



Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, August 16, 2026
Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
Making Christ Known Through Faith, Hope, and Love

Introduction

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

PRELUDE

BELL

WELCOME

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Please stand as you are able

*CALL TO WORSHIP:

- P: May God be merciful to us and bless us.
C: **May the light of God's face shine upon us.**
P: Let your way be known upon earth.
C: **Your saving health among all nations.**
P: Let the peoples praise you, O God.
C: **Let all the peoples praise you.**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, whose compassion endures forever.
C: Amen.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**

P: Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: **We confess to you all our sins. Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves. In your mercy, call us back to you. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Restore us to dwell in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.**

P: Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." In the name of God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. Rest in God's love.

C: Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: "All Are Welcome" (ELW 641)**

**1 Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:**

Refrain

**All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

**2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,**

where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Refrain

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

- 3 Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

Refrain

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

- 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

Refrain

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

- 5 Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed

as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

Refrain

**All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

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***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.**

***KYRIE: *Congregation sings response* (ELW pg. 138)**

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: 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.**

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

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: **Amen.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE: *"This is the Feast"* (ELW pg. 140)**

**This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

1 Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,

whose blood set us free to be people of God.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

2 Power, riches, wisdom and strength,
and honor, blessing and glory are his.
This is the feast of vict'ry for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

3 Sing with all the people of God,
and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of vict'ry for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

4 For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of vict'ry for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: God of all peoples,

C: Your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as
disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy,
that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus
Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 56:1, 6-8

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

¹ Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come and my deliverance be revealed. ⁶ And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it and hold fast my covenant— ⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. ⁸ Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel: I will gather others to them besides those already gathered. Here ends the first reading.

PSALM 67 ~ Congregation reads the *bold*
Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)

¹ May God be merciful to us and bless us; may the light of God's face shine upon us.

² **Let your way be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.**

³ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

⁴ **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth.**

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

⁶ **The earth has brought forth its increase; God, our own God, has blessed us.**

⁷ May God give us blessing and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 11:1-2a, 29-32

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

[Paul writes:] ¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all. Here ends the second reading.

Please stand as you are able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: sung (ELW pg. 142)

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia

GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 15:[10-20] 21-28

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

[¹⁰[Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand:¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." ¹⁵But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile." ²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that

region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.
The Gospel of the Lord... **Thanks be to God!**

Please be seated

CHILDREN'S TIME & SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (ELW 886)

- 1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!**
- 2 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.**
- 3 The name of Jesus charms our fears
and bids our sorrows cease,
sings music in the sinner's ears,
brings life and health and peace.**
- 4 He breaks the pow'r of canceled sin;
he sets the pris'ner free.
His blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood avails for me.**

**5 To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever giv'n
by saints below and saints above,
the church in earth and heav'n.**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

Last petition sing: “Hear Our Prayer O Lord”

L: With bold trust in God’s unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God’s creation.

A brief silence.

L: For believers around the world who stream to your holy mountain, that all be united in faith and harmony in the body of Christ. Let your church on earth be a witness to the beloved community of your heavenly kingdom. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: For your wondrous creation, that it thrives and flourishes as you intend. Raise up wise stewards to defend the natural world against carelessness and destruction. Safeguard endangered species and their habitats. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: For the nations of the world and all in authority, that they heed the cry of the outcast and ensure care for the most vulnerable. Give wisdom to leaders of countries, congregations, and communities, that they lead and serve justly. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: For all who are lonely, grieving, or struggling with chronic pain, that they find comfort, community, and hope. Send relief to all who struggle with illness of any kind especially Jerry, Bruce, Cheryl, Chris, Kristy, Ricky, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Bev, Gary, Shirley, Joyce, Allison, Becky, Kim, Cadence,

Sara, Marg, Karen, Pete, Margaret, and Lynnsy. Merciful God,
C: Receive our prayer.

L: For this congregation, for visitors and those new to this faith community, that all may recognize the presence of Christ in each new face. Draw this community together in love and strengthen it in unwavering faith. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: For the saints before us whose work is done, that their faithful example continues to direct your church. May their witness remind us that your gifts and calling are irrevocable, whether in life or death. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

L: Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.



