



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

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

August 16, 2026

Setting 3 with Holy Communion

*Congregation please stand as you are able.

Introduction

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

Prelude:

The Gift of Love

Hal Hopson

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

GATHERING

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

***Invitation to Worship**

P: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

C: and also with you.

P: Welcome to all who are weary and need rest.

**C: To all who mourn and long for comfort,
To all who feel worthless and wonder if God cares,
To all who fail and desire strength,
To all who sin and need a savior,
To all who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
And to whoever will come,**

P: This church opens wide its doors, its homes, its lives, and its hearts,
And offers its welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C: All are welcome. Amen.

***Gathering Song:**

Grace Alone

TBOB 77

***Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
whose compassion endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

**C: we confess to you all our sins.
Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves.
In your mercy, call us back to you.
Your yoke is easy and your burden is light.
Restore us to dwell in your peace.
In Christ's name we pray,
Amen.**

P: Jesus says, "Come to me,
all you who are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest."
In the name of God,
Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,
your sins are forgiven.
Rest in God's love.

C: Amen.

***Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

C: God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

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

First Reading:

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

R: A reading from Isaiah, the 56th chapter.

¹ Thus says the LORD:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come
and my deliverance be revealed.

⁶ And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,

all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸ Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

- ¹ May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.
- ² **Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.**
- ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
- ⁴ **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity and
guide all the nations on earth.**
- ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
- ⁶ **The earth has brought forth its increase;
God, our own God, has blessed us.**
- ⁷ May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

Second Reading:**Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32**

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

R: A reading from Romans, the 11th chapter.

[Paul writes:] ¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a} God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy.

³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation:**Lord, Be Glorified***

In my life Lord, be glorified, be glorified

In my life, Lord, be glorified today.

In your church, Lord, be glorified, be glorified

In your church, Lord, be glorified today.

Gospel:*Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28**

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 15th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: [¹⁰ [Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand:¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹² Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” ¹³ He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶ Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”]

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed from that moment. The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

***Sermon Hymn:**

Healer of Our Every Ill

ELW 612

*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: With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church,
those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

R: For believers around the world who stream to your holy mountain, that
all be united in faith and harmony in the body of Christ. Let your
church on earth be a witness to the beloved community of your
heavenly kingdom. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

R: For your wondrous creation, that it thrives and flourishes as you
intend. Raise up wise stewards to defend the natural world against
carelessness and destruction. Safeguard endangered species and their
habitats. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

R: For the nations of the world and all in authority, that they heed the cry of the outcast and ensure care for the most vulnerable. Give wisdom to leaders of countries, congregations, and communities, that they lead and serve justly. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

R: For all who are lonely, grieving, or struggling with chronic pain, that they find comfort, community, and hope. Send relief to all who struggle with illness of any kind, *especially those we name at this time (Pause for 10 seconds for people to be named)*. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

R: For this congregation, for visitors and those new to this faith community, that all may recognize the presence of Christ in each new face. Draw this community together in love and strengthen it in unwavering faith. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

R: For the saints before us whose work is done, that their faithful example continues to direct your church. May their witness remind us that your gifts and calling are irrevocable, whether in life or death. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

R: Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

<u>Special Music:</u>	<i>Fairest Lord Jesus</i>	Munster Gesangbuch
	<i>Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee</i>	Henry Van Dyke
		& Ludwig van Beethoven

***Offertory**

Give Thanks

TBOB 65

**Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, His Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ His Son.**

**And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say "I am rich."
Because of what the Lord has done for us.
And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say "I am rich."
Because of what the Lord has done for us.**

**Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, His Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ His Son.
Give thanks.**

***Offering Prayer**

P: Loving God,
we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts.
Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love,
so that all creation can taste your abundance.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.

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.

***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.

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.**

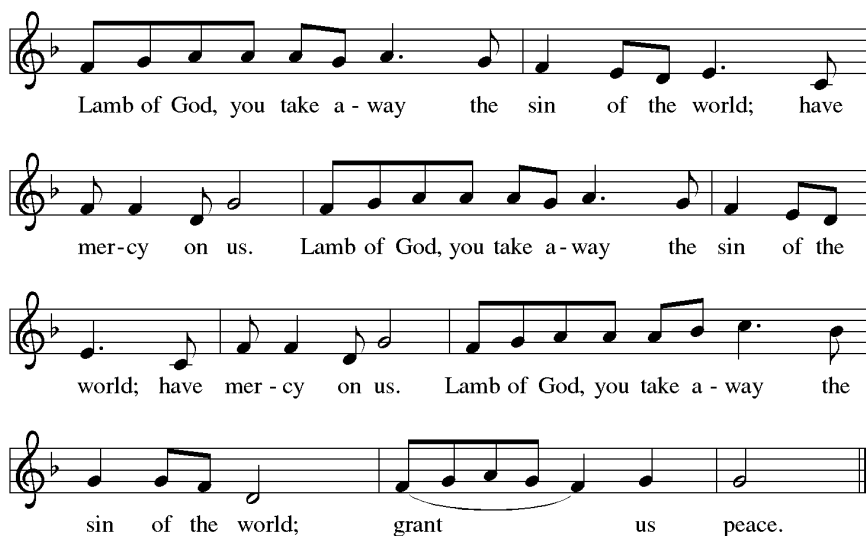
**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

***Invitation to Communion**

P: Heaven has come near.

