

Service of Holy Communion

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 2026



INTRODUCTION

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

GATHERING

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

P. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

P. Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God, **we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ☩ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Freely receive this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

I Come with Joy

ELW 482

THE GREETING

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

C. And also with you.

KYRIE

A. In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

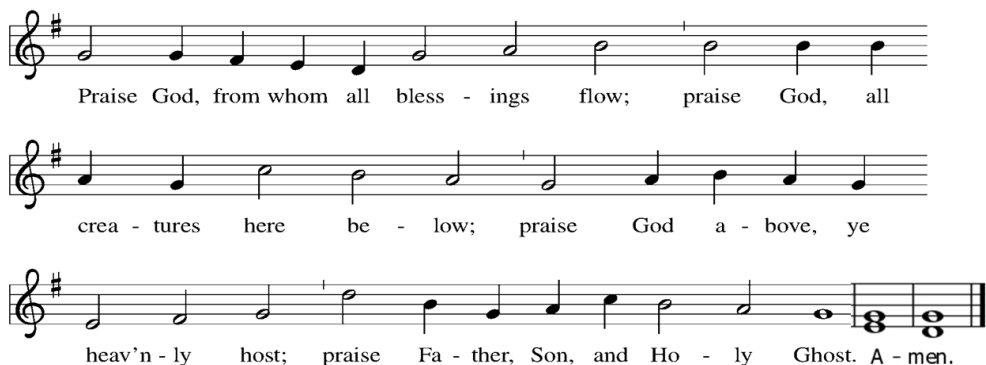
A. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C. Amen

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711, alt.

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. O 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.**

Congregation is seated

WORD

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵ Realizing 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?" ¹⁶ So 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. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as God is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 103:1-7 (*read responsively*)

¹ Bless 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—**

³ who 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;**

⁵ who 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.**

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

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those 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. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves 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.

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

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

¹⁰ Why 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. ¹¹ For it is written,

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

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

A. Word of God, word of life.

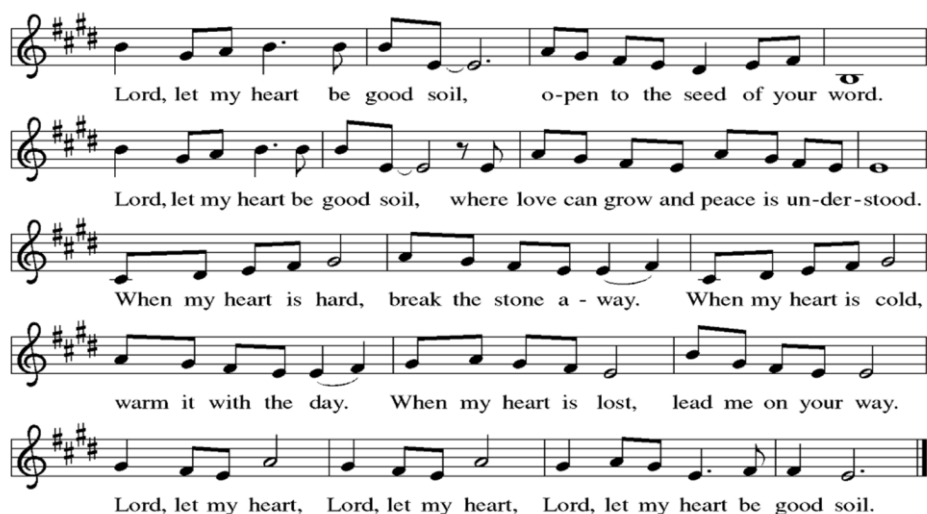
C. Thanks be to God.

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL

Children & Youth are invited forward for a special sermon time with Pastor Peggy.

Congregation stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.

Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.

When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,

warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.

Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

P. The holy gospel according to Matthew. **C. Glory to you, O Lord.**

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus 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. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But 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.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they

were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

P. The gospel of the Lord. **C. Praise to you, O Christ.**

Congregation is seated

SERMON

Forgiveness, Again?

Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY All Creatures Worship God Most High ELW 835
vs. 1-4

APOSTLE'S 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

A. Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us. *A brief silence.*

A. Move your church throughout the world away from judging and despising others. Lead us to embody the forgiveness you have given us in Jesus. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. The endless beauty of your creation reminds us of your mercy. Protect those who care for farms and ranches. Guide those who lead us to wonder at your creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Raise up leaders, like John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, whom we remember today, to hold all in authority accountable for any misuse of the power entrusted to them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Calm the fears of all in need with your promises. Compassionately free the lives of any who feel bound by their failures. Remember your children in need. We pray especially for... those we name aloud... and those we hold in our hearts... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. Ground this congregation in the welcome you show us in forgiving our sin. Inspire each of us to welcome others for your honor and glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. With you is found the joy and promise of eternal life. Keep us in that joy as we remember Claire Kranz, all those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P. Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C. And also with you.

P. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Congregation is seated

CHOIR ANTHEM

Forgiven

Nan & Dennis Allen

MEAL

OFFERTORY INVITATION

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via Venmo ↓



Offering can be given by putting it in the offering plate when it is passed, online directly via the QR codes for Tithely or Venmo, or by requesting your bank to send a check to the church. Find more details on our website.

Thank you for your generous gifts!

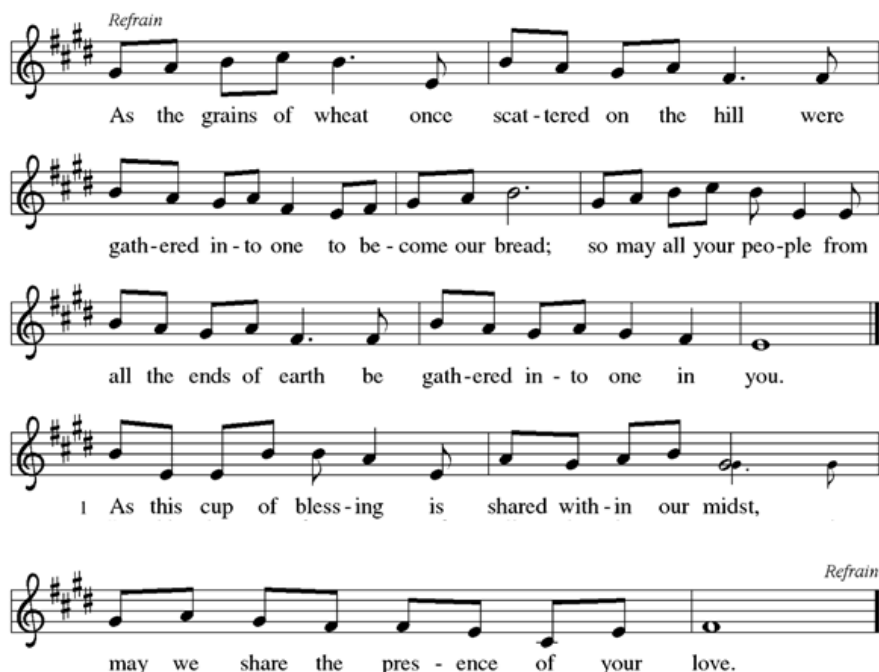
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Congregation stands

OFFERTORY SONG

Refrain



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.
1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst,
Refrain
may we share the pres - ence of your love.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A. Let us pray...God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

DIALOGUE & PREFACE OF 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 offer thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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: *(Sing 2x—English 1st time; Spanish 2nd time)*



San - to, san - to, san - to, mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra.
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you.



Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de-cir: San - to, e-res Se - ñor.
My heart is glad to say the words: You are ho - ly, God.

Text: Argentine traditional

Music: ARGENTINE SANTO, Argentine traditional

Congregation is seated

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P. Holy God, our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food, you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life, and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven. You sent your Son to eat with sinners and to become food for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, 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.

Remembering, therefore, his life given for us and his rising from the grave, we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal: strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want, and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we practice Eucharistic hospitality. All baptized persons are welcome to Communion this morning. Please come forward, guided by the Ushers, to receive the bread and wine. Children are invited to the table for a blessing.

