

WE are Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church (elca)

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WE WELCOME ALL WHO WORSHIP WITH US TODAY.

ALL are invited to receive the bread and the wine. Please know that at CELC this common meal is for all who feel moved to receive. This sacrament is God's gift to all, and is not tied to membership, doctrine or creed.

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Sept. 13, 2026

9:00 AM

Service of Word and Sacrament

The Gathering

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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 al- | ways 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.**

GATHERING ELW 641 *"MY HOPE IS BUILT*

1. My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus name (2x)

Refrain: Christ alone, Cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all

2. When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

My anchor holds within the veil

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P 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.**

PASTORAL GREETING

P 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.

[Congregation is seated.]

The Word

1ST 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.

2ND 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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: WOV 791 “ALABARE”

Alabare alabare alabare ami Senor

Alabare alabare alabare ami Senor

Sing with the people, the people of God,
and join creation in a joyful hymn
blessing and honor and glory and might
to God and to the Lamb be without end.

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

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

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the 18th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.**

SERMON: PASTOR JEFF

SONG OF THE DAY: ELW 482 *“I COME WITH JOY”*



1 I come with joy, a child of God, for - giv - en, loved, and
2 I come with Chris - tians far and near to find, as all are
3 As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud di - vi - sion
4 The Spir - it of the ris - en Christ, un - seen, but ev - er
5 To - geth - er met, to - geth - er bound by all that God has



free, the life of Je - sus to re - call in
fed, the new com - mu - ni - ty of love in
ends. The love that made us, makes us one, and
near, is in such friend - ship bet - ter known, a -
done, we'll go with joy, to give the world the



love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.
Christ's com - mu - nion bread, in Christ's com - mu - nion bread.
strang - ers now are friends, and strang - ers now are friends.
live a - mong us here, a - live a - mong us here.
love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A 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.

P: 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.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

The Meal

OFFERTORY / OFFERTORY MUSIC ELW 608 "SOFTLY AND TENDERLY JESUS IS CALLING"

1 Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing for
2 Why should we tar - ry when Je - sus is plead - ing, plead - ing for
3 Oh, for the won - der - ful love he has prom - ised, prom - ised for

you and for me. See, on the por - tals he's wait - ing and watch - ing,
 you and for me? Why should we lin - ger and heed not his mer - cies,
 you and for me! Though we have sinned, he has mer - cy and par - don,

Refrain

watch - ing for you and for me.
 mer - cies for you and for me?
 par - don for you and for me. "Come home, come home!
 Come home, come home!

You who are wea - ry, come home." Ear - nest - ly, ten - der - ly,

Je - sus is call - ing, call - ing, "O sin - ner, come home!"

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Let us pray.
 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 GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,..
We praise your name and join their unending hymn...

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

The first system of musical notation for 'The Great Thanksgiving'. It consists of a treble and a bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,' are written below the treble staff.

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

The second system of musical notation. It continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics 'ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,' are written below the treble staff.

heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.

The third system of musical notation. It concludes the phrase 'heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.' The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. .Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

[THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE]

P on the night before he died...

Again, after supper ...

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup
we remember the incarnation of your Son:
his human birth and the covenant he made with us.
We cry out for the resurrection of our lives,
when Christ will come again in beauty and power
to share with us the great and promised feast. **Amen, Come, Lord Jesus.**

Send now, we pray your Holy Spirit,
that we and all who share in this bread and cup
may be united in the communion of the Holy Spirit,
may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven,
and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

**Through him, with him, in him, in the unit of the Holy Spirit,
All glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

LAMB OF GOD

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.**

COMMUNION SONG: ELW 484 "YOU SATISFY THE HUNGRY HEART"

Refrain



You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.



Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.