Come, share in the feast!

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:

TBOB 88 Here Is Bread

TBOB 236 We Remember You

***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: Compassionate God,
through the gifts of bread and wine
our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love.
Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal,
may share your love freely, as you have shared with us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING

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

***Blessing**

P: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
✠ one God,
bless, heal, and hold you
today and always.

C: Amen.

***Sending Song:** *Shout to the North* **TBOB 197**
Men of faith rise up and sing of the great and glorious King.
You are strong when you feel weak, in your brokenness complete.

Shout to the north and the south
Sing to the east and the west.
Jesus is Savior to all
Lord of heaven and earth.

Rise up women of the truth, stand and sing to broken hearts,
Who can know the healing power of our glorious King of love.

(Continued)

**Shout to the north and the south
Sing to the east and the west.
Jesus is Savior to all
Lord of heaven and earth.**

**Rise up church with broken wings, fill this place with songs again,
Of our God who reigns on high, By His grace again we'll fly.**

**Shout to the north and the south
Sing to the east and the west.
Jesus is Savior to all
Lord of heaven and earth.**

**Shout to the north and the south
Sing to the east and the west.
Jesus is Savior to all
Lord of heaven and earth.**

***Dismissal**

P: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

***Postlude:**

Shout to the North

Martin Smith

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WE COME TOGETHER TO "CALL UPON THE LORD, WHO IS WORTHY TO BE PRAISED" (Psalm 18:3, NRSV). All are sincerely welcomed to this service of worship and praise. Lord, make us mindful of the joy your grace can be to us. Grant us the gift of your presence, we pray. Amen.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR 5 CANDIDATES FOR CHURCH COUNCIL: Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Deacon, and Elder. We are also looking for 2 people for Endowment. If anyone is interested, please let Pastor Tim or one of the council members know.

JOY STORY - YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN HIM is our theme for Rally Day this year. Enjoy breakfast and activities between worship services on Sept. 13th. We will also have Blessing of the Backpacks at both services with a special blessing of our students, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, lunch ladies and aides to let them know that we love and support them, and God loves them to Eternity and Beyond.

PLEASE JOIN US IN CELEBRATING STAN' 75TH BIRTHDAY – In addition we are celebrating each of you, with gratitude and appreciation, for the continuous prayers, love and overwhelming support we have received over the past three years of this incredible journey!

When: Sunday, September 27th (Stan's actual Birthday)

Time: 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. Open House –

Come when you can/Leave when you must.

Where: Fremont Country Club, 2340 E. State Street, Fremont, Ohio. There will be Food, Soda, Coffee, Iced Tea and Lemonade provided. Cash bar available – (Credit Cards used will be charged a fee). PLEASE, NO GIFTS!!! Thank you, Jadlynn & Stan Moyer



SOUPER SOUP COOKOFF AND SILENT AUCTION:

WHEN: Saturday, September 26, 2026 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 that evening.

UP TO 12 ENTRANTS: Sign-up between July 19th and September 6th.

We request that you be present to win.

RESTRICTIONS: **MUST NOT USE PEPPERS in Soup – Except Ground Black Pepper** – 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 20th – not required – simply to give us an idea of how many to expect.

YOU MAY BRING FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

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 Matthew Young – For Medical Expenses.

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 19th – Sept. 20th

BE CREATIVE AND
HAVE FUN WITH IT!



**PLEASE JOIN US AS WE BEGIN A NEW SEASON OF SPIRITUAL
WORSHIP AND MUSICAL FELLOWSHIP!**



Faith's Senior Choir, directed by Darla Brown, will begin rehearsals on **Thursday, September 10th and 17th**. Afterwards, rehearsals will move to **Wednesdays (9/23)**. Rehearsals run from **7:30-8:30 p.m.** in the **Choir room** past the central coat area. Faith's Senior Choir leads in the hymn singing and provides an anthem for each 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service, starting September 13th through May. This choir may also lead the hymns during the midweek Lenten services.



Faith's Handbell Choir encourages all persons to join and praise our God and Savior with the beautiful sounds of handbells. Prior musical experience is helpful but not necessary to share your interest in instrumental music with this fun and friendly group. Rehearsals will begin on **Wednesday, September 23rd**, in the **Fellowship Hall** and will run from **6:30-7:20 p.m.** This choir usually performs one anthem each month from October through May. You may contact Darla at 419.680.6717 for more information concerning the Senior and Handbell choirs.



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 Becky at 419.618.6948 for 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)

GROWING IN FAITH (FORMERLY DIAKONIA) is a ministry of theological education and faith formation designed for lay leaders and lifelong learners who want to deepen their understanding of Scripture, Lutheran theology, and Christian discipleship. Offered in partnership by the **Northwestern Ohio Synod** and **Northeastern Ohio Synod**, the 2026–2027 course offerings provide flexible opportunities to grow in faith alongside others from across Ohio. Learn more about upcoming classes and registration at **Growinginfaithohio.org**! See flyer on the bulletin board in the coat room area.



