

Service of the Word

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

October 18th, 2026



This Service of the Word derives its pattern from the service of Holy Communion. Although a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper is the norm, a service of the word of God is also celebrated regularly or occasionally in many places.

INTRODUCTION

In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Congregation stands as you are able

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

L. Let us confess our sin to God.

The congregation sits or kneels. 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.**

L. 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

Lift Every Voice and Sing

ELW 841

THE GREETING

L. 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.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711, alt.

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L. Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

GENEROSITY IMPACT MOMENT

Fred Schoenagel

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 45:1-7

- ¹ Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before
him and to strip kings of their robes, to open doors before
him-and the gates shall not be closed
- ² I will go before you and level the mountains;
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron;
- ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
- ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob
and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name;
I give you a title, though you do not know me.
- ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no
god. I arm you, though you do not know me,
- ⁶ so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
- ⁷ I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 96:1-13 *(read responsively)*

- ¹ Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- ² **Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**
- ³ Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.
- ⁴ **For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,
more to be feared than all gods.**
- ⁵ As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;

but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

**⁶ Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

**⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

⁹ Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

**¹⁰ Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be
moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful
and all that is therein.

**¹² Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your
coming, O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

¹³ You will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with your truth.

SECOND READING: Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

² We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you
in our prayers, constantly ³ remembering before our God and
Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of
hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters
beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our message of
the gospel came to you not in word only but also in power and in
the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind
of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you
became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution
you received the word with joy from the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you
became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in
Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not

only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it.

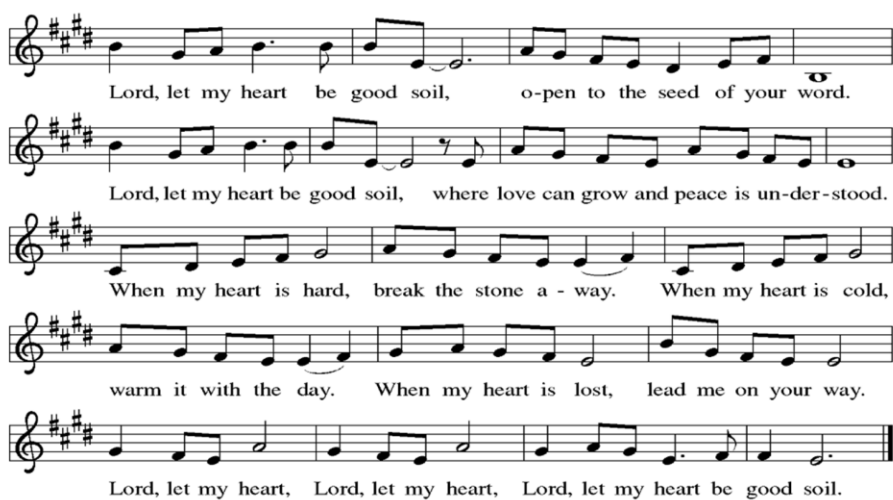
⁹ For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

A. Word of God, word of life.

C. Thanks be to God.

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 22:15-22

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

¹⁵ The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality.

¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, “Whose head is this and whose title?” ²¹ They answered,

“Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”

²² When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

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

Congregation is seated

SERMON REFLECTION

Mark Rossi

Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY God of Grace and God of Glory

ELW 705

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. Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world. *A brief silence.*

A. Living and true God, you inspire us to share the message of the gospel. Give your spirit of love to seminarians and those beginning their lives in ordained ministry Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. We give you thanks for the majesty of our oceans. Protect the abundant life within them and sustain all those who work to preserve them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. We seek your wisdom in all things. Direct all who hold positions of authority around the world, that they act with compassion, seeking the good of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. We pray for all people who work in dangerous or degrading environments. Grant them safety and courage, and heal all those who are injured, sick, or suffering. We pray especially for... those we name aloud... and those we hold in our hearts... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. We ask your blessing on those who do the quiet, unseen work of the church. Help them to know how thankful we are for them. Encourage them in their work of faith and labor of love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A. We thank you for our ancestors who have been called home to you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L. Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

L. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C. And also with you.

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

Congregation is seated

CHOIR ANTHEM

Be Everything

Regi Stone, Christy Sutherland

OFFERTORY INVITATION

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via Venmo ↓



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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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

A. Let us pray... O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory 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.

Congregation stands

SENDING

BENEDICTION

L. 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

Give Thanks

W&P 41

(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 October 18th, 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** worshiping 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 worshiping. 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.**

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**Thank you, Pam Kucks for this morning's refreshments!!**  
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Volunteers for Today's Worship

Lay Asst.	Dawn McCormick
Ushers	Elaine Kuntz & Janet Beach
Tech	Fred Schoenagel
Tellers	Volunteer needed
Refreshments	Pam Kucks

Volunteers Scheduled for Next Sunday

Lay Asst.	Dawn McCormick
Ushers	-----
Tech	John Heeren

***** Join us for refreshments after worship*****

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

Sunday, October 18: Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship, Service of the Word, 9:30am

Choir Rehearsal following worship

Road Clean-Up, 11am-2pm

Wednesday, October 21: Adult Ed, [Zoom](#), 10:00am

Spending Plan Meeting, 7-8:30pm

Thursday, October 22: Cluster-wide Mental Health Study, [Zoom](#), 7-8pm

Saturday, October 24: Sisters in Prayer, [Zoom](#), 8:30am

Auction of the Gifts & Oktoberfest Dinner, 5-8pm

Sunday, October 25: Sunday School, 8:45-9:15am

Worship w/Communion and Baptism, 9:30am

Toddler Family Park & Play, Franklin Pond Park, 4-6pm

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**Over the next several weeks our congregation will be focusing on financial stewardship for 2027.** We will reflect on the theme “Because of God’s Love...” and the many ministries of Holy Counselor that are possible because of your time, talent, and treasure.