Please stand as you are able

***APOSTLES' CREED: (ELW pg. 105)**

**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:**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Please be seated

OFFERING

*We thank you for our gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this
congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in
our communities and the world.*

OFFERING HYMN: “God of Grace and God of Glory” vs. 4 (ELW 705)

4 Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

Text: Harry E. Fosdick, 1878-1969

Please stand as you are able

***OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

P: O God,

C: Your gifts cannot be taken away from us. Fill our hearts with gratitude and generosity, and use these gifts that we present to you, so that your kingdom's work might flourish on earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

***GREAT THANKSGIVING: *sung* (ELW pg. 107)**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift our hearts to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

***THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION: *sung* "Remember Now My Children"**

The night of His betrayal, our Lord took bread.
He broke it and he blessed it, and then he said,
"My body given for you is what this means,
remember now my children what you have seen."

And then He took the chalice, and raised it high.
"My body broken for you, a full supply...
a covenant, a promise, a cleansing stream.
Remember now, my children, what you have seen."

We share this food together, remembering Christ;
we share a common treasure and know the price
we share it without measure, a gift of love;
we share our life forever, with God above.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER: *spoken***

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.**

***EUCCHARISTIC INVITATION:**

P: Even though we have disobeyed, we still receive God's mercy in abundance.
Come and share the gifts of this holy supper at the table of your savior. All are welcome and no one will be turned away!

Please be seated

COMMUNION

The acolytes, ushers, organist and those assisting with communion should come forward at this time and receive around the rail. Following the assistants, we celebrate Holy Communion around the altar. The ushers will direct you. We welcome all to the Lord's Table where we experience the unity that God intends for all people. Gluten-free wafers and apple juice are available.

COMMUNION HYMN: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (ELW 742)

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
oh, what needless pain we bear--
all because we do not carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!**
- 2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged--
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?**

Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness--
take it to the Lord in prayer.

- 3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820-1886

COMMUNION HYMN: “Let Us Break Bread Together” (ELW 471)

- 1 Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees.

Refrain

When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

- 2 Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees.

Refrain

When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

- 3 Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees.

Refrain

When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

Text: African American spiritual

Please stand as you are able

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:**

P: Compassionate God,

C: Through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

***BLESSING:**

May God be merciful to us and bless us.

May the light of God's face shine upon us.

May God ☩ walk with us, wherever we go, in peace and love.

THREE FOLD AMEN

***SENDING SONG: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" (ELW 759)**

- 1** My faith looks up to thee,
thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
take all my guilt away,
oh, let me from this day
be wholly thine!
- 2** May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me,
oh, may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be,
a living fire!

- 3 **While life's dark maze I tread
and griefs around me spread,
be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day,
wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray
from thee aside.**
- 4 **When ends life's transient dream,
when death's cold, sullen stream
shall o'er me roll;
blest Savior, then, in love
fear and distrust remove;
oh, bear me safe above,
a ransomed soul!**

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-1887

***DISMISSAL:**

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you. May God bless you with peace, protection,
and strength for the week ahead.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson	Kristy Fyhrie
Larry Sather	Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist	Lois Rosenquist
Ricky Hart	Sara Skoglund

Margaret Wehking
Cheryl Farber – mother of Melissa Schlosser
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
Marg Peterson -friend of the Thoms
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Bev Lorine – mother of Mandy Arvidson
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons

Allison Dotzler – friend of Kathy Mittag
Cadence Smith – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Becky Yttrie – friend of the Townsends
Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Karen Schlosser – mother of Justin Schlosser
Pete Baugh – brother-in-law of Pr. Ken Bowman
Chris Clapshaw – step-brother of Mark Ratajesak
Family and Friends of: Katie Jahnke, Colleen Burquest, Doug Tvedt, Jerry Pogose,
Terry Burns, Bruce Carter, Gary Willie, Connie Pesta, Kathy Wilkins, Ivy
Christensen, Jim Schlosser, Leroy Olson, Dale Flemming, and Wally Schlosser

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Sunday, August 16th – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship

10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by Megan Townsend

2 pm – Worship at St. William's

Monday, August 17th

6 pm – Christian Education Meeting

Thursday, August 20th

6 pm – Worship Committee

Sunday, August 23rd - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship

10 am – Worship led by The Youth

2 pm – Worship at St. William's

NEWS AND NOTES

Ice Cream Still Available! If you missed the Ice Cream Social, you're in luck! We still have individual cups of ice cream available in the basement kitchen freezer. Feel free to help yourself and place your donation in the box provided. Suggested donations: \$2.50 per cup or 5 cups for \$10.

