUST OFF YOUR RUNNING SHOES AND GET READY FOR THE 2025 RALLY DAY GAMES. The fun starts September 7th. And don't forget your backpacks for a special blessing to start the school year.

PLEASE CONSIDER TEACHING SUNDAY SCHOOL for grades Pre-K - Kindergarten. After 22 years, Peggy Koch is retiring. Thank you.

GAMES – GAMES – GAMES!

Tuesday, September 9th – 7:00 p.m. – Fellowship Hall

Bring your favorite game(s) and come to play.

We will have a great time! Don't miss out on our night of fun!!

ALL ARE WELCOME!!!

Sign up today on the sheet on the women's bulletin board!

We will have our September General Meeting at

6:30 p.m. in the lounge and then LET THE GAMES BEGIN!!!



SOUPER SOUP COOKOFF AND SILENT AUCTION:

WHAT: Any kind of soup – No Peppers please

WHEN: Saturday, October 4, 2025 at 5 pm

WHERE: Faith Fellowship Hall

COST: \$10.00 for adults and
\$5.00 for kids 10 and under

Tickets sold at door only

UP TO 12 ENTRANTS: Sign-up between July 27th and September 14th.

We request that you be present to win.

RESTRICTIONS: **MUST NOT USE PEPPERS IN SOUP**

– due to some who are allergic to them.

SOUP HERE BY: 4:00 P.M. in a crock pot with no names or identifying marks on it.

SERVING: Women's Board Members will serve Soup in Styrofoam bowls with entrant's number on it.

TO ATTEND, EAT AND VOTE: Sign up by Sunday, September 28th – not required – simply to give us an idea of how many to expect.

VOTING: Each person attending will be given 1 ticket to write their number one choice on and drop into a box. Only one ticket will be issued per person.

PROVIDED: Hot Dogs, Buns, Condiments, Crackers, Tableservice
Drinks: Lemonade, Iced Tea (Sweetened & Unsweetened), Hawaiian Punch, Water, Ice

PROCEEDS: To Flag City Honor Flight (For veterans to view monuments in Washington, D.C.) Free to Veterans, 1 Guardian can fly with them at a cost of \$400. They do 4 flights per year at a cost of \$150,000 per flight to take 80 Vets and their Guardians.

WANTED: Salads and Desserts to add to meal.
Sign-up sheet will be out closer to the time.

PRIZE: \$50.00 Visa Gift Card, Framed Certificate and Apron to sign to be displayed at the church AND "All year bragging rights"

SILENT AUCTION: **Wanted** – Groups or members to help donate Baskets/Items, Craft items, or Services you could provide someone to be included in auction. Sign up between July 27th – Sept. 28th

BE CREATIVE AND HAVE FUN WITH IT!

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE BEGIN A NEW SEASON OF MUSICAL WORSHIP!



Faith's Senior Choir, directed by Darla Brown, will begin rehearsals on **Wednesday, September 3rd!** Rehearsals run from **7:30-8:30 p.m.** in the **Choir room** which is down the hall on the right. Faith's Senior Choir leads in the hymn singing and provides an anthem for each 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service, starting September 7th through May. The choir may participate in additional services during the Advent and/or Lenten seasons. New singers are always welcome to join!



Faith's Handbell Choir invites all persons wishing to praise our God and Savior with the beautiful sounds of handbells. Prior musical experience is helpful but not necessary to share your interest in heavy (and light) metal music with this fun and friendly group. Rehearsals will begin on **Wednesday, September 3rd**, in the **Fellowship Hall** and will run from **6:30-7:20**

p.m. This choir usually performs one anthem each month from Sept./Oct. through May.



Faith's Praise Choir, directed by Becky Fox, will also rehearse on Wednesdays, from **7:30-8:00 p.m.** and will meet in the **Sunday School Gathering** room. This

joyful group of singers presents a contemporary anthem periodically for the **8:00 a.m.** Sunday worship service, starting in September and running through May. New singers are always welcome to join!

You may contact Darla at 419.680.6717 or Becky at 419.618.6948 if you have any questions and would like more information. We hope to see you soon...

"as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:19-20 (NRSV)

SANDUSKY COUNTY FOOD PANTRY

More families than ever are facing hunger and are struggling to make ends meet. Your donation to the Sandusky County Food Pantry helps us stock our shelves to meet the needs of families in our communities. No one should go hungry. With your help, no one has to. **DONATE TODAY!**

One time or recurring donations of any size make a difference.

Mail to: P.O. Box 445, Fremont, OH 43420

Or donate online: sanduskycountyfoodpantry.org

THANK YOU!

