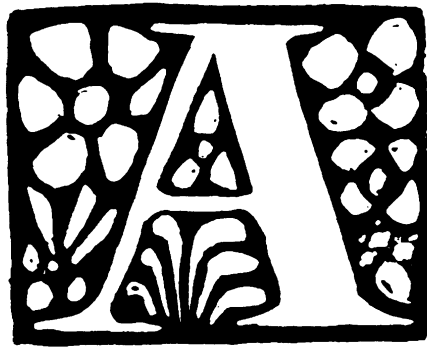


SOLOMON'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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P S A L M 2 5 : 7



ACCORDING
TO YOUR
STEADFAST
LOVE - REMEMBER ME

"Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, following the example of Jesus Christ, seeks to live in the confidence and fullness of God's grace; to preach the Good News boldly and truthfully; to support and serve others in faith; to work in harmony with all creation."

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
OCTOBER 1, 2023

October 1, 2023
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God,
the one who forms us,
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.
Amen.

Let us bow before God in humility,
confessing our sin.

Steadfast and faithful God,
**you have revealed the ways of justice,
yet we fail to follow you.**
**We are overwhelmed
by the world's violence and suffering.**
**We are afraid to risk what we have
for the sake of others.**
**For the harm we have caused,
known and unknown, forgive us.**
**For the unjust demands we place on others
and your creation, forgive us.**
**For the ways we turn away
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**
**Lead us back to you
and set us on the right path;
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.**
Amen.

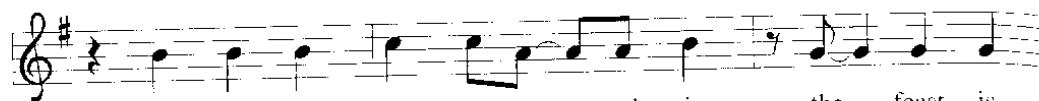
Beloved in Christ,
God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.
God's compassion is beyond compare.
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.
In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG *The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing: The Feast Is Ready (ELW 531)*

GATHERING

The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing
The Feast Is Ready

531



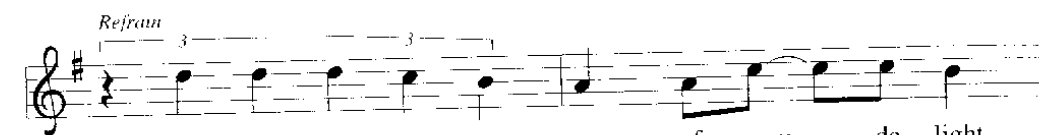
1 The trum - pets sound, the an - gels sing, the feast is
2 Ta - bles are la - den with good things; oh, taste the
3 The hun - gry heart he sat - is - fies, of - fers the



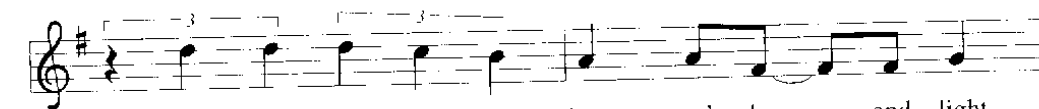
read - y to be - gin. The gates of heav'n are o - pen wide.
peace and joy he brings. He'll fill you up with love di - vine;
poor his par - a - dise. Now hear all heav'n and earth ap - plaud



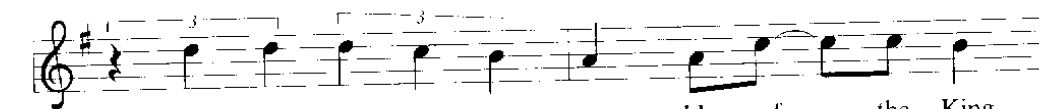
and Je - sus wel - comes you in - side.
he'll turn your wa - ter in - to wine.
the a - maz - ing good - ness of the Lord.



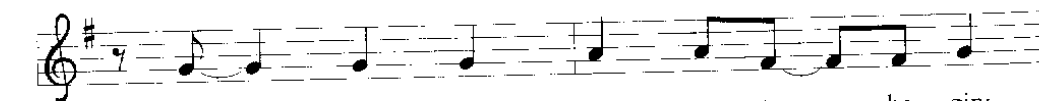
Sing with thank - ful - ness songs of pure de - light.