**On Generosity Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup>,** each friend and member of HCLC will be invited to **submit an intent card** as we pray over our intentions for the coming year. As you hear people provide their Generosity Impact Moments during worship in the coming weeks, **we ask you to do two things:**

- **First,** to prayerfully discern either **making your first intent** to HCLC, **or** if you’ve done so in the past, to **increase your giving** by 1 or 2% of your household income.
- **Second,** consider **making your gifts using Tithely or Venmo** to help the church with sustained giving. We can help you set this up—just let the church office know!

**Every gift makes a difference in the life of the church and our ministry together! Because of God’s Love...joy abounds and community thrives!**

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Church Road Clean-up-TODAY: 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 **TODAY, Sunday, October 18th from 11am-2pm** (any time available during those hours is appreciated). Please see Diane Rossi if you are available to help!

Auction of the Gifts & Oktoberfest Dinner: Do you have a special gift, talent, or item to share? Maybe you sew, organize well, or are a talented photographer. Or maybe you love to cook, have a vacation house to lend, or have another idea altogether! Share your talent, gift, or donation item for the Auction of the Gifts & Oktoberfest Dinner Fundraiser **THIS Saturday, October 24th from 5-8pm. Here's how it works:** you donate your gift and then the item is auctioned off to the highest bidder while we all enjoy dinner, community, and laughter. **Come to dinner** and have a fun evening regardless of whether or not you're bidding. Contact Diane Rossi to donate your gifts today!

Trick or Trail: We will be **hosting a church table** at Vernon's Halloween Trick or Trail at Maple Grange on **Friday, October 30th**. Set up is between 2pm-3:30pm and the last group comes through at 7pm. If you'd like to **help with set up and/or dressing up and handing out popcorn** please email Pastor Peggy. We are also looking for **6 large boxes of microwave popcorn** to be donated.

Toddler Family Park Play: Families with kids age 5 and under are invited to join us at **Franklin Pond Park, NEXT Sunday, October 25th anytime between 4-6pm**. As our church family continues to grow, we want to build strong bonds and support one another. **Pack your own dinner** to eat at the park. Connect with Lynn Ludlow for more details.

Cluster-wide Mental Health Study: Our cluster-wide study series called **Mental Health & Radical Hospitality** continues on **Zoom from 7-8pm on Thursdays, through October 29th**. All are welcome to participate. Reach out to Pastor Peggy with any questions.

All Saints Sunday: On **Sunday, November 1st**, we will remember all the Saints who have died and honor their memory during worship. If you have a loved one who has **died in the past year** whose name and dates you would like listed in the bulletin, **please email Pastor Peggy** to include their printed information **by Monday, October 26th**.

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at **Tuscan Café** in Warwick **Tuesday, October 27th from 12:30-2:30pm** for Community Office Hours. All are welcome to visit as she is present in the community.

Turkey Trot: The Annual Vernon Turkey Trot is Thanksgiving Day (11/26). HCLC is the center hub! You are invited to **participate in the 5K, which begins at 8am.** Church members are free, advance **registration is required.** You can also **volunteer to help** with check-in or snack tables & cheer on the participants. Volunteers should arrive by 6:45/7am. Speak to Denise Urbaniak for more details or to get signed up.

RaiseRight Gift Cards for Shopping/Gifts/Holidays: As you are preparing gifts for the upcoming holidays, we want to remind you of our ongoing program RaiseRight! You can **purchase gift cards** to be sent to others **as gifts** or you can get gifts cards **for the places you are buying from** during this season. As well as for anytime you shop all year long!

There are **2 ways to get cards:** You can do this **via the RaiseRight app** on your phone or via the order forms with a selection of cards that can be ordered through HCLC. The **Raiseright book is in the Narthex.** Share the forms with your family and friends too. **It works by** simply buying gift cards to stores where you already shop, you get the full value, and then the church gets a percentage back. **Download the RaiseRight app & link to the church with enrollment code:** 53EB2E84IL3275 – our RaiseRight ID number. Speak with John Heeren for more information.

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!

Give Thanks

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked 'Last time' in a box above the final staff. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The score consists of eight staves of music. The first two staves contain the first line of lyrics, the next two staves contain the second line, and the final four staves contain the third line. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some rests and a repeat sign at the end of the final staff.

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.
Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.
And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And
now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

Text: Henry Smith
Music: GIVE THANKS. Henry Smith

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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

Land Acknowledgement: *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.*