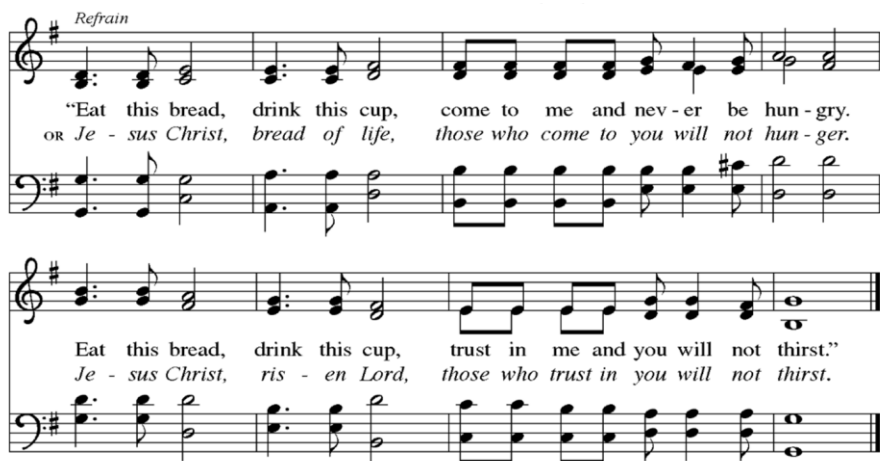
Gluten free and traditional wafers are available, please note this to Pastor Peggy when you come up. The bread is dairy and egg free. Grape juice is available in the second communion plate. As you return to your seat via the side aisles you can place your empty cup in the baskets on either side.

P. Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

COMMUNION SONG

Refrain



"Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and nev - er be hun - gry.
OR Je - sus Christ, bread of life, those who come to you will not hun - ger.

Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst."
Je - sus Christ, ris - en Lord, those who trust in you will not thirst.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

After all have received Communion the congregation stands.

TABLE BLESSING

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

SONG AFTER COMMUNION



Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done.

Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.

Send us with your prom - is - es and lead your peo - ple forth in joy with

shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A. Let us pray...Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

SENDING

BENEDICTION

P. The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus. **Amen.** The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit. **Amen.** The God of grace ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

God's Work, Our Hands

ACS 1000

(printed in back)

DISMISSAL

A. Go out in joy! Be led forth in peace.

C. Thanks be to God.

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Announcements for September 13, 2026

***Welcome** to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God's presence in our worship!*

*If today is your **first time** worshipping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the "Guest Book" on the table in the narthex and **take a welcome bag**. Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning. **Large print bulletins are available**.*

*The **Pray-ground** is a special place to help **support kids and families** in worshipping. We love the sound of kids in worship! God made kids wiggly and curious, and we celebrate that here. **Tips:** explain, participate, and move around together. Need to leave? No problem, but please come back!*

***Worship is live streamed** to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All. **Anyone on the altar is on camera**.*

~~~~~  
***Altar flowers are in memory of Papa McCormick from the Heerens!***  
~~~~~

Volunteers for Today's Worship

Lay Asst.	Pam Kucks
Ushers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Comm. Asst.	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tech	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Tellers	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Refreshments	Church Picnic!

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

Sunday, September 13: Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

All Church Photo following worship

Church Picnic, 11am

Brief Choir Rehearsal, 11am

Tuesday, September 14: Pastor's Comm. Hrs, Café Dolci, 12:30-2:30pm

Wednesday, September 16: Adult Ed, [Zoom](#), 10:00am

Spending Plan Meeting, 7-8:30pm

Saturday, September 19: Sisters in Prayer, [Zoom](#), 8:30am

Sunday, September 20: Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

Usher Training, 10:45am

Choir: Choir rehearsals have resumed following worship, however there is **NO** rehearsal next Sunday. **All singers are welcome**, no matter your experience! Read June's Jottings in the September newsletter for more details.

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at Café Dolci in Franklin, **THIS Tuesday, September 15th from 12:30-2:30pm**, as well as the 22nd, and 29th for Community Office Hours. All are welcome to visit as she is present in the community.

Usher Training: If you are interested in Ushering/Greeting or already participate in worship in this way stay **after worship on Sunday, September 20th** for a brief training session. Talk with Kathy Heeren or Diane Rossi for more information.

Sunday School: Sunday School begins **NEXT Sunday, September 20th!** Sunday School is from 8:45-9:15am Sunday mornings before worship for ages 3yrs old-6th grade. **Register** for the new program year [via this link](#). Kristina Garnett, is our new Sunday School Coordinator! Connect with her or Pastor Peggy for help or with any questions.