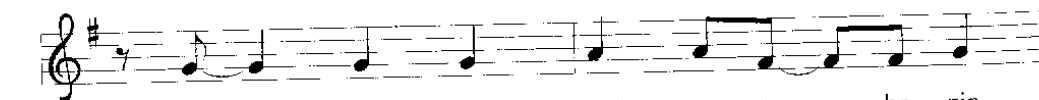
Come and rev - el in heav - en's love and light.



Take your place at the ta - ble of the King.



The feast is read - y to be - gin;



the feast is read - y to be - gin.

Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950
Music: Graham Kendrick
Text and music © 1989 Make Way Music, admin. Music Services in the Western Hemisphere

THE FEAST IS READY
LM and refra.

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (*Sung Twice*) *He Is Exalted* (W&P 55)

The musical score is written in 8/8 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of six systems, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are: "He is ex-alt-ed, the King is ex-alt-ed on high; I will praise him. He is ex-alt-ed, for - ev - er ex - alt - ed, and I will praise his name. Je - sus is Lord, for - ev - er his truth shall reign; hea - ven and earth re - joice in his ho - ly name. He is ex-alt-ed, the King is ex-alt-ed on high." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Chord symbols are provided for the bass line: F, F/A, Bb, C/Bb, Bb/C, C, Dsus, D/C, Gm, Dm/F, C/E, C, F, Am, Bb, F/A, Gm, Dm/F, C/E, C, F, Am, Bb, F/A, Gm, Bb/F, EbM7, Bb/C, F, Bb/F, F.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM *God's Love Never Fails*

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

A reading from Ezekiel.

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9

(Sung responsively between choir and congregation, beginning with the choir)



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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¹To | you, O LORD,

I lift | up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness, O
LORD.

⁸**You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

⁹You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

A reading from Philippians.

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
 and gave him the name
 that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
 every knee should bend,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
 that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence,
 but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good
 pleasure.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Open Our Eyes, Lord* (W&P 113)

The musical score is written in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 3/4 time. It consists of six staves of music with corresponding lyrics and guitar chords. The chords are: D, G², G, Em⁷/A, A⁷, G/D, D, A/C#, Bm, D/A, GM⁹, Em, A⁷, G/D, D², D, DM⁷, A/G, G, Em⁷, A⁷, G/D, D, A, Bm⁷, D/A, GM⁹, Em⁷, A⁷, Em/D, D.

O - pen our eyes, Lord; we want to see
 Je - sus, to reach out and touch
 him, and say that we love him.
 O - pen our ears, Lord, and help us to
 lis - ten. O - pen our eyes,
 Lord, we want to see Je - sus.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

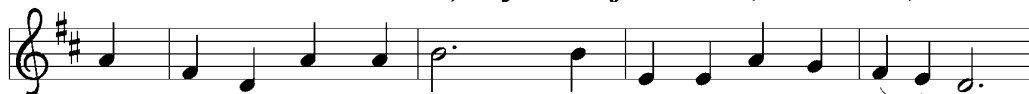
²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The gospel of the Lord.

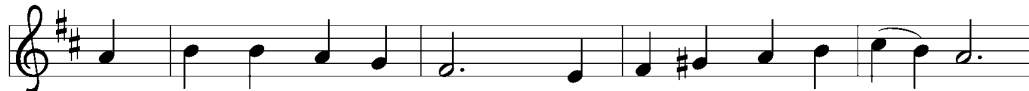
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON REV. RICHARD RUFF

HYMN OF THE DAY *O God, My Faithful God* (ELW 806)



1 O God, my faith - ful God, true foun-tain ev - er flow - ing,
2 Give me the strength to do with read - y heart and will - ing
3 Keep me from say - ing words that lat - er need re - call - ing;
4 When dan-gers gath - er round, oh, keep me calm and fear - less;



with - out whom noth - ing is, all per - fect gifts be - stow - ing:
what - ev - er you com - mand, my call - ing here ful - fill - ing—
guard me, lest i - dle speech may from my lips be fall - ing;
help me to bear the cross when life seems dark and cheer - less;



give me a health - y frame, and may I have with - in
to do it when I ought, with all my might—and bless
but when, with - in my place, I must and ought to speak,
help me, as you have taught, to love both great and small,



a con - science free from blame, a soul un - stained by sin.
what - ev - er I have wrought, for you must give suc - cess.
then to my words give grace, lest I of - fend the weak.
and, by your Spir - it's might, to live at peace with all.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.

