

Worship in the Home

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 23, 2020



In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While we cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer.

Prelude

Announcements

Invocation

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Confession & Forgiveness

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin. Reconciling God, **we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

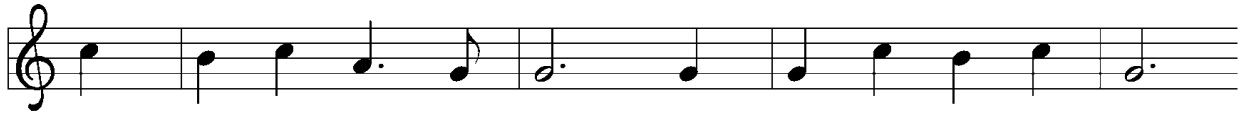
Opening Hymn

When Morning Gilds the Skies

ELW #853



1 When morn - ing gilds the skies, my heart a - wak - ing cries:
2 When mirth for mu - sic longs, this is my song of songs:
3 No love - lier an - ti - phon in all high heav'n is known
4 Let all of hu - man - kind in this their con - cord find:
5 Sing, sun and stars of space, sing, all who see his face,



may Je - sus Christ be praised! When eve - ning shad - ows fall,
may Je - sus Christ be praised! God's ho - ly house of prayer
than "Je - sus Christ be praised!" There to the e - ter - nal Word
may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let all the earth a - round
sing, "Je - sus Christ be praised!" God's whole cre - a - tion o'er,



this rings my cur - few call: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
has none that can com - pare with "Je - sus Christ be praised!"
the e - ter - nal psalm is heard: oh, Je - sus Christ be praised!
ring joy - ous with the sound: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
to - day and ev - er - more shall Je - sus Christ be praised!

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray...O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 51:1-6

Semi-continuous First Reading: Exodus 1:8--2:10

Psalm: Psalm 138

¹I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise.

²**I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**

³When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.

⁴**All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord, when they have heard the words of your mouth.**

⁵They will sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

⁶**The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar.**

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

⁸**You will make good your purpose for me; O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

Second Reading: Romans 12:1-8

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Homily

Caesarea Philippi is my favorite location in the Holy Land. Whereas most other sites that are mentioned in the Bible have shrines or whole churches built over or around them, Caesarea Philippi remains a largely natural area with just a few informative signs and a walkway. It is located at the northernmost part of modern day Israel, nearly bordering Lebanon and Syria, in the shadow of Mount Hermon.

From a shallow cave, a spring of water flows south, joining other tributaries to form the headwaters of the Jordan River. Watching the water cut a lush and vibrant path through the dry desert, it is easy to see how ancient people came to revere it as a sacred birthplace of life. One civilization after another—and therefore one religion after another—claimed it as a home for their gods. Not much remains of the ruins of the ancient temples, but you can still see carved in the side of the cliff the niches that used to display statues of the gods. It is in this place, that was once a holy site of Ba'al, once a shrine to the Greek god Pan, once a temple built by Herod the Great to honor Philip—Caesar, the divine emperor, it is here that Jesus asks his disciples: *Who do you say that I am?*

In other words, Jesus took his followers to the place where all kinds of religions had been practiced, where all sorts of deities had been worshipped, and he asked them where they thought he fit into the picture. It was not so much that he was asking them to choose between him and the other gods: the former cults had died with their believers, and Jesus' Jewish disciples wouldn't have committed blasphemy by acknowledging Caesar as divine. What Jesus is really asking is whether the disciples recognize that God, the great I Am, the One before whom they were to worship no other gods, had chosen to be revealed through the life—and eventual death and resurrection—of Jesus. Peter, who so often gets it wrong, this time gets it right: *You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.* Now, Peter will ride it off the rails almost immediately, and we get to hear about that next week, but in this moment, the disciples profess that Jesus is the Son of God, sent to live out God's good intentions for all the world.

As disciples ourselves, we are faced with the same question that Jesus asked the first twelve: *Who do you say that I am?* And like the disciples, that question is not primarily calling us to choose between different religious options, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu. The question that is really facing us is this: *Would we say that the way Jesus lived and the way Jesus died show us, more clearly than anything else could, the nature and character of God? Do we believe that a person who was born in the humblest circumstances, who lived his early life as a refugee, who seems to have held no property, who left home and family to accomplish a mission of healing and helping, who taught others by his own example how to be servants instead of being served, who rejected wealth and political power, who welcomed the least, the last and the lowliest, who forgave his enemies and taught others to do the same, who sacrificed himself for the benefit of others—even those who would never recognize or appreciate what he did...do we believe that this person is the best revelation we have of the steadfast lovingkindness of an infinitely gracious God?*

Of course the first disciples, led by Peter, answered “yes” to this question. But, like the disciples, the answer that we are called to give is more than a verbal affirmation, more than the recitation of a creed or a prayer confessing Jesus’ lordship. The way we answer Jesus’ question: *Who do you say that I am?* with the answer: *You are the Son of the living God!* is by acting like we believe it, by living the way Jesus taught us to live: Loving God by loving our neighbors as ourselves; loving even our enemies; cooperating instead of competing with each other; helping and supporting instead of using each other; trusting that God will provide and therefore sharing generously instead of hoarding what we have been given; feeding the hungry, working for justice, living in humility, restoring community; opening ourselves to relationship with others until we see the divine image in all people; crossing every boundary that has been established by human sin—pride, fear, envy, greed, and hatred—in recognition that God draws no lines to divide God’s good creation.

