

Sunday, September 13, 2026
Sixteenth Sunday of Pentecost & Rally Sunday
9/11 Remembrance & Acts of Lovingkindness
Liturgy from Sundays and Seasons 2026



INTRODUCTION FOR 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.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE CHIMES

GATHERING

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

**Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.**

Amen.



Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through + Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.
Amen.



Gathering Hymn: ELW # 595 “Jesus Loves Me”

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.

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.**

Please be seated as the children come forward.

CHILDREN’S TIME

Rite for the Blessing of Backpacks and Those Who Wear Them

Today, we have before us our students and the backpacks they carry to and from school. We will also remember those things that these backpacks will carry: books, homework, laptops, and perhaps even a snack. We ask for God’s blessing on these, those who carry them, and all that lies ahead in the new school year. In a moment, when we bless water and sprinkle you and your backpacks with it, keep in mind that you are baptized children of God and that Christ is with you always, no matter how things go.

The Blessing of the Water

Please stand with me as we pray...

Holy and Mighty God, look with kindness upon your children, redeemed by your Child, Jesus Christ, and born to a new life by water and the Holy Spirit.

Bless this water (+) and grant that what it touches may be used for the glory of your Name, an offering of our service to you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Litany of Faith

(Shared with the children on the half-sheet handout.)

When I am ready to go, **You are with me, Jesus.**

When I am not ready for anything, **You are with me, Jesus.**

When I am scared, **You are with me, Jesus.**

When I am embarrassed, **You are with me, Jesus.**

When I am delighted, **You are with me, Jesus.**

That my work can be a gift to you, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That my rest can be rest in you, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That you always hear me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That my life is a gift, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

The Blessing with the Water

(The minister sprinkles the children and their backpacks with water and says...)

God's blessing be upon you, your backpacks, and all the tools for learning that they will carry. As you learn your lessons and grow in knowledge, use them to understand the world God has made and to serve it as God calls you.

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

THE WORD

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

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.

¹⁵ 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?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ '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. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ 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. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13 (Read Responsively)

Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

- [¹ Bless 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—**
³ who 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;**
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
⁶ **O Lord, you provide vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.**
⁷ You made known your ways to Moses
and your works to the children of Israel.]
⁸ **Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**



- ⁹ you 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.**
- ¹¹ For 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.**
- ¹³ 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

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.

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ 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. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves 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.

⁵ 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. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

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

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For it is written,
"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God."

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation

ELW Setting # 4 – S 151a



Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

The Gospel according to St. 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.

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

Please be seated.

Sermon

Pastor Steven Kuhl

Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Hymn of the Day: ELW # 608 “Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling”

The Apostles’ 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.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Pastor: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Move your church throughout the world away from judging and despising others. Lead us to embody the forgiveness you have given us in Jesus. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The endless beauty of your creation reminds us of your mercy. Protect those who care for farms and ranches. Guide those who lead us to wonder at your creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Raise up leaders (*like John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, whom we remember today*) to hold all in authority accountable for any misuse of the power entrusted to them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Calm the fears of all in need with your promises. Compassionately free the lives of any who feel bound by their failures. Remember your children in need especially those we name aloud or in our hearts. (*A brief silence*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ground this congregation in the welcome you show us in forgiving our sin. Inspire each of us to welcome others for your honor and glory. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With you is found the joy and promise of eternal life. Keep us in that joy as we remember all those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Pastor: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

A Litany of Remembrance for the 25th Anniversary of 9/11/2001

Leader: Lord, today we remember 9/11/2001, when everything changed.

People: We remember a beautiful autumn day forever marred by smoke, chaos, death, and confusion.

Leader: In bewilderment, we wondered where you were. We wondered how this could happen. So many innocent people were gone. So many more were left quaking with fear.

People: **How long must we wrestle with our thoughts? How long until the sorrow in our hearts is healed?**

Leader: We think of the children—now adults—who only know their moms or dads through pictures and the memories of others. We grieve with parents, spouses, and friends who miss familiar faces, whose gatherings are no longer complete.

People: **But you are always with us, and we remember your saving grace.**

Leader: We acknowledge that there are many things we don't understand, but we understand your love, O Lord, and put our trust in you.