Mindfulness Walk: Join Pastor Peggy for a fall **Mindfulness Walk at Maple Grange Park NEXT Wednesday, September 23rd from 4-5pm**. We will meet in the first parking lot and determine our route based on the group. You're invited to **wear your 'Live Generously T-shirt'**. All ages are welcome!

Pampered Chef Fundraiser: Pam has organized a Pampered Chef fundraiser for the church. You are welcome to **order** any products through our [special link](#) by **September 27th** and the church will earn the proceeds, plus the Kucks family will be matching any funds. Connect with Pam for more details.

Bring-A-Friend Sunday: Start inviting your friends now to join you for worship on **Sunday, October 4th!** We are excited to add this event to our 2026 calendar. **Everyone who brings a friend** will get a raffle ticket into drawings for gift cards to local spots in town. Let's show others how wonderful Holy Counselor is and how God's love shines. The more the merrier!

Stop The Bleed & AED Training: After worship on **Sunday, October 4th from 11am-12:30pm** we will have an AED training and Stop the Bleed class led by Claire Speroni's husband, Dale. He has been an EMT in Vernon for over 12 years and is graciously volunteering his time to offer this training for us. All are welcome, however **anyone who regularly cooks at church, works with kids, or is an active leader in the congregation (ushers, council members, etc.) is highly encouraged to attend.** Let's help keep everyone safe and healthy together!

Blessing of the Animals: Our annual Blessing of the Animals will be **Tuesday, October 6th at 6pm on the church front lawn.** Invite anyone with a pet! Please bring your leashed or crated pet, or their picture for a blessing. **All are welcome** to join us for this brief gathering, even if you don't have an animal but want to spread God's love through pets and smiles.

New Member Inquiry Class: Pastor Peggy will be offering a New Members Inquiry class **Sunday, October 11th after worship at 11am.** **Anyone interested** in learning more about the church, how we work, and what we do is invited to attend. After attending the class, you can decide if joining as a member is right for you at this time. For those who are interested in being members we will pick a date to welcome all new members in worship on a Sunday. Please **let Pastor Peggy know by 10/4**, if you are interested in the class even if you can't attend (pastorpeggy@hc-lutheranchurch.org).

Church Road Clean-up: As part of the Clean Communities Project, the Vernon Twp DPW will pay HCLC to pick up garbage on Sand Hill and McPeck roads. **Volunteer** to help with the Road Cleanup on **Sunday, October 18th from 11am-2pm** (any time available during those hours is appreciated). Please see Diane Rossi if you are available to help!

Food Pantry: Food items to help restock: 4-pack toilet paper, canned tuna, canned chili, canned corn, canned soup, canned green beans, canned fruit, mac & cheese, boxed potatoes, tuna helper, peanut butter, jelly, children's juice boxes or pouches, kid's snacks, toothpaste, shampoo. You can always bring donations of canned goods, paper goods, and hygiene products. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!

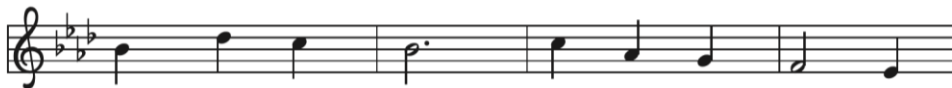
God's Work, Our Hands



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
 2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
 3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
 4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
 fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
 prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
 seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
 walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
 pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
 Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
 run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
 claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
 gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
 Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
 Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
 Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
 shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: EARTH AND ALL STARS, David N. Johnson, 1922–1987

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For God's Children of all ages!



Worship Notes

Sunday's Date: _____



My Favorite
Song:

This week, I'm praying for:

I'm curious or have a
question about:



Today's Focus Scripture: _____

I would draw it like:



Word Count

How many times did you hear each
of these words today? Make a tally.

grace: _____

joy: _____

peace: _____

love: _____

||



Contact Information

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Bookkeeper: Wynn White: accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org

MISSION STATEMENT

As Children of God, we are called to share and serve Christ's love and bring God's word to all.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow

President Nancy Knecht

Vice President Frank Urbaniak

Treasurer Claire Speroni

Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick

Financial Secretary John Heeren

Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince

Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel

Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Kristina Heeren

Pam Kucks

Matt Moller

Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