I don’t mean to give the impression that it is easy for us to live like Jesus. He’s God after all, which gives him more than a little bit of a head start. But it’s not hard to figure out what the whole of the Christian calling is really all about. It’s using our lives every day to answer this question: *Do we believe that Jesus showed us how God wants us to live, and are we going to trust God enough to do it?* That’s the whole thing in a nutshell: trusting God’s way instead of relying on anything else, including ourselves. We will mess up sometimes. We will be stubborn and arrogant and insist on our own way. We will need the mercy and forgiveness which God is, thankfully, always willing to give. But in a world that puts so many competing claims on our lives, that offers us so many choices and confuses us with chaos, we have the rock-solid confidence of knowing that God who intends every good thing for us shows us the way. May the Spirit who works God’s holy will in us inspire in us the strength to live it out.



1 Tú has ve - ni - do a la o - ri - lla, no has bus -
 1 You have come down to the lake - shore seek - ing
 2 You know full well what I have, Lord: nei - ther
 3 You need my hands, my ex - haus - tion, work - ing
 4 You who have fished oth - er wa - ters; you, the



ca - do ni a sa - bios ni a ri - cos; tan só - lo
 nei - ther the wise nor the wealth - y, but on - ly
 trea - sure nor wea - pons for con - quest, just these my
 love for the rest of the wea - ry— a love that's
 long - ing of souls that are yearn - ing: O lov - ing



quie - res que yo te si - ga.
 ask - ing for me to fol - low.
 fish nets and will for work - ing.
 will - ing to go on lov - ing.
 Friend, you have come to call me.

Refrain / Estribillo



Se - ñor, me has mi - ra - do a los o - jos; son - ri - en - do,
 Sweet Lord, you have looked in - to my eyes; kind - ly smil - ing,



has di - cho mi nom - bre. En la a - re - na he de - ja - do mi
 you've called out my name. . . . On the sand I have a - ban - doned my



bar - ca; jun - to a ti bus - ca - ré o - tro mar.
 small boat; now with you, I will seek oth - er seas.

Prayers of Intercession

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, your Son, whom we confess as the living God. Prepare your church for its mission in bearing witness to Christ, both here at home and throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord. Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your ways. Help leaders regard those in need with mercy and fulfill your loving purposes in the governance of peoples. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care (*especially...*) Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the everlasting Rock from which we were hewn, and you restore your people to joy and gladness. In blessed memory and hope, we thank you for the lives of our beloved dead. Bring us with them to our heavenly home. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

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

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Built on a Rock

ELW #652



1 Built on a rock the church shall stand, e - ven when stee - ples are
2 Sure - ly, in tem - ples made with hands God the Most High is not
3 Christ builds a house of liv - ing stones: we are his own hab - i -
4 Yet in this house, an earth - ly frame, Je - sus the chil - dren is
5 Through all the pass - ing years, O Lord, grant that, when church bells are



fall - ing; crum - bled have spires in ev - 'ry land, bells still are
dwell - ing— high in the heav'ns his tem - ple stands, all earth - ly
ta - tion; he fills our hearts, his hum - ble thrones, grant - ing us
bless - ing; hith - er we come to praise his name, faith in our
ring - ing, man - y may come to hear your Word, who here this



chim - ing and call - ing— call - ing the young and old to rest, call - ing the
tem - ples ex - cel - ling. Yet God who dwells in heav'n a - bove deigns to a -
life and sal - va - tion. Where two or three will seek his face, he in their
Sav - ior con - fess - ing. Je - sus to us his Spir - it sent, mak - ing with
prom - ise is bring - ing: "I know my own, my own know me; you, not the



souls of those dis - tressed, long - ing for life ev - er - last - ing.
bide with us in love, mak - ing our bod - ies his tem - ple.
midst will show his grace, bless - ings up - on them be - stow - ing.
us his cov - e - nant, grant - ing his chil - dren the king - dom.
world, my face shall see; my peace I leave with you. A - men."

Sending

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

Committee Chairs: Remember to get meeting dates and times to Lori via email (stmatthewluth@aol.com) so they can be on the weekly schedule.

Weekly Bulletins and Messengers are available on the website (stmatthewlc.com) for viewing or printing.

