



*“Whoever welcomes
one such child in my
name welcomes me.”*

MATTHEW 18:5, NIV

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

4672 N Cedar Ave. Fresno, CA 93726

Rev. Michael N. Vernava

Rev. Khai N. Lee

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 10, 2023

The Mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to honor our Lord Jesus Christ through worship and ministering to all God’s people equipping them for service to God and to each other.

CREATIVE WORSHIP

As We Gather: Calling A Faithful Pastor

O Gracious Father, You led Your holy apostles to ordain ministers for the proclamation of Your Word and the Faithful administration of the Sacraments of Christ. Grant to this congregation the guidance of the Holy Spirit to choose a suitable pastor according to Your will for the blessing of Your Church in this place; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRELUDE

Organist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Peace Handbell Choir

“Shepherd of Tender Youth”

— arr. by Martha Lynn Thompson

OPENING HYMN *“The Lord, My God, Be Praised” LSB 794*

- 1 The Lord, my God, be praised,
My light, my life from heaven;
My maker, who to me
Has soul and body given;
My Father, who will shield
And keep me day by day
And make each moment yield
New blessings on my way.

2 The Lord, my God, be praised,
My trust, my life from heaven,
The Father's own dear Son,
Whose life for me was given,
Who for my sin atoned
With His most precious blood
And gives to me by faith
The highest heav'nly good.

3 The Lord, my God, be praised,
My hope, my life from heaven,
The Spirit, whom the Son
In love to me has given.
His grace revives my heart
And gives my spirit pow'r,
Help, comfort, and support
In sorrow's gloomy hour.

△ 4 The Lord, my God, be praised,
My God, the ever-living,
To whom the heav'nly host
Their laud and praise are giving.
The Lord, my God, be praised,
In whose great name I boast,
God Father, God the Son,
And God the Holy Ghost.

Text: Johann Olearius, 1611–84; tr. August Crull, 1845–1923, alt. Text: Public domain

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen. *Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]*

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** *1 John 1:8-9*

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.** *[John 20:19-23]*

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

KYRIE

L In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

L For the peace from above and for our salvation.
Let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

L 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.

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

C Lord, have mercy.

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

C Amen.

COLLECT

P Let us pray.

O God, from whom all good proceeds, grant to us, Your humble servants, Your holy inspiration, that we may set our minds on the things that are right and, by Your merciful guiding, accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 33:7–9

⁷“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and

he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE

Romans 13:1–10

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

32:1–7

P Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

**C Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no
iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

P For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

**C For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**

P I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my
iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the
LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

**C Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to
you at a time when you may be found; surely in the
rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.**

P You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from
trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

**C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy
Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be
forever. Amen.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 18:1–20

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the
eighteenth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who
is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ²And calling to
him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³and said, “Truly,
I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you

will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever humbles
himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of
heaven.

⁵“Whoever receives one such child in my name
receives me, ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones
who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have
a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be
drowned in the depth of the sea.

⁷“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is
necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by
whom the temptation comes! ⁸And if your hand or your foot
causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for
you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two
feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye
causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better
for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be
thrown into the hell of fire.

¹⁰“See that you do not despise one of these little ones.
For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face
of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹For the Son of Man came to
save the lost. ¹²What do you think? If a man has a hundred
sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave
the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one
that went astray? ¹³And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he
rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never
went astray. ¹⁴So it is not the will of my Father who is in
heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his
fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you
have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take
one or two others along with you, that every charge may be
established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he

refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

MESSAGE HYMN *“Shepherd of Tender Youth” LSB 864*

- 1 Shepherd of tender youth,
Guiding in love and truth
Through devious ways;
Christ, our triumphant king,
We come Your name to sing
And here our children bring
To join Your praise.
- 2 You are the holy Lord,
O all-subduing Word,
Healer of strife.
Yourself You did abase
That from sin’s deep disgrace
You so might save our race
And give us life.
- 3 You are the great High Priest;
You have prepared the feast
Of holy love;
And in our mortal pain

None calls on You in vain;
Our plea do not disdain;
Help from above.

- 4 O ever be our guide,
Our shepherd, and our pride,
Our staff and song.
Jesus, O Christ of God,
By Your enduring Word
Lead us where You have trod;
Make our faith strong.
- 5 So now, and till we die,
Sound we Your praises high
And joyful sing:
Infants and all the throng,
Who to the Church belong,
Unite to swell the song
To Christ, our king!

Text: attr. Clement of Alexandria, c. 170–c. 220; tr. Henry M. Dexter, 1821–90, alt. Text: Public domain

MESSAGE

**“Why Jesus Cherishes the Children”
St. Matthew 18:1-5**

APOSTLES’ CREED

LSB 158

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.**

The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and
the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.

OFFERTORY

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” LSB 805

△ 1 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711 Text: Public domain

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBER

Patricia R. Goehring, by Confession of Faith

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, “Peace be with you,” as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3).

LORD’S PRAYER

**C 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.

HYMN “Oh, Blest the House” LSB 862

- 1 Oh, blest the house, whate’er befall,
Where Jesus Christ is all in all!
A home that is not wholly His—
How sad and poor and dark it is!
- 2 Oh, blest that house where faith is found
And all in hope and love abound;
They trust their God and serve Him still
And do in all His holy will!
- 3 Oh, blest the parents who give heed
Unto their children’s foremost need
And weary not of care or cost.
May none to them and heav’n be lost!
- 4 Oh, blest that house; it prospers well.
In peace and joy the parents dwell,
And in their children’s lives is shown
How richly God can bless His own.

- 5 Then here will I and mine today
A solemn promise make and say:
Though all the world forsake His Word,
I and my house will serve the Lord!

Text: Christoph Carl Ludwig von Pfeil, 1712–84; (sts. 1–2, 4–5): tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.; (st. 3): tr. Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal, 1880, Columbus Text: Public domain

CLOSING PRAYER

P Lord God our Father, You kept Abraham and Sarah in safety throughout the days of their pilgrimage, You led the children of Israel through the midst of the sea, and by a star You led the Wise Men to the infant Jesus. Protect and guide us now in this time as we set out to travel. Make our ways safe and our homecomings joyful, and bring us at last to our heavenly home, where You dwell in glory with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD look upon you with favor and give ☩ you peace.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *“Renew Me, O Eternal Light” LSB 704*

- 1 Renew me, O eternal Light,
And let my heart and soul be bright,
Illumined with the light of grace
That issues from Your holy face.
- 2 Remove the pow’r of sin from me
And cleanse all my impurity

That I may have the strength and will
Temptations of the flesh to still.

- 3 Create in me a new heart, Lord,
That gladly I obey Your Word.
Let what You will be my desire,
And with new life my soul inspire.
- 4 Grant that I only You may love
And seek those things which are above
Till I behold You face to face,
O Light eternal, through Your grace.

Text: Johann Friedrich Ruopp, 1672–1708; tr. August Crull, 1845–1923, alt. Text: Public domain

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE

Organist