Please join me as we confirm our faith together in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

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 THE CHURCH (*Please respond.*)

P: Merciful God, C: receive our prayer.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERTORY *Create in Me a Clean Heart (Hopkins) (W&P 35)*

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve

you; cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, that

I might be re - newed. So fill me and

heal me, and bring me back to you. Cre -

ate in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you.

The musical score is written in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you; cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, that I might be re - newed. So fill me and heal me, and bring me back to you. Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you." The guitar accompaniment includes various chords such as C/D, mn, Dm/C, C7sus, C7, F, C/E, Gm, F/A, F/Bb, C, Am7, Dm7, Gm7, Gm/D, C7sus, C7, and F.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of power, God of plenty,
all things belong to you.
We bring your gifts to the table,
that all might be fed.
Form us into the body of your Beloved,
Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

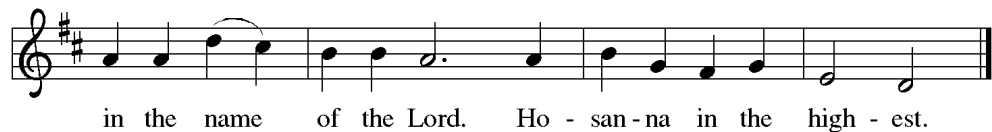
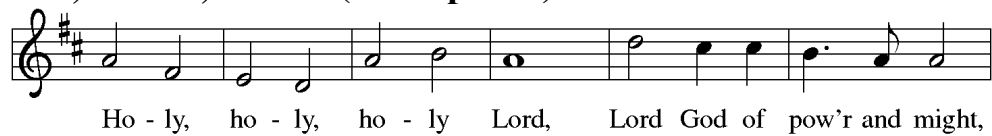
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 153)



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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

Jesus invites you to this table.
Come, eat and live.

COMMUNION

Continuous - Please continue down center aisle at the direction of the usher. After you receive the bread, you may take a cup of red wine or white grape juice from the tray. Please place your empty communion cup in the basket. Gluten free wafers are available, ask the Pastor when you come forward. Notify the Head Usher if you would appreciate receiving Communion at your seat rather than walking up to the altar, the Pastor and Communion Assistant will be happy to bring Communion to you.

COMMUNION SONG



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

HYMN AFTER COMMUNION *Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways* (ELW 772)



1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways to keep his stat - utes still!
2 Or - der my foot-steps by your word and make my heart sin - cere;
3 As - sist my soul, too apt to stray, a strict - er watch to keep;
4 Make me to walk in your com-mands, 'tis a de-light - ful road;



Oh, that my God would grant me grace to know and do his will!
let sin have no do - min-ion, Lord, but keep my con-science clear.
and should I e'er for - get your way, re - store your wan-d'ring sheep.
nor let my head or heart or hands of - fend a - gainst my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.

Music: EVAN, William H. Havergal, 1793–1870

COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *We Rejoice in the Grace of God* (W&P 151)



We re-joice in the grace of God poured up - on our lives;



lov - ing - kind - ness has come to us be -



cause of Je - sus Christ. We re-joice in the



grace of God, our hearts o - ver - flow.



What a joy to know the grace of God!

Text: Steve Cook and Vicki Cook

Music: WE REJOICE IN THE GRACE, Steve Cook and Vicki Cook

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Blessed be your name, O God,
for we have feasted on your Word,
Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.
Strengthened by this food,
send us to gather the world to your banquet,
where none are left out and all are satisfied.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *The Lord Now Sends Us Forth: Enviado soy de Dios* (ELW 538)



En - via - do soy de Dios, mi ma - no lis - ta, es - tá
The Lord now sends us forth with hands to serve and give,
pa - ra cons - truir con él un mun - do fra - ter - nal.
to make of all the earth a bet - ter place to live.
Los án - ge - les no son en - via - dos a cam - biar
The an - gels are not sent in - to our world of pain
un mun - do de do - lor por un mun - do me - jor;
to do what we were meant to do in Je - sus' name;
me ha to - ca - do a mí ha - cer - lo rea - li - dad.
that falls to you and me and all who are made free.
A - yú - da - me, Se - ñor, a ha - cer tu vo - lun - tad.
Help us, O Lord, we pray, to do your will to - day.