Prayers are needed for our homebound: Shirley Acker, Carl & Dawn Alexy, Verna Blough, Fred Brandenburg, Jim Calvert, Clyde Claycomb, Betty Helsel, Doris Henderson, Gene Henry, Jere Hess, Dean Hinish, Gerald Hoover, John Klepser, Janet Kreider, Ginny Sell, Dan Sinal, Don Smith, Nancy Uber, Joy Williams.

Prayer Concerns:, John Aljets, Pastor Denise Arpino, Randy Barrett, Elaine Buchar, Mark Calvert, Dwight Ciccotelli, Greg Comer, Jesse Fay, Joe Fay, Brian Fleck, Jim Freyer, Shari Gilbert, Ryan Guyer, Bill Hainaut, Gregg Hallam, Dan Hershberger, Stephen Hinish, Marilyn Horton, Amber Itle, Fred Kensinger, Darren Kreutzer, Kristen Malloy, Ryder McDermitt, Betty McDowell, Scott McFarland, Aunt Mica, Deb Peters, Alana Rhodes, John Russell, Paul Ruth, Dan Sinal, Barbara Smith, Luther Steele, Katie Stomer, Cindy Thomas, Trenton, Carol Weyandt, Pete Williams, Robert Winston, Jody Zelanko, and for our **Missionaries: Rev. Lesley Hand, On Eagle's Wings, Elizabeth Hendrickson.**

Our college students: Christopher Bush, Olivia Day, Jacob Orzeck.

August Worship Schedule

Sunday: 9:30 AM Worship on Facebook, 10:15ish Fellowship on Zoom

Monday & Friday: Hymn Devotions at 9AM

Tuesday & Thursday: Morning Prayer 9AM & Night Prayer at 9PM

Wednesday: Holden Evening Prayer at 8PM

Serving God and Us Today

Our Pastor – Rev. Traci Marriott Bowman

Our Organist – Dr. Adam Smith

Our Administrative Assistant – Lori Tremmel

Our Assistant Administrative Assistant – Laura Orzeck

Our Sexton – Bill Brown

Our Audio/Video Tech – Alex Snyder

Our Offering Counters – Beth Garner, Jim Barley

Third Quarter Ventures in Faith to “*OEW & Missionaries*”

Monthly Messenger's: If you would like a mailed copy of the Messenger, please let Lori know in the church office either by email stmatthewluth@aol.com or by phone 793-2413. Always remember that the Messenger is also found on the Website at: stmatthewlc.com.

Prayers and Christian Sympathy are asked for Amy and Jane Carpenter upon the death of Amy's mother-in-law and Jane's grandmother on Wednesday, August 19, 2020.

Greetings from ALSM!

These times are unprecedented in our world. Never did any of us think we would be faced with dealing with a virus of unknown origin. Frightening times for all of us. I hope all of you to continue to follow precautions that are indicated by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

As you can imagine, Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries (ALSM) is experiencing challenges we never thought we would face. While the counties in which our three senior communities are located have gone “green,” our communities continue to restrict visitors and screen staff who are tirelessly caring for our residents. Several of our senior daily programs are closed, yet our *ALSM at Home* program continues.

Of course, we are safeguarding our staff team members and our residents by providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) so we can continue to respond to regulating body guidelines. The costs of these are one we did not anticipate. We have set up a COVID-19 Fund to assist with extra expenses such as masks and additional cleaning supplies. We expect to spend at least \$100,000 in PPE. We use approximately 2,000 masks a week and 10,000 gloves a week. If we have an active Covid-19 case, we will need the added PPE of shoe covers, N-95 masks, and shoe covers. We have received a supply of face shields from Saint Francis University, so we have not had to purchase those items yet.

ALSM is fortunate to have the dedicated staff who are committed to our mission “to serve people with love, compassion, and mercy.”

I invite you to please consider a donation of \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 so that we can purchase the equipment we need to keep ALSM safe. We are all in this together and together we can help end the spread of this virus. **St. Matthew will match gifts to ALSM** by members of the congregation through August 31st up to a total of \$1000. Make your ALSM **donation through St. Matthew** by designating "**ALSM PPE**" on your **envelope**. If you already received this communication directly from ALSM and you have made a gift directly to ALSM in response to this letter, please let Lori know the amount of that gift so it can be included in St. Matthew's effort toward the \$1000 match. ***Thank you. Stay safe!***

Sincerely,

Patricia W. Savage, President/CEO

YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

- Your \$105 gift purchases 4500 gloves.
- Your \$100 gift purchases 100 masks.
- Your \$25 gift purchases 3 surgical gowns.

PPE PRICING GUIDELINES:

Surgical masks @ \$1.00 each

N-95 masks @ \$4.00 each

A case of shoe covers @ \$25.00 each

Surgical gowns @ \$8.00 each

A case of 1500 gloves @ \$35.00

N95 test kit @ \$90.00 each