NWOS WOMEN OF THE ELCA 2025 GATHERING will be **Sept. 26-27** at St. Mark Lutheran Church, 315 College Drive, Bowling Green, Ohio. Friday from 1:00-7:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9-3 p.m. Join us for Bible Study, Break-out Sessions, Worship Service, Friday night Program, Business Meeting, Fun, Food and Fellowship and a Silent Auction. Theme is: BE STILL, which encompasses both rest and listening. The Bible Studies for the weekend will be based on these. Break-out Sessions on Contemplative Prayer, Bible Journaling and Party Planning. Hotel accommodations are at the Holiday Inn, Bowling Green. Registration deadline for hotel rooms is August 19th. Deadline for Gathering only registration is September 12th. For a registration form, please inquire in the church office. Bring your Bible, a Reusable water bottle and Dress Casual.

IT'S NEVER EASY OR CONVENIENT to give the time and attention to our marriages that they need, but a Marriage Encounter Weekend provides a **concentrated and safe environment** to do exactly that. God commands us to love, which means love is not simply a feeling but an action. Husband and wives, rediscover your hearts, grow your commitment, don't risk letting your marriage relationship simply drift along. Commit a weekend to growing your marriage **November 7-9** at the Fairfield Inn & Suites, Streetsboro OH. Go to GodLovesMarriage.org for more information about the benefits, costs, and details, and then get it on your calendar because *drifting* will never get your marriage to where you want it to be.

ASSISTING TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Tim Miller **Organist:** Parm Boyer

Special Music: Karly Paeth

9:00 a.m.

Greeter: Pat Forsyth & Kathleen McClain

Lector: Kim Smith

Acolyte:

Communion: Ginger Walker & Annie Gazdecki

Counters: Dave Kocsis* & Judi Neill

Fellowship Time Host:

Altar Guild: Anna & Julia Norris

ASSISTING NEXT WEEK

Pastor: Rev. Tim Miller **Organist:** Parm Boyer

9:00 a.m.

Greeter: Larry & Donna Leow

Lector: Cheryl Paeth

Acolyte:

Communion: Karly Paeth & Annie Gazdecki

Counters: Marie Reiselt* & Nicole Weiker

Fellowship Time Host:

Altar Guild: Anna & Julia Norris

PRAYING DAILY



For healing and hope: Paul Antesberger, Joan Bolen, Patty Carrigan, Mary Ann Diekman, Denny Fahle, Millie Fetterman, Della Humbarger, Denny Krumnow, Bill Leutenegger, Dean May, Stan Moyer, Nancy Mylander, Sandie Reed, Ken & Gloria Root, Bob Schneider, Bill Seibert, Janet Tressler, Linda Woessner, Mick Rogers, Terri Titkemeier.

For our Military: Noah Egbert, Troy Halfhill, Jade Kayser, Daniel Linder, Tony Rozzi, Christopher Templeton, & Joshua Tooman.

For our Bishops: Bishop Christian Ndossa, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and NWOS Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Staff

For our partner congregation in Bumila, Tanzania

And its pastor: Pastor Peter Magasi

FAITH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK OF – Aug. 17 to Aug. 24

Sunday BLESSING OF THE QUILTS, FLEECE, & PRAYER SHAWLS

Aug. 17-----9 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
 10 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship Time

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE

Monday

Aug. 18----- 10 a.m. Valley View Worship & Holy Communion

Tuesday

Aug. 19-----2 p.m. Ruth Circle

Wednesday

Aug. 20-----

Thursday

Aug. 21-----9-3 p.m. Fellowship & Sew Day
 3 p.m. Christ Care

Friday

Aug. 22-----

Saturday

Aug. 23-----

Sunday

Aug. 24-----9 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
 10 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship Time

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2025: ATTENDANCE: 118 – OFFERING: \$3,296.52

GOSPEL MESSAGE
August 17, 2025
10th Sunday after Pentecost

It's So Confusing

Entering someone else's conversation halfway through can be disorienting. You don't know the context, and you're confused about the background, so you can't really make heads or tails of what's being discussed. Today's gospel reading is kind of like that experience. It's so confusing to hear Jesus talk like this!

But if we're honest with ourselves, we know our world is already full of the divisions Jesus describes. Political divisions have only deepened. Religious divisions cause people to talk over one another. We encounter racial divisions that we're afraid to talk about or even acknowledge, and economic divisions that isolate people according to status and means. Yes, our world is already full of divisions. And what about the tone of this gospel reading? Jesus' sayings are so provocative! With the kind of rhetoric being thrown around in our world today, do we need more alarming words?

When we look closely at the reading and pay attention to the context, we can get a better idea of what exactly Jesus is proposing in these inflammatory sayings. Notice the divisions he mentions here: divisions within families. In the context of the ancient world, the family was the central unit of connection and the source of your identity. The family told you who you were and how you could (or could not) operate.

It is into that kind of ordering, the foundation of identity, that Jesus brings disruption. His point is that in the kingdom of God, whether you were born into wealth or poverty, a family of prestige or one of pandemonium, you are God's beloved child. The message of God in Christ breaks up the social boxes and social games of this world, erasing the dividing lines we already set up for ourselves.

In the death and resurrection of Christ, we're all united in God's family, enjoying a new ordering of identity that breaks down what divides us.