

First St. John Lutheran Church

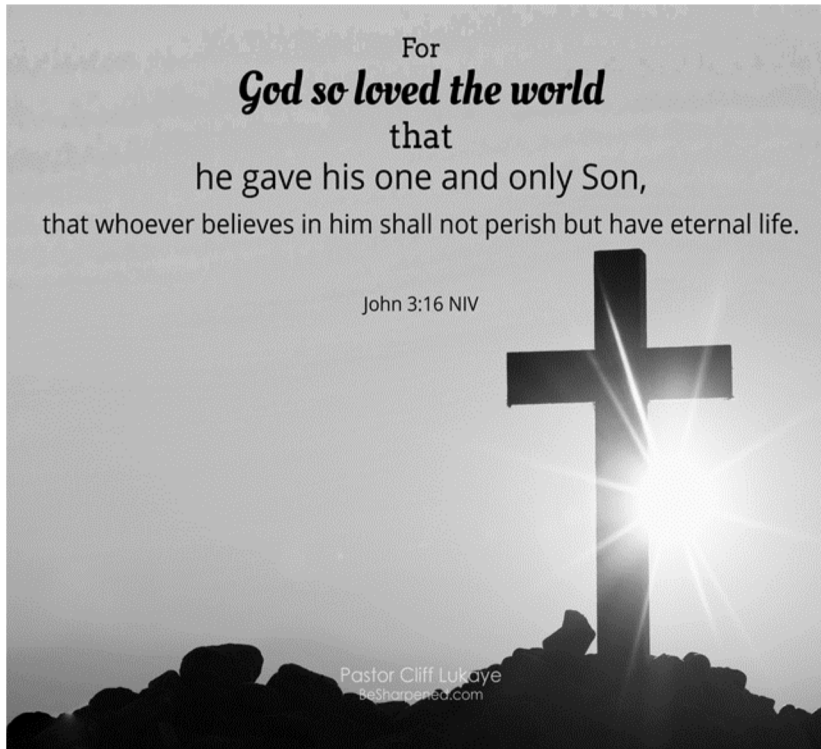
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music
Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jennifer Hess, Office Manager



September 17, 2023

16th Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Through the Summer months we offer one service. Holy Communion will be celebrated every Sunday throughout the Summer.

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study/Bible Quiz
10:30 am	Late Worship

****Rally Day Celebration Following 2nd Service****

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

SUNDAY SCHOOL officially will kick off next week, September 24th. Every Sunday at 9:15am.

2ND YEAR CATECHISM will begin on Sunday, September 24th following 2nd service at 11:45am. See bulletin for more information.

NURSERY is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Dr. Pattin

Ringing of the Bell (Please Stand)

Welcome to Worship Pastor Rayl

Opening Song “Shine, Jesus, Shine” No. 671

Opening Dialog

P: The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork.

**C: One day tells its tale to another,
and one night imparts knowledge to another.**

P: Although they have no words or language,
and their voices are not heard,

**C: their sound has gone out into all lands, and their message
to the ends of the world.**

P: The teaching of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the
simple.

**C: The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to
the eyes.**

P: The fear of the LORD is clean and endures forever;
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

**C: More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine
gold, sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.**

P: By them also is your servant enlightened,
and in keeping them there is great reward.

**C: Who can detect one’s own offenses?
Cleanse me from my secret faults.**

P: Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them
not get dominion over me; then shall I be whole and sound,
and innocent of a great offense.

**C: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength and my
redeemer.**

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: O Lord 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.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Day School Kids Sing

“This Little Light of Mine”
“Jesus Loves Me”
“I’ve Got The Joy, Joy, Joy”

Children’s Message

Pastor Rayl

Service of the Word of God

PSALM: Psalm 103:1-5,8-13 (congregation responds in **BOLD**)

¹Bless 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—**

³who 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;**

⁵who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle’s.

⁸**Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

⁹you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.

¹⁰**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

¹²**As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

¹³As a father has compassion for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O Lord.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

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 Announcement

P: The Gospel according to Matthew Chapter 18.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus 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. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But 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.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

MESSAGE

Pastor Rayl

Message Hymn “Children Of The Heavenly Father” No. 781

(Please be seated)

The Offering

Offertory Music “Climbing Up That Mountain” FSJ Chancel Choir
Dr. Joan Walldorf—Director

Offering Prayer

P: God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

C: Amen.

Blessing of the Backpacks

P: Today, we have before us backpacks to be carried to and from school by the children and youth gathered here. These backpacks will contain work to be done, work that's been returned, books to be read and studied, notes, permission slips,

things to be shared, along with notebooks, pencils, pens crayons, glue sticks and other items used for school work will find their way in and out of these backpacks.

Some days, so much stuff will fill these backpacks that the student may find it difficult to walk. Other days, they will be light and nearly empty. But on each and every day, these backpacks represent work required of the students gathered here. And, as in every aspect of our life, we bring these before God for blessing at this time.

P: God of all knowledge and wisdom,
Bless these backpacks and each student that will carry them very day of this school year.

