

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
September 20th, 2026 – Seventeenth Sunday of Pentecost
Pastor Stephanie Newman

Welcome / Announcements

Prelude/Video

“Jesus Loves”

Zach Williams

WELCOME *(Please Stand)*

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We begin in the name of the God who created us, the Christ who calls us, and the Holy Spirit who gathers us together.

C: Amen.

P: Friends, before we sing about welcome, we tell the truth about the times when we have failed to welcome. Before we sing about love, we confess the times when love has been difficult. Before we come to Christ's table, we remember again that none of us comes because we have earned a place. We come because Jesus has made one. Let us pray.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

We confess that sometimes we make your love too small. We draw lines you never asked us to draw. We judge people we do not understand. We hold tightly to what is ours when you have called us to open our hands.

Forgive us when we have failed to see Christ in one another. Forgive us when we have forgotten that your grace is a gift, not reward.

Open our hearts. Widen our welcome. Teach us again to love as Jesus loves. Amen.

P: Hear this good news:

God's grace is bigger than our failure. God's mercy is bigger than our mistakes. And in Jesus Christ, the things that separate us from God are forgiven. You are loved. You are forgiven. You are free.

And there is still a place for you.

C: Amen.

The Peace

P: The peace of Christ knows no stranger

C: We share that peace with one another.

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.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. God of boundless grace, you are always making the circle wider. You find us when we are wandering, feed us when we are hungry, welcome us when we are uncertain, and give us one another for the journey. Make this church a place where love has room to breathe. Teach us to recognize Christ in the stranger, the neighbor, the friend, and even the person we struggle to understand. And when we forget how wide your grace really is, bring us back to Jesus, who welcomed the forgotten, ate with the excluded, touched the untouchable, and keeps pulling up another chair.

In Jesus name we pray

C: Amen

THE WORD IN SONG**Psalm 145:8–13a, 17–18**

The Psalm will be read responsively

A The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

C: The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

A: All your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.

C: They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,

A: that all people may know of your power and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

C: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout all ages.

A: You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works.

C: You are near to all who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully.

A: This is the God we sing about-

C: gracious, compassionate, loving, and good to all.

A: Let all God's people say:

C: Amen

P: This is the God we sing about today. Not a distant God. Not a reluctant God.
A God whose goodness reaches toward *all*.

Cross-Gen Song
Cross-Gen Message

“God Welcomes All”

ACS 978 (twice)

P: We sing because the God who made mountains and oceans and galaxies also knows us by name.
Church, sing your wonder.

Hymn

“How Great Thou Art”

ELW 856 (1-4)

A Word About The Journey

P: Our next hymn carries us through an entire lifetime.

From birth—
to questions—
to wandering—
to aging—
to death—

God says the same thing: **I am with you.**

Before you knew God's name, God knew yours. And wherever the road takes you, you do not walk it alone.

Hymn

“Borning Cry”

ELW 732 (1&4)

A Word For The Church

Paul wrote to the Philippians

“Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ... standing firm in one spirit.”

Faith was never supposed to be only *Jesus and me*. Following Christ creates an **us**.

A people learning to stand together. A people learning to carry one another. A people learning that nobody has to make the journey alone.

Hymn

“What a Friend We Have In Jesus”

ELW 742 (1-3)

The congregation will please stand as able & comfortable

The Gospel

P: The Holy Gospel according to: **Matthew 20:1-16**

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about God’s generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Congregation will please be seated

Homily: “Grace Isn’t Fair-Thank God”

Pastor Stephanie Newman

The Congregation will please stand as able
(Lights on after Sermon)

P: If Christ's light has found us, then we don't hide it inside this building. We carry it into the world. So let's sing this one like a prayer.

Hymn of Response

“Shine, Jesus, Shine”

ELW 671 (1-2)

** Pass Info Slips to Side Aisle and Prayer cards to the inside aisle*

Video Presentation: *The Love of God*

Offering

P: Everything we have first came to us as gift. Our time. Our abilities. Our resources. Our lives. We give not to earn God's generosity but because we have already received more grace than we could ever repay.

Our offering will now be received.

Special Music

Cancel Choir

Offering Prayer

P: Generous God, receive these gifts and receive our lives. Use them to feed people, welcome strangers, comfort neighbors, teach children, heal wounds, and proclaim the extravagant love of Jesus. Make what we offer part of your work of making room in this world.

A: Amen

Holy Communion

Invitation To The Table

P: And now we come to the table. Before we come, we remember whose table this is. It is not mine. It is not yours. **It belongs to Jesus.** And throughout his life Jesus had a remarkable habit of eating with people other people weren't sure belonged at the table, so we believe all are welcome

So if you are hungry for grace-come.

If your faith is strong-come.

If your faith is hanging by a thread-come.

If you have been here a thousand times-come.

If this is your first time-come.

Christ is the host. Grace is the meal. And there is room.

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 to give you thanks, gracious God. You created a world overflowing with life and called it good. When your people wandered, you continued to seek them. When they were hungry, you fed them. When they were afraid, you remained with them. And when we still could not understand the depth of your love, you came among us in Jesus. He ate with sinners. Touched the forgotten. Welcomed children. Crossed boundaries. Forgave enemies. And showed us that your kingdom looks remarkably like a table with room for one more.

Sanctus

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!”

ELW 413 (Vs.1)

Words Of Institution

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus gathered with his friends. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them saying:

Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it with them saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

And so whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, Christ meets us here.

Not because we earned a place. Because love made one.

P: Gathered into one, we are bold to pray:

The 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

P: This is the body of Christ. This is the feast, ever abundant, ever overflowing

Come. There is room for you.

(Please be seated)

**Lamb of God
Communion Distribution**

“Now Behold the Lamb”

ELW 341 (Vs.1)

Communion Hymns ***“Children of the Heavenly Father”***
 “Amazing Grace”
 “Beautiful Savior”

ELW 781 1-4)
ELW 488 (1-4)
ELW 838 (1-4)

Communion Blessing

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in grace.

A: AMEN

Prayer after Communion

P Let us pray. Jesus, you have fed us with grace and made us one body. Send us now to share what we have received: welcome for the stranger, hope for the weary, and love for the world.

C: Amen

(The Congregation will please stand as able and comfortable)

Pastor's Blessing

Blessing

P: Church, wherever you go this week: may you know that you are loved beyond measure. May you remember that you never walk alone. May you recognize Christ in people you did not expect. May you be brave enough to widen the circle, generous enough to pull up another chair, and gracious enough to say to someone who thought there could never be a place for them: **“There you are. We've been waiting for you. Welcome home.”**

And may the blessing of God—Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—go with you and remain with you always.

A: Amen

Sending Hymn ***“We Are Marching in the Light of God”***

ELW 866 (1-4)

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Love has made space for us. Praise God

A: Thanks be to God!