- 1 As when the shep - herd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;
- 2 With joy - ful lips we sing to you our praise and grat - i - tude
- 3 Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ out - poured?
- 4 The mys - t'ry of your pres - ence, Lord, no mor - tal tongue can tell:
- 5 You give your - self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

Refrain



so when you call your fam - 'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - joice.
that you should count us wor - thy, Lord, to share this heav' n - ly food.
Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare our one - ness in the Lord?
whom all the world can - not con - tain comes in our hearts to dwell.
to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.

ELW 721 "GOODNESS IS STRONGER THAN EVIL"



Good -ness is stron-ger than e - vil; love is stron - ger than hate;



light is stron-ger than dark - ness; life is stron-ger than death; vic-t'ry is



ours, vic-t'ry is ours, through God who loves us. Vic-t'ry is



ours, vic - t'ry is ours, through God who loves us.

I. Behold As a sign of our bonds of grace
Around the table of the King

PASTORAL BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Let us pray.
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

BENEDICTION:

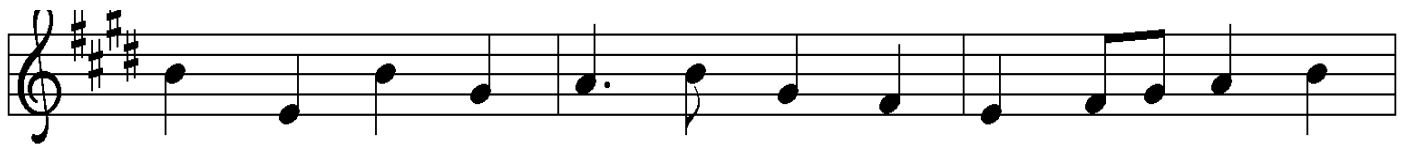
P The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus. **Amen.**
The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit. **Amen.**
The God of grace ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: ELW 208 *“PRAISE TO YOU, O GOD OF MERCY”*

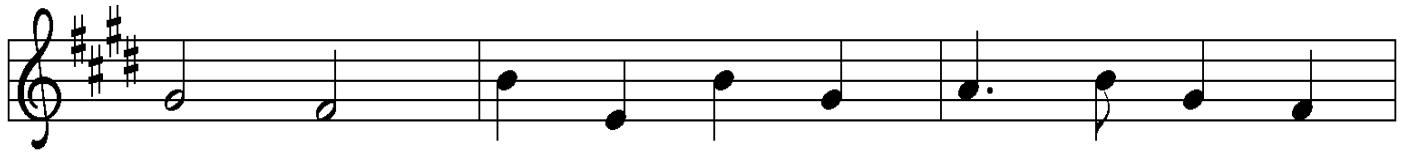
P Go out in joy and be led forth in peace.
Thanks be to God.

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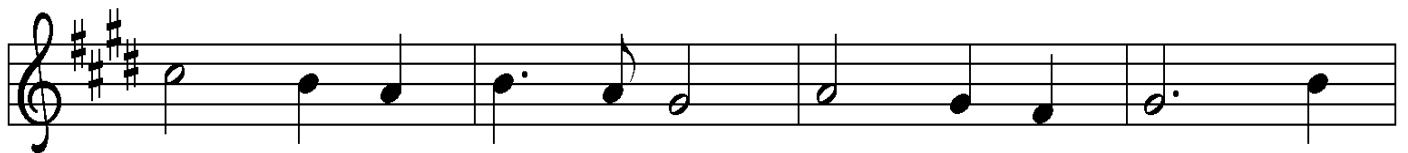
1 Praise to you, O God of mer - cy: thanks be to you for -
2 From of old you loved and sought us: thanks be to you for -
3 Praise to you, O God of mer - cy: thanks be to you for -



ev - er! Rais - ing high the weak and low - ly:
ev - er! Truth and jus - tice you have taught us:
ev - er! Rais - ing high the weak and low - ly:



thanks be to you for - ev - er!
thanks be to you for - ev - er!
thanks be to you for -



Strong is your faith - ful-ness, strong is your love, re -



mem - b'ring your cov - e - nant of life with us.

 Coda



ev - er! Thanks be to you for - ev - er!

DISMISSAL: