

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH–ELCA
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“Inspired by the Holy Spirit to Serve”

Shared values of our Worshiping Community are:
Community + Generosity + Hospitality + Serving

OUTDOOR WORSHIP
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
9:00 a.m., Sunday, September 13, 2026

Introduction: 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.

(*—please stand as you are able)

Prelude: “Come, Now Is the Time to Worship”

Ana Anderson

Welcome and Announcements

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

*Confession and Forgiveness

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

C: **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: 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.

P: 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.

C: **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: **"God's Work, Our Hands"** (sung to the tune "Earth and All Stars")

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.

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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.

***Canticle of Praise: "Glory to God..." ELW, p. 139**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

***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.

WORD

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

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

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.

R: Word of God, word of Life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 103:1-13 (read responsively)

P: ¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

C: ² Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—

P: ³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

C: ⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

P: ⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

C: ⁶ The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.

P: ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

C: ⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

P: ⁹ He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.

C: ¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities.

P: ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

C: ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

P: ¹³ As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

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.

R: Word of God, word of Life. **C: Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation: “Alleluia!”**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

“Alleluia,” words and music by Jerry Sinclair, ©1972 Manna Music, Inc. (Admin. by ClearBox Rights, LLC). Used by permission. CCLI License #2452533.

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

***Holy Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35**

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.”

P: The gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Blessing of Backpacks

Sermon

Pastor James Anderson

Hymn: “**God’s Work, Our Hands**” (sung to the tune “Earth and All Stars”)

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.

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***Apostles’ Creed**

C: 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 into hell. 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**

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*). 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.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

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

Your mercy is great.

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.

*Peace

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

MEAL

Offering/Offering Music

(We contemplate our response to all that God has given us.)

*Offertory: **"We Are an Offering" ELW 692**

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering. Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are yours: we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you. We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You: we are an offering, we are an offering.

"We Are An Offering," words and music by Dwight Liles, ©1984 Word Music, LLC. Used by permission. CCLI License #2452533.

*Offering Prayer

P: 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.

C: Amen.

*Great Thanksgiving (spoken) p. 152, ELW

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

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

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: it is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

C: (sung-ELW 190) Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of pow'r and might, Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of pow'r and might, heaven and earth are full, full of your glory. Hosanna in

the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest. Amen, amen, amen. Amen, amen.

***Eucharistic Prayer**

***Lord's Prayer**

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.

***Invitation to the Table**

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

Distribution (continuous)

Communion Hymn: "All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly"

1. All who hunger gather gladly; holy manna is our bread. Come from wilderness and wand'ring. Here in truth we will be fed. You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

2. All who hunger, never strangers; seeker, be a welcome guest. Come from restlessness and roaming. Here in joy we keep the feast. We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

3. All who hunger, sing together, Jesus Christ is living bread. Come from loneliness and longing. Here in peace we have been fed. Blest are those who from this table live their days in gratitude. Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

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***Table Blessing**

**P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C: Amen.**

***Prayer after Communion**

**P: 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.
C: Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*Blessing

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

C: Amen.

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

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace ✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Sending Song: "Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing"

1. Lord dismiss us with Your blessing. Fill our hearts with joy and peace. Let us each Your love possessing triumph in redeeming grace. O refresh us, O refresh us. Traveling through this wilderness.

2. Thanks we give and adoration for Your gospel's joyful sound. May the fruits of Your salvation in our hearts and lives abound. Ever faithful, ever faithful, to the truth may we be found.

3. Savior when Your love shall call us from our struggling pilgrim way. Let no fear of death appall us. Glad Your summons to obey. May we ever, may we ever, reign with You in endless day.

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*Dismissal

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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WORSHIP MINISTRY

Ministers.....	Members of the Congregation
Pastor.....	James Anderson
Cell: 402-570-9050; E-mail: janderson007@luthersem.edu	
Organist.....	Nadine Hibbert
Greeters.....	Joyce Haecker
Ushers.....	Sheryl Harrington, Mary Schuster-Graff
Door Greeters/Ass't Ushers	Bill & Rebecca Behrends
Reader.....	Mary Schuster-Graff
Communion.....	Joyce Haecker
On-call councilperson- September.....	Kodi Higgins, 402-239-4044

WELCOME TO HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH! *We are delighted to have you with us in worship this weekend. Whether you come each week or came today for the first time, you are a valuable member of God's family and we're glad you're here!*

HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus is the host of this meal; it is he who invites us to the table and we exclude none whom Jesus himself would welcome.