People: **We trust that you continue to work all things according to your purpose, and that your Word and your plan will prevail.**

Leader: May we not give in to our fear. May we pray for our enemies and those who would harm us. May hearts of stone be turned to hearts of love.

People: **Our enemies will say, "I have overcome them," but they haven't. For you are our fortress and strength.**

Leader: We trust in your unfailing love, O Lord; our hearts rejoice in your salvation.

People: **We will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to us. Amen.**

Hymn: ELW # 701 "Once We Sang and Danced"

Leader: Let us pray...

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but in Jesus, you bear that pain with all who suffer at the hands of others. Remember your promise to sustain your people. Bring healing and strength to those who lost loved ones on 9/11/2001, and guide our troubled nation into the ways of justice and peace. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

(Adapted from ELW, p. 84)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and may say, "Peace be with you" or similar words. The assembly is seated.

OFFERING – Collection of our offerings.

OFFERING SONG: ACS # 1000 God's Work, Our Hands

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



- 2 God's work, our feet: trav'ling 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

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Please rise as you are able in body or spirit.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray, together.

God of creation,
you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
in service to you and in love to our neighbors,
today and always. Amen.

THE MEAL

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

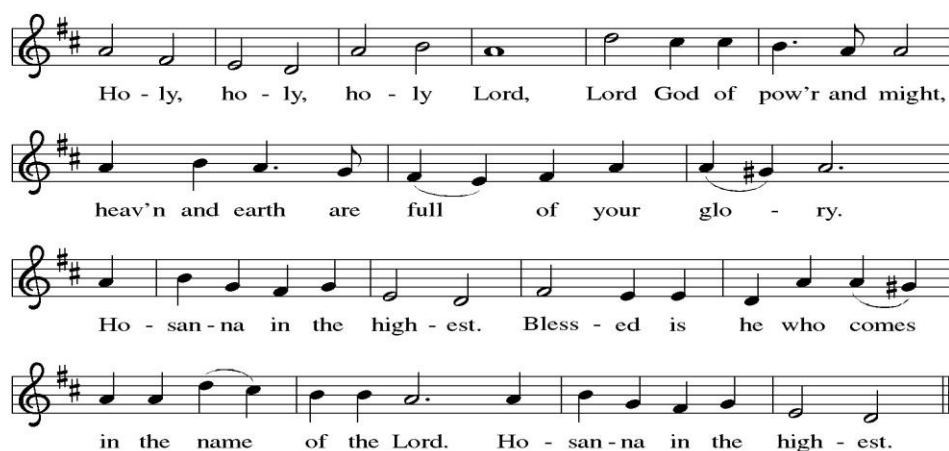


PROPER PREFACE – for the Season of Pentecost

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus: Holy, Holy, Holy

ELW Setting # 4 – S 153



The Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

Please be seated and wait to come forward for Holy Communion after the singing of The Lamb of God song.



Lamb of God

ELW Setting # 4 – S 154

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on

us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the

sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

HYMN DURING COMMUNION: ELW # 781 “Children of the Heavenly Father”

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

*After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands. The presiding minister may say a table blessing; the assembly responds **Amen**.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray, together.

Sustaining God,
with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.
Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.



THE SENDING BLESSING

The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit. **Amen.**

The God of grace
✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN: ELW # 677 “This Little Light of Mine”



THE DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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**The Lamp of God's Presence is Lit in
Memoriam of 9/11**



Adoration Lutheran Church

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America

3840 West Edgerton Avenue

Greenfield, WI 53221

Phone: 414.281.0414

Web site: www.adorationlc.com

e-mail: adorationlutheran@gmail.com

Pastor Steve Kuhl, Interim Pastor

Crystal A. Roider, Office Manager



Today's Lay Leaders

Lector: Cheryl Hagfors

Ushers: Linda Kolar Wood and Deanna Posig

Communion Assistant: Jeanette Nowakowski

Altar Guild: Deanna Posig

Altar Guild for Wednesday Evenings: Joann Voegeli and
Joyce Weinert

Music & Worship Coordinator: Barb Regent

