

ment that has
for·give (fər·giv
for·giv·ing v.t.

Peter came up and said to [Jesus],
“Lord, how often will my brother sin
against me, and I forgive him?”

-Matthew 18:21

Sunday, September 13, 2020

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

St. Mark Lutheran Church

1515 S. Harris Rd.

Ypsilanti, MI 48198

stmarkypsi.com

OPENING AND WELCOME

We continue to remember God's gift of baptism. We invite you to ready a bowl of water in preparation for Confession.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,

have mercy on us.

**We confess that we are captive to sin
and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace
and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgment on one another
before examining ourselves.**

We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.

We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.

**Make us humble, cast away our transgressions,
and turn us again to life in you**

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need,
and through his death and resurrection,
Christ has made us his own.

Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✝ Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness
to do God's work in the world.

Amen.

GREETING

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

OPENING SONG: Bless the Lord, O My Soul

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 103:1-13

LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

¹Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

²**Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all God's benefits**

³who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases;

⁴**who redeems your life from the grave
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**

⁵who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

⁶**O LORD, you provide vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.**

⁷You made known your ways to Moses
and your works to the children of Israel.

⁸**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

⁹you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.

¹⁰**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

¹²**As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

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

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹Welcome 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. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants 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.

⁵Some 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. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If 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. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why 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. ¹¹For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia.

We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous;
your sins are forgiven on account of his name.

Alleluia. (1 John 2:1, 12).

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus 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. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But 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.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

SERMON

Forgiveness

Pastor Jim Debner

SERMON HYMN: Where Charity and Love Prevail

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CREED: The Creed

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. Give peace to all who are near death, hope to those who are depressed, shelter to the homeless, and healing to the sick.

(A time of silence as we lift up those on our prayer list.)

- ✠ We lift up especially Karen Severson, Beth Hall, and Sissy Howard.
- ✠ We continue to pray for Chloe, Richard, Terry, Charlene, Melissa, Millie, Sandy, Pam, Kevin, Chuck, Ted, Dr. Jim, Denny, Sharon, Mary, Ben, Rick, John, Barb, Frances, and Dusty.
- ✠ May God be with the family and friends of Kathleen Peacock, especially her cousin Kim Bailey, and comfort them in their grief.
- ✠ We ask God to protect and comfort the family and friends of Robin Enck as they grieve, especially his wife, Cate Collins Enck, former St. Mark member.
- ✠ May God bring comfort to the family and friends of Frances Storemski as they mourn, especially her sister and brother-in-law, Nancy and Augie Wallman.

✠ We pray for God's comfort for the family Angel Rabaa, wife of Terry Karns' cousin, Steve Rabaa, especially for their children, Caleb, Sophia, and Aidan.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father in Heaven

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INVITATION TO OFFERING

OFFERING SONG: The Steadfast Love of the Lord

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OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.
You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.
Prepare us for your heavenly banquet,
nourish us with this rich drink and food,
and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,
through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Thank you for continuing to give to the work God is doing through St. Mark Lutheran Church. You can give by mailing your gift directly to the church. You can also give your gift by going online to www.stmarkypsi.com. Your gifts continue to sustain and nourish our ministries here at St. Mark, so thank you.

BLESSING FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Thank you, God, for new opportunities to learn and grow whether it be in an actual classroom, a virtual classroom, or from our homes.

Be with our teachers, leaders, caregivers, and administrators as they guide us into the new school year. Give them the tools and energy to create engaging ways for all of us to learn and grow.

Help us to open our hearts and minds to new ideas, new friends and leaders, and new ways of learning.

Show us how to seek joy in all things even when things don't go as planned. As we begin to explore the unknown of this school year, let us rejoice with new friends, rejoice in new ways of learning, rejoice in knowing that you are with us through it all.

God of joy and light, pour out your blessing upon these students, families, teachers, and leaders. Bless their backpacks, Chromebooks and computers, iPads and pencils, virtual classrooms, school buildings, and all preparations that help build a strong and safe year for everyone.

May each of you be a blessing and light in your new year! Go and light up the world!

Amen.

In the spirit of our fall kickoff Sunday, we are giving away Blessing Bags for families of our children. These bags contain things that we hope will help enhance faith formation at home during this daunting time. If you are not a member of our community but you are watching online, please contact Vicar Anna annataylor@mccants@gmail.com and we will hook your kiddos up with a Blessing Bag.

BENEDICTION AND BLESSING

Receive this blessing:

Mothering God,

Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,

bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Stir Us Lord

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

ENCIRCLED WITH PRAYER

- † Recognizing the power of prayer, please join us in praying at home throughout this week for those whose needs are known to us and those whose cares we do not know.
- † We lift up especially Karen Severson, Beth Hall, and Sissy Howard.
- † We continue to pray for Chloe, Richard, Terry, Charlene, Melissa, Millie, Sandy, Pam, Kevin, Chuck, Ted, Dr. Jim, Denny, Sharon, Mary, Ben, Rick, John, Barb, Frances, and Dusty.
- † May God be with the family and friends of Kathleen Peacock, especially her cousin Kim Bailey, and comfort them in their grief.
- † We ask God to protect and comfort the family and friends of Robin Enck as they grieve, especially his wife, Cate Collins Enck, former St. Mark member.
- † May God bring comfort to the family and friends of Frances Storemski as they mourn, especially her sister and brother-in-law, Nancy and Augie Wallman.
- † We pray for God's comfort for the family Angel Rabaa, wife of Terry Karns' cousin, Steve Rabaa, especially for their children, Caleb, Sophia, and Aidan.

Please contact Vicar Anna annataylor@mccants@gmail.com if you need prayer for yourself or those dear to you.

REMEMBER TO JOIN US FOR VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR FROM 11:15-11:45AM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vicar Anna is holding regular **office hours on Tuesdays** from 10am to Noon. While you can just drop by if you need to pick up/drop off something at the church building or would to chat, it is recommended that you confirm with Vicar Anna via email ahead of time, just in case she gets called away.

Confirmation Classes will be offered on Zoom this fall, in collaboration with the other Washtenaw ELCA churches. Classes begin in October and will meet from 1-2pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Contact Vicar Anna if you would like to add your child to the class.

The Washtenaw ELCA has just announced **Sunday Adult Faith Formation and Wednesday Social Justice classes** that begin on Zoom in September: Sundays at 10am and Wednesdays at 7pm. The first Sunday class was this morning; the first Wednesday class is September 16. Other offerings – Bible studies, prayer meditations, and more – are also being planned. A detailed schedule is posted on our website www.stmarkpsi.com

Volunteer opportunities are available at **Hope Clinic**, including helping with their food distribution efforts and donations of food and health care items.

Sunday School will be offered online by St. Mark at 9:30am on the 4th Sunday of each month, beginning September 27. Contact Vicar Anna annataylor@mccants@gmail.com to enroll your children.