UPDATE ON THE FAITH FILLED TRAVELERS 2026 TRIPS

Joshua & More (Sight and Sound) – **Oct. 12-15, 2026** – Can still add more. **Please send your deposit ASAP.**

Sincerely, Yvonne Vogel 419-307-1774.



SUMMER MUSIC: Make a joyful noise to the Lord! Please consider sharing your gifts of worshipful song through vocal or instrumental music at our 9 am worship service beginning June 7th. You may contact Darla Brown at 419-680-6717 or Parm Boyer at 419-307-1332 if an accompanist is needed. There is a sign-up sheet on the board in the coat room area.



SUMMER WORSHIP: THROUGH SEPT. 6TH: Worship will be at **9 a.m. only** with Sunday School and Fellowship time to follow.

PRAYING DAILY

*Please be
Praying for...*

For healing and hope: Joan Bolen, Mary Ann Diekman, Millie Fetterman, Della Humbarger, Denny & Sue Krumnow, Laurie Krynock, Bill Leutenegger, Dean May, Stan Moyer,

Nancy Mylander, Betty Nielsen, Gary Overmyer, Sharon Peña, Sandie Reed, Ken & Gloria Root, Letty Rusch, Bob Schneider, Jackie Seibert, Janet Tressler, Minnie Weber, Jerie Young, Cindy Zorn. Eric Paul, Leha Young.

For the Family of: Linda Woessner

For our Bishops: Bishop Christian Ndossa, Bishop Yehiel Curry, and NWOS Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Staff

For our partner congregation in Bumila, Tanzania

And its pastor: Pastor Peter Magasi

PRAY FOR OUR

MILITARY

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



USHERS NEEDED ON SUNDAY MORNINGS –

I would like to appeal to those of you interested in being ushers to please sign up on the clipboards in the coat room area. Thank you very much! Mike Fought, Deacon.

ASSISTING TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Tim Miller

Pianist: Becky Fox

Special Music: Matthew Reiselt

9:00 a.m.

Greeters: Dave & Barb Kocsis

Lector: Randy Koch

Acolyte: Karly Paeth

Communion: Randy Koch & Barb Kocsis

Counters: Dave Kocsis* & Niki Wasserman

Fellowship Time Host:

Altar Guild: Anna & Julia Norris

Ushers:

ASSISTING NEXT WEEK

Pastor: Rev. Tim Miller

Organist: Parm Boyer

9:00 a.m.

Greeters: Dave & Marilyn Ring

Lector: Ken Walker, Jr.

Acolyte:

Communion: Ginger Walker & Annie Gazdecki

Counters: Becky Dymond* & Randy Brown

Fellowship Time Host:

Altar Guild: Anna & Julia Norris

Ushers:

FAITH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK OF – Aug. 16 – Aug. 23

Sunday

Aug. 16-----9 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
 10 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship Time

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE

Monday

Aug. 17-----10 a.m. Valley View Worship & H.C. w/Pastor Tim

Tuesday

Aug. 18-----2 p.m. Ruth Circle
 6:30 p.m. Executive Council
 7:00 p.m. Church Council

Wednesday

Aug. 19-----

Thursday

Aug. 20-----9-3 p.m. Fellowship & Sew Day
 3 p.m. Christ Care

Friday

Aug. 21-----

Saturday

Aug. 22-----9:15 a.m. Christ Care
 4:30 p.m. Christ Care Picnic at Catawba State Park

Sunday

Aug. 23-----9 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
 10 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship Time

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2026: ATTENDANCE: 100 – OFFERING: \$5,186.52

GOSPEL MESSAGE

August 16, 2026
12th Sunday after Pentecost

Breaking Boundaries

Jesus did not stay within the boundaries of his time, much to the frustration of authorities. He broke through not just geographic boundaries but religious, ethnic, and social boundaries as well.

Jesus intentionally broke geographic and ethnic boundaries in visiting the Canaanite communities of Tyre and Sidon. Canaanites and Jews had often been in conflict, so it was not that surprising when the disciples attempted to prevent a Canaanite woman from seeing Jesus. She was breaking boundaries herself in asking that Jesus heal her child. Jesus' first response seems harsh, but as the woman persisted and acknowledged him as "Lord" (something the disciples had been slow to grasp), he healed her child.

In this encounter, Jesus demonstrated that God's love cannot be held back by boundaries created by humans based on who we are, where we are from, what we have done, our background, our position in society, and more. God's grace and restoration are available to all, with no exceptions.

And yet, history is filled with accounts of bias, discrimination, oppression, segregation, persecution, and genocide. Tragically, this continues today in a multitude of ways and a multitude of places.

As present-day disciples, we are called to follow Christ in breaking boundaries, challenging biases, and welcoming all to celebrate God's love at the font and the table. So, what boundaries do we need to break to work for peace and proclaim the good news? How are we and our congregations fighting bias, discrimination, oppression, and persecution wherever we can? How are we persistently asking Christ to heal and restore fractured communities and nations around the world?