- If you are physically unable to come forward, tell an usher and the sacrament will be brought to you.
- White grape juice is in the center of the tray for those unable to drink wine.
- Gluten-free wafers are available. Tell the pastor/communion assistant serving you.
- Anyone not communing is invited to come forward for a blessing. Keep your hands folded to indicate you would like a blessing.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Bonnie Baete, Xander Otto (Sept. 13), Robert Haecker (Sept. 15), Richard Schnaidt, Frieda Wolken (Sept. 16), Peggy Johnsen (Sept. 17).

HAPPY WEDDING ANNIVERSARY to Darrell & Jackie Rinne (9-14-91).

ADULT BIBLE STUDY will be held next Sunday following worship in the Conference Room.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF SCHOOL KITS: Our summer project this year was School Kits for Lutheran World Relief. We have been collecting items throughout the summer, started assembling them on Saturday, September 5 and will finish **this morning, September 13**. Thank you to everyone for your gifts to this ministry! Thank you to Shirley Wiens for providing a \$250 Thrivent Action Team card for the purchase of the school bags and to Genell Copas for coordinating this project.

We have enough supplies to do 100+. We will put together as many complete School Kits as we can and then save any extra items for next year. Thank you again for your generosity! It will make a huge difference in many children's lives around the world!

FAITHBUILDERS SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday School for all Preschool through 5th grade resumes this morning on Rally Sunday, September 13. Please join us as we welcome the kids back for the kickoff to another Sunday School year. *"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."* – **Proverbs 22:6**
Today is also Backpack Blessing. All children are asked to bring their backpacks along to church!

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED! Are you interested in helping our youth develop lives of faith? We need your time and talents. Please contact Pastor James at your earliest convenience.

OUTDOOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING ON GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS SUNDAY, – 9:00 a.m., followed by the church photo, assembly of LWR School Kits and then a meal provided by the church. There will be hamburgers, hotdogs, potato salad, chips and dessert. Thank you to Dianne Cole for sponsoring our meal with a \$250 Thrivent Action Card.

CONGREGATIONAL PHOTO: We will be taking a Congregational photo on Sunday, September 13, immediately after worship. Please wear your God's Work Our Hands Holy Cross t-shirt. If you don't have that T-shirt a Thrivent T-shirt would be fine. We will also be taking a photo of the people at worship on Saturday evening September 19.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: A volunteer is needed to launder the acolyte robes as needed. If you are willing to help, please contact Gail Russell.

TRUNK OR TREAT MEETING after worship in the Conference Room on Sunday, September 27. Vision team members, and all groups and individuals interested in participating in this event, please join us!

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER items are due by this Friday, Sept. 18. Please send to smahleris@gmail.com or leave at the church office. Thank you!

WEBSITE UPDATES: We are updating the photos and content on the website. Please contact Gail Russell to get your group scheduled for a photo at your next meeting or event.

HEY SINGERS! Come join the choir! Faithful Sounds began practice Wednesday, September 9th at 5:45. Come join us for fun and fellowship! Questions? Call Karen Jobman (402)520-0661!

PEPPERNUIT BAKING DAY has been scheduled! Come join us for a day of baking fun on Tuesday, September 15! We will begin at 8:30. Lunch will be provided.

GARDEN PRODUCE: You are welcome to bring garden produce to share. Any left-over produce will be taken to the Community Food Pantry.

JOYFUL STEPS: Each Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. come join us for our weekly hour of fellowship and exercise. No equipment needed. You may wish to bring a bottle of water. See you all then!

FREE DEVOTIONALS: Please pick up your free copy of Portals of Prayer, Christ in Our Home, or Our Daily Bread. They can be found on the table in the narthex.

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS:

Sunday, Sept. 13.... 9:00 a.m. Outdoor Worship/Backpack Blessing

	10:00 a.m. Congregational Picture, God's Work Our Hands project Fellowship
	10:15 a.m. Sunday School Rally Day, WELCA Meeting
	LUNCH for all (provided by church)
Monday, Sept. 14....	10:00 a.m. Holy Cross Bible Study
Tuesday, Sept. 15.....	8:30 a.m. WELCA Peppernut Baking & Bagging
	10:00 a.m. Joyful Steps
Wednesday, Sept. 16...	5:45 p.m. Choir
	7:00 p.m. Confirmation at St. John's
Friday, Sept. 18...	8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship @ Michael J's
	NEWSLETTER articles due
Saturday, Sept. 19...	6:00 p.m. Worship followed by Congregational Picture
Sunday, Sept. 20....	9:00 a.m. Worship
	10:00 a.m. Fellowship
	10:15 a.m. Sunday School, Adult Bible Study
Office Hours...	8:30-3:00-Tuesday, Thursday & Friday