SENDING IN SERVICE

Go in peace. God is at work in you.
Thanks be to God.

EXTINGUISHING THE CANDLE/SILENT PRAYER

POSTLUDE

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SERVING TODAY

Pastor	Rev. Richard Ruff
Church Office Email Address	office@solomonslutheran.org
Organist	Doug Mummert
Head Usher	Larry Socks
Acolyte	Janice McEntire
Lector.....	Richard Graven
Securing Offering.....	Zoe Mummert & Wayne Norman
Communion Set-Up.....	Ilona & Jerry Laney
Communion Clean-Up	Ilona & Jerry Laney
Communion Bread	Frances Reichard
Communion Assist.....	Marjorie Dale & Janice McEntire
Coffee Station.....	Bonney Coldsmith & Martie Veilleux
Attendance last Sunday.....	37

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The altar flowers this morning are placed to the Glory of God.

Welcome Visitors! We welcome you to our worship service. We hope your visit with us will be a time of blessing. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Head Usher. We invite you to worship with us again!

Prayer requests for the following: *Mark Gayman, Sam Mull, Lilly Chiado, Bernie Harris, Phyllis Brehm, Catherine Plummer, Bonnie Hudson, Marty Wenger, Virginia Detwiler, Callie Mummert, Matthew, Lexi and Brooke Bowen, Jim & Carole Darr, Beth Floyd, Sarge and Barb Weaver, Tina Smith, Patricia Yetter, Nancy Marshall, Darrell Veilleux, Linda Wepking, Bill and Jane Brindle, Esther Gift, Jean Jackson, Marjorie McMullin, Joe Mock, Ina Shreiner, Genny Grant, Frances Kramer, Linda Russ, Carol Locke, Betty Amt, Ukrainian Nation, Peace for the World.* If anyone has a prayer request, please call Janice McEntire. **Please Be Aware: If you would like to remain listed on the next month's list, or if you would like to have your name removed from the list before the end of the month, please call the office.**

Weekly Calendar Reminders:

October 1 - Coffee Hour Fellowship after worship
5 - Finance 6PM
Choir Practice 7PM

A special thank you to Rev. Richard Ruff for filling in as supply pastor this morning.

If you are in need of pastoral care, please notify Ron Coldsmith, Council President.

Pastor Jane Nicholson, pastor of First Lutheran, Chambersburg, has agreed to provide this care for Solomon's until such time as an interim or settled pastor is called to serve.

The SpiriTrust Lutheran Chambersburg Auxiliary invites you to dine out at MOD Pizza located at 917 Norland Ave, Chambersburg on Sunday, October 15th. Simply bring in the fundraiser flyer, or order online through the MOD app or website using the code MODGIVES20 and MOD will donate 20% of your bill to the auxiliary. All proceeds support SpiriTrust Lutheran, The Village at Luther Ridge and SpiriTrust Lutheran Home Care & Hospice in Franklin County.

Solomon's Relay for Life Team: Is having a Hammer & Stain Fundraiser – “Stained Resin Wine Glasses or Metal Tumblers Workshop” on Sunday, October 22, 2023 from 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm at: Hammer & Stain, 31 South Main Street, Chambersburg. Go on-line to register & pay at: hammerstainchambersburg.com. Scroll down on the home page until you see our listing. – “Click on” 10/22/23 Relay for Life Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church Fundraiser; then you pick which item you want to make; pay directly on the site. **Sign-up deadline is October 8, 2023.** If you have any questions please see Becky Mull or Zoe Mummert. Snacks and Water will be provided. Join us for a fun afternoon!