As students carry these backpacks, may they be reminded of the love and care of this congregation that surrounds them each day. Help them to do their best, guide them to make right choices, and remind them that your love and presence are always with them. Fill them with curiosity, understanding, respect for their teachers, and care and compassion for other

We give thanks for teachers, administrators, and staff that work with children each day Bless the briefcases and totes of the teachers and administrators and schools throughout our city, our nation, and our world. May these teachers and staff be reminded that this congregation supports them in their roles, and surrounds them with our love and care. Give them patience and strength to never give up, and assurance that you are always with them.

In your love and mercy, surround our children and our schools with your protection that they may be safe places for all who enter. We pray in the name of Jesus who we seek to follow day by day.

C: Amen.

Installation of J.A.M. and Day School Teachers and Staff

(J.A.M. and Day School Teachers and Staff please come forward)

P: Dear friends, before his ascension our Lord commissioned his followers with these words: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything

I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

P: You have been called to the ministry of teaching and administering the Jesus And Me Sunday School and Day School ministry of First St. John Lutheran Church. This task carries important responsibilities. You have been entrusted with the gospel. It is your duty to clearly make known the Holy Scriptures so those who are entrusted to your care will be led into a knowledge of redemption through faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. You need not fear; God has promised to be with you in the person of the Holy Spirit who will provide for your every need. Therefore, honestly answer the following questions before God and in the presence of this congregation:

P: Are you willing to accept this responsibility to which God has called you? Will you earnestly study your lessons so you might accurately teach the children about the wonders of God? Will you faithfully instruct those entrusted to your care in the ways of God, giving freely of your heart, mind, time, and talent so that you may fulfill your duties to the best of your ability? Will you be a proper role model for those observing your behavior, teaching not just with words, but with actions?
If so, answer: **I WILL, WITH GOD BEING MY HELPER.**

P: (to the congregation) Members of the Body of Christ, we celebrate the presence of God as we recognize God's call, received by these to the direction and teaching of our Sunday School and Day School. They come in a spirit of devotion to offer themselves to God for this service, and so it is our obligation to support them by our encouragement and prayers, that they may be empowered for this calling with faithfulness to the glory of God.

As members of First St. John Lutheran Church will you promise your faithful encouragement and prayerful support in the home and the church?

If so, answer: **WE WILL.**

P: To the Lord who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now

and forevermore!

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (*prayed by all*)

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.

Blessing

P: May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn *"Now Thank We All Our God"* No. 840

Dismissal

P: Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude Dr. Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Darold Henninger, Dick Haar

SOUND BOARD

Mark Ackerman

JESUS AND ME (JAM) AND ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF

Bob Haar	Adult Sunday School
Sue Ann Rogers	3-Year Olds & Preschool
Debbie Ladd	Grade School
Darlene Paul	Grade School
Courtney Miller	Music Coordinator

Second Year Catechism Classes

Pastor Rayl

DAY SCHOOL STAFF

Andrea Buckley	Administrator
Michelle Swank	Beginnergarten Teacher
Angel Brown	Teacher, 4-Year Olds, MWF
Dawn Irelan	Teacher, 4-Year Olds, MWF
Kellie Ulrich	Teacher, 3-Year Olds, TTH
Jill Deneau	Teacher, 3-Year Olds, M-F
Bonnie Petroff	Teacher, 4-Year Olds, M-F
Marie Ivan	Aide—All Preschool Classes
Emily Brown	Aide—All Preschool Classes
Shela Stringham	Day School Cook

SERMON NOTES:



September 17, 2023

16th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Extreme Forgiveness

Many times people don't even want to forgive someone once, let alone more than once! To them even once is generous. The Jewish rabbis (or teachers) of Jesus' day taught that you are to be even more generous than that and said that you should forgive someone of an offense up to three times. Peter went the extra mile. He more than doubled the recommendation of the leading Jewish teachers and he bumped it all the way up to seven times. Peter probably felt like he was really raising the bar and that he was being super generous. However, Jesus took it to the extreme! Jesus said we should forgive our brother or sister in Christ seventy times seven times. Now, for those of you who didn't come prepared to do math today, that is 490 times! That's extreme.

The point is not to keep a scrap of paper with tally marks for how many times you have forgiven someone until you reach seventy times seven. In some cases, we may feel we would still be waiting! Jesus is again using hyperbole (or extreme exaggeration) to make a point. He is basically saying that if our brother or sister is genuinely repenting of their sin, we should forgive them an unlimited number of times.

Surely, Jesus could anticipate that this might seem extreme to Peter, and to us, so He offers us a parable in today's reading to help us better understand this extreme standard. Jesus provides this story to give us a picture of God's forgiveness shown to us. In Jesus, we have experienced extreme forgiveness, and God calls us to mirror that level of forgiveness to others.

This life to which Jesus calls us is not easy, it is extreme. However, if we have experienced the change only the extreme grace of Christ can bring in our lives, we should want to pass that onto to others as well. Remember, forgiveness brings peace to both the forgiver and the forgiven.