Christian Education Meeting will be held Monday, August 17th at 6 pm.

Sabbath at the Lake will be held on Tuesday, August 18th at Trinity Point on Maple Lake in Mentor, MN 8:45 am – 3 pm. Mail your registration form by August 10th. Registration cost: \$30 (includes lunch).

Worship Committee will meet on Thursday, August 20th at 6 pm.

Widows & Singles Share & Care Day will be August 21st at 1 pm at Parkers Prairie City Park. They will have a potluck and enjoy visiting and taking in the Parkers Prairie Farmers Market.

The Ready, Set, Go Giveaway is being hosted by Grace Christian Church on Sunday, August 23rd from 12 pm - 2 pm. This includes the following: 1) Free school supplies are available for students of the Parkers school District. 2) Free clothing will be provided for all ages and sizes, including some brand-new items donated by Walmart. 3) Free snacks for anyone attending, along with the opportunity to play on the playground. All are welcome!



You are invited to the Sixth Annual 2026 Remembrance Day Walks by Humble Hearts Grief Support Services on Sunday, September 13th at the Lake Brophy Park in Alexandria, MN. There is also a walk in Sleepy Eye, MN on Sunday, September 27th. 12 pm – 1 pm is registration, meal, and shopping, 1 pm- 2 pm is the Remembrance Walk, and 2 pm – 3:30 is the Inspirational Program and Recognition of Loved Ones (Alexandria only – dove release). Scan to register donate and learn more!

Vanco online giving platform is a great way to set up a scheduled giving plan for even when you cannot make it to church. Scan the QR code, go



online to [estherlutheran.com](https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4R), go to the tab “ways to support Esther Lutheran Church” and click on the link

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4R> or download the app Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement.

Any questions please ask Mandy Arvidson.

Check out the Esther Calendar on our website to stay up to date on everything happening! Go to estherlutheran.com and click on “Esther Calendar.”



We welcome you to join in the weekly "Behold the New Has Come" devotions available on our website estherlutheran.com on the "Behold" tab. Devotions are posted to the website and emailed out each Monday. If you are not currently on the email list and want to be, please notify Mandy in the office. Each weekly devotion includes a challenge for the week. This past week's challenge is:

Choose just one of the Baptismal Promises and spend time this week dwelling in the power of that promise. Think creatively about how you might live out that promise in the world. Be courageous as you work to embrace what it means to keep that promise of baptism. Remember the words of the song, "Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true."

Ask yourself, What is the value of a *"pledge of a clear conscience toward God?"* The promises of Baptism wash the weight of our sin clean and leave us with a clear conscience, not just once, but as many times as is needed as we live out our promises each week.

We hope these devotions and weekly challenges will inspire conversations and stories that we can share with one another as, together, we grow in faith through this initiative.

Sunday School begins on **Sunday, September 13th**! We welcome all children ages 3 through 6th grade to join us.

During worship on September 13th, we will also celebrate the start of the school year with a **Back-to-School Blessing and Prayer**, followed by a **Backpack Blessing** during the Children's Sermon. We hope you'll bring your backpacks and join us for this special day!

Confirmation classes will begin again in September with a **Get-to-Know-You Potluck and Planning Night on Wednesday, September 16th at 6:00 p.m.**

Students and their parents are invited to attend. We welcome everyone from **7th grade through adults** to join the class, whether you are preparing for confirmation, have already been confirmed, or would simply like a refresher on the faith. For more information or to sign up, please contact Jewel Townsend.

38th Annual NW MN SWO Convention will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Crookston, MN on September 18-19th.

Fall Conference Gatherings: Conference 5: October 15th at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Moorhead, MN and Conference 8 at Grace Lutheran in Brandon, MN.

You belong here. We believe that each person has unique gifts, are created in God's image, and is a beloved child of God. We welcome you to join us each week to share in the community of faith at Esther - "Knowing Christ - making Christ known through faith, hope and love". If you would like to become a member of Esther, please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com.

Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA

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