Apple Butter and Candy Order forms are here! Candy Making – Mark your calendars – **Thursday October 26, 2023 & Friday October 27, 2023.** We will be setting up for candy making on Thursday October 26 at 10:00 am. We will be making candy on Friday October 27 at 8:00 am. Apple Butter & Candy Order Forms are in the newsletter and on table in the Sunday School Room. **Apple Butter & Candy orders will need to be turned in by Sunday, October 8, 2023.** Sign-up Sheets are on the bulletin board in the Sunday School Room. Candy can be picked up Saturday Oct. 28th 9:00 – 11:00 am and Sunday Oct. 29th after Church.

Power Pack Meals: The need for nutritious food for New Franklin Elementary School students in need starting in September. Please consider donating individual serving size fruit and vegetable cups, individual packages of mac-n-cheese, Chef Boyardee, 8 oz bottles of water, juice boxes, and yahoo chocolate drink. Monetary donations are accepted as well, please write “power pack meals” in the memo of your check.

SpiriTrust Lutheran Chambersburg auxiliary has discount cards available for \$5.00. Cards are good until Sept. 1, 2024. All proceeds go to support programs at Luther Ridge. Lots of great places to save. See Bonney Coldsmith, Marjorie Dale, Becky Pecha, or Frances Reichard if you'd like to have a card.

Sign-up Sheets for worship assistants for July – December 2023 are on the bulletin board in the Sunday School room. Communion: bread, set-up, clean-up, and assistant will be on a monthly basis. If you can't commit to the entire month, please see if you can share the month with someone else. Acolytes and Lectors are on a weekly basis. If you find you can't fulfill a chosen date, please call someone to take your place. Let Kimberly in the office know so the bulletin and newsletter info stays up to date. Thank you for your commitment to help provide opportunities for meaningful worship at Solomons. Kimberly will publish the schedule for each month in the newsletter.

Bulletin Announcement Forms are in both pamphlet racks. Please submit all bulletin announcements to the office by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday for inclusion in the bulletin.

Council Minutes, Monthly Financial Statement and Committee Minutes are available in the library for anyone to read.

OCTOBER 1, 2023
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Jesus' humble obedience brings hope for all people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 21:23-32	Parable of the two sons
Monday	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32	God's ways are fair
Tuesday	Philippians 2:1-13	Christ shows us humility
Wednesday	Hebrews 13:1-8	Service well-pleasing to God
Thursday	Exodus 18:13-27	Jethro's advice
Friday	John 13:12-20	Jesus washes the disciples' feet
Saturday	Psalms 25:1-9	Prayer for guidance and help
Sunday	Matthew 21:33-46	Parable of the vineyard tenants

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name. Philippians 2:8-9 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of the nations, you rule with steadfast love and mercy; help us to recognize our need for you and to worship you alone through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, may this food strengthen us in body and soul that we may desire your good pleasure and act in ways that serve others in love. Amen. (Philippians 2:13)

A Blessing to Give:

May the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ give you strength and courage.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When is a time you questioned someone's actions in government, school, or other organization?
- How does Jesus' leadership differ from other leaders?

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Send Me, Jesus



DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 21:23-32.

The chief priests and elders are intended to be leaders of the Jewish people. Jesus challenges their authority and leadership by wanting them to make a commitment—pro or con—regarding John the Baptist. They are not able to do that because they do not truly represent the people who supported John. These leaders are actually servants of Rome, the occupation force in Judea. Their wealth and power are at the pleasure of Rome, not the people of Judea. The leaders have a difficult task to balance between worshiping God and an allegiance to Rome. It is reminiscent of Jesus saying that one cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). The authority Jesus serves is only God's kingdom. In words and actions, Jesus is the obedient Son who triumphs over all other authorities on earth. It is an obedience that will lead to Jesus' death at the hands of those loyal to Rome but will bring hope for all people burdened by powers of fear and death. *Discuss:* How does Jesus' authority and obedience to serve only God's kingdom make a difference for all people?

Pray: **Almighty God, we thank you for Jesus' obedience to your power of grace and mercy so that sinners and tax collectors enter into your kingdom through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how can you help someone who feels weighed down by the burdens of life?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Philippians 2:3 says, *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves."* Name this "Humility Week" in your household. Secretly decide on one act of service you (and others) can perform that will show concern for the interests of others. If you live alone, find someone outside your home to do this with. At the end of the week, think or talk about your acts of "secret service" and what it felt like to show concern for others.