

## **15th Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, September 13, 2020**

### **Introduction to the day**

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.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **GATHERING SONG: We Are Marching in the Light of God**

We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching in the light of God

We are marching, marching  
We are marching, marching  
We are marching in the light of God  
Repeat

We are singing in the light of God  
We are singing in the light of God  
We are singing in the light of God  
We are singing in the light of God

We are singing, singing  
We are singing, singing  
We are singing in the light of God  
Repeat

We are praying in the light of God  
We are praying in the light of God  
We are praying in the light of God  
We are praying in the light of God

We are praying, praying  
We are praying, praying  
We are praying in the light of God

Repeat

Traditional South African

**Goodness Is Stronger than Evil**

Goodness is stronger than evil;  
love is stronger than hate;  
light is stronger than darkness;  
life is stronger than death;  
vict'ry is ours, vict'ry is ours,  
through God who loves us.  
Vict'ry is ours, vict'ry is ours,  
through God who loves us.

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**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

**Most merciful God, 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 have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. 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.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

### **OPENING SONG: God's Work, Our Hands**

God's work, our hands: working together,  
building a future, repairing the world,  
raising up homes, planting new gardens,  
feeding the hungry and sheltering the cold.  
Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,  
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

God's work, our feet: traveling together,  
following Jesus to places unknown,  
walking as friends, marching for freedom,  
running the race with God's future the goal.  
Bless, God, our feet as we follow your way,  
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

God's work, our voice: singing together,  
praising, proclaiming to all who will hear,  
praying for peace, shouting for justice,  
claiming God's love for the lost and the least.  
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,  
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

God is at work in and around us:  
seedlings are sprouting and bread's on the rise!  
Washed and set free, humbled and honored,  
gifted by grace, we respond in God's love.  
Bless, God, our lives as we answer your call,  
sharing the good news of your Gospel.

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### **GREETING**

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

## KYRIE



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **Lord, have mer - cy.**  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*



Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **Christ, have mer - cy.**  
*Christ, . . . . have mer - cy:*



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **Lord, have mer - cy.**  
*Lord, . . . . have mer - cy:*

## CANTICLE OF PRAISE: Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy, holy  
Holy, holy, Lord God almighty  
And we lift our hearts before you as a token of your love  
Holy, holy, holy

Gracious Father, gracious Father  
We're so blest to be your children  
Gracious Father  
And we lift our heads before you as a token of your love  
Gracious Father, gracious Father

Precious Jesus, precious Jesus  
we're so glad that you've redeemed us  
Precious Jesus,  
And we lift our hands before you as a token of your love  
Precious Jesus, precious Jesus

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit

come and fill our hearts anew Holy Spirit  
And we lift our hands before you as a token of your love  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit

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### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. 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. **Amen.**

### **SPECIAL MUSIC: COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY (Carey Landry)**

#### **FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21**

A reading from Genesis.

*After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.*

<sup>15</sup>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?" <sup>16</sup>So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, <sup>17</sup>'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. <sup>18</sup>Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

#### **PSALM: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13**

<sup>8</sup>LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;

<sup>9</sup>**you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.**

<sup>10</sup>You have not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.

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

<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

**<sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.**

**SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12**

A reading from Romans.

*This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.*

<sup>1</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.

<sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on servants 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.

<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

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

<sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>For it is written,

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

<sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35**

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

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

<sup>21</sup>Peter 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?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, 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. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his

knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>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.' <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

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

## **SERMON "FORGIVENESS AS COMPASSION"**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY: I Come with Joy**

1 I come with joy, a child of God,  
forgiven, loved, and free,  
the life of Jesus to recall  
in love laid down for me,  
in love laid down for me.

2 I come with Christians far and near  
to find, as all are fed,  
the new community of love  
in Christ's communion bread,  
in Christ's communion bread.

3 As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,  
each proud division ends.  
The love that made us, makes us one,  
and strangers now are friends,  
and strangers now are friends.

4 The Spirit of the risen Christ,  
unseen, but ever near,  
is in such friendship better known,  
alive among us here,  
alive among us here.

5 Together met, together bound  
by all that God has done,  
we'll go with joy, to give the world

the love that makes us one,  
the love that makes us one.

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## **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.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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**

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.  
**Amen.**

### **SENDING SONG: God Forgave My Sin**

verse 1

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,  
I've been born again in Jesus' name.  
and in Jesus' name I come to you,  
to share his love as told me to.

refrain

He said — “Freely, Freely,  
you have received,  
freely, freely give.  
Go in my name,  
and because you believe,  
others will know that I live.”

verse 2

All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name,  
in earth and heav'n in Jesus' name  
and in Jesus' name I come to you,  
to share his pow'r as he told me to.  
refrain

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## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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