

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER **PENTECOST**

September 13, 2026

***Please respect the sanctity of worship and turn off all cell phones.
Thank you.***

For the Gathered

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

Processional – As the Deer – W&P 9

Greeting – ELW 147

(Pastor) - 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.

(All who are able may stand.)

Gathering Song – For the Beauty of the Earth – ELW 879

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

Refrain

Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon and stars of light: *Refrain*

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight: *Refrain*

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above;
for all gentle thoughts and mild: *Refrain*

For each perfect gift of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
for thyself, best gift divine,
to our world so freely giv'n: *Refrain*

Text: Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1835-1917, alt.

Confession and Forgiveness – ELW 94

(Pastor)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

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.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

Kyrie - ELW 147

(Liturgist) In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

Amen.

Canticle of Praise – ELW 149

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia.

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**Power and riches and wisdom and strength,
and honor and blessing and glory are his.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia.

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

**This is the feast of victory for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign.**

Alleluia. Alleluia.

(Assembly may be seated.)

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading – 1 Kings 3: 5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalms 119: 129-136

¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful;

therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰ When your word is opened it gives light;

it gives understanding to the simple.

¹³¹ I open my ¹ mouth and pant
because I long for ¹ your commandments.
¹³² Turn to me and be gra- ¹ cious to me,
as you always do to those who ¹ love your name.

¹³³ Order my footsteps ¹ in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion ¹ over me.
¹³⁴ Rescue me from those ¹ who oppress me,
and I will keep ¹ your commandments.

¹³⁵ Let your face shine up- ¹ on your servant
and teach ¹ me your statutes.
¹³⁶ My eyes shed ¹ streams of tears,
because people do not ¹ keep your teaching.

Epistle Reading – Romans 8: 26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words.

²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved

us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Message for the Young at Heart

Passing of the Peace

Special Music – Morning Has Broken – ELW 556

Gospel Announcement – Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

(All who are able may stand.)

Acclamation – ELW 151

(ALL SING) - Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵² And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

(Assembly may be seated.)

Message

(All who are able may stand.)

Hymn of the Day - Here I Am, Lord – ELW 574

"I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?"

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

"I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

"I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide

till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946

Text © 1981 OCP Publications, Inc., 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Apostles' Creed – ELW 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.**

(Assembly may be seated.)

Prayers of Intercession

Response

(Liturgist) – Hear us, O God.

(All) – Your mercy is great.

Offering

Offertory - We Are An Offering – W&P 146

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.
We are an offering.

Prayer

Let us pray.

God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving – ELW 152

(PASTOR) - The Lord be with you.

(ALL) - **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.

Pastor's Preface

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:

Our Response – ELW 153

(ALL SING) - **Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord's Prayer – ELW 154

(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.**

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.

Confession Song – Lamb of God – ELW 154

(ALL SING) –

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Grant us peace. Grant us peace.**

Distribution

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished
us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now
send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this
day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

(All who are able may stand.)

Sending Song - Now Thank We All Our God – ELW 839

Now thank we all our God
with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who, from our mothers' arms,
has blest us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us all in grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all harm
in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heav'n adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586-1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878

(Assembly may be seated.)

Announcements

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.

(ALL) - Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH

1455 E. Yosemite Ave. Merced, CA 95340

Church Phone 209-383-0632

Website: <http://www.thesovlutheran.net>

Office email: shepherdofthevalleyelca@gmail.com

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost – September 13

PASTOR	John Russell-Curry
GREETERS	Stacy & Kylie Christofferson
READER/ASSISTING MINISTER	Susan Gumm
USHERS	Greg Burnett
ORGANIST/PIANIST	Martin Hansen

This Week

TODAY	10 AM Worship
MONDAY	10 AM Council Meeting
THURSDAY	11:30 AM Birthday Luncheon H&W Drive-In
FRIDAY	2 PM Knitting Club

Readings for Sunday, September 20

Jonah 3:10-4:11; Psalm 145:1-8;
Philippians 12-30; Matthew 20:1-6

Attendance for last week 38 and via Zoom 7

Upcoming Events – Mark your Calendar

September 20 Worship Service

September 25 Knitting

September 27 Worship Service

Prayers for healing:

Ken Sullivan; Family of Carol Linneman; Jan Collins; David Bettis; Brad Branstad; Gleneda Muralt; Dorothy Woody; Rosie Sullivan; Eric Smith; Gleneda Muralt's niece, Shereida; Nan Dailey; Kimberly Castillo's daughter Jillian and mother-in-law Lupe; Pam Andersen; Pastor John Russell-Curry and his family; Warren Westerberg; Sylvia Poupard; Jeane & David Hetland; Annie Sofranek; David Cherf; and people who are ill around the world.

We lift prayers for our Benevolence of the Month, **New Beginnings for Merced County Animals** and for our Sierra Pacific Synod Bishop, **Jeff Johnson**; and for missionaries spreading God's Word.