



**September 10, 2023  
9:00 a.m.  
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A**

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***St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA***

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**Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A  
Reverend Maggie Westaby

## **WELCOME**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, † Jesus who bears the cross, and the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

**Amen.**

## **CONFESSON & FORGIVENESS**

Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Steadfast and faithful God,

**You have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused,**

**known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us.**

**Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

**Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

**Amen.**

## **GATHERING HYMN**

## Gather Us In

1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark-ness  
2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-t'ry, we are the old who  
3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter, here we will take the  
4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,

van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings  
yearn for your face; we have been sung through-out all of his-t'ry,  
bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,  
light years a-way— here in this place the new light is shin-ing,

brought here to you in the light of this day.  
called to be light to the whole hu-man race.  
call us a-new to be salt for the earth.  
now is the king-dom, and now is the day.

Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en, gath-er us in, the  
Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty, gath-er us in, the  
Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion, give us to eat the  
Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er, gath-er us in and

blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en,  
proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly,  
bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion  
make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,

we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.  
give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.  
lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.  
fire . . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: GATHER US IN, Marty Haugen

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## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Holy God,

Your ways are far beyond our understanding, help us to trust in you. Guide us to cultivate a spirit of unity and compassion within our community. Help us to see the beauty in our differences and the common thread that ties us all together as your beloved children. May we embrace one another with open hearts, offering kindness, understanding, and a willingness to lend a helping hand. In Jesus Christ we pray.

**Amen.**

## **Psalm 119:33-40**

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

**Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching; I shall keep it with all my heart.**

Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire.

**Incline my heart to your decrees and not to unjust gain.**

Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood; give me life in your way.

**Fulfill your promise to your servant, which is for those who fear you.**

Turn away the reproach that I dread, because your judgments are good.

**Behold, I long for your commandments; by your righteousness enliven me.**

## **READING: Romans 13:8-14**

<sup>8</sup>Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav-ing word.



Let it burn like fire with-in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

## GOSPEL: Matthew 18:15-20

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>15</sup>“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

## HYMN OF THE DAY

## God, When Human Bonds Are Broken

1 God, when hu - man bonds are bro - ken and we lack the love or skill  
2 Through that still-ness, with your Spir - it come in - to our world of stress,  
3 You in us are bruised and bro - ken: hear us as we seek re - lease  
4 Send us, God of new be - gin - nings, hum - bly hope - ful in - to life.  
5 Give us faith to be more faith - ful, give us hope to be more true,

to re - store the hope of heal - ing, give us grace and make us still.  
for the sake of Christ for - giv - ing all the fail - ures we con - fess.  
from the pain of ear - lier liv - ing; set us free and grant us peace.  
Use us as a means of bless - ing: make us stron - ger, give us faith.  
give us love to go on learn - ing: God, en - cour - age and re - new!

Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929

Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823–1889

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## BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS & ST. JOHN YOUTH MINISTRY

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.  
Responding to "God of grace," with "hear our prayer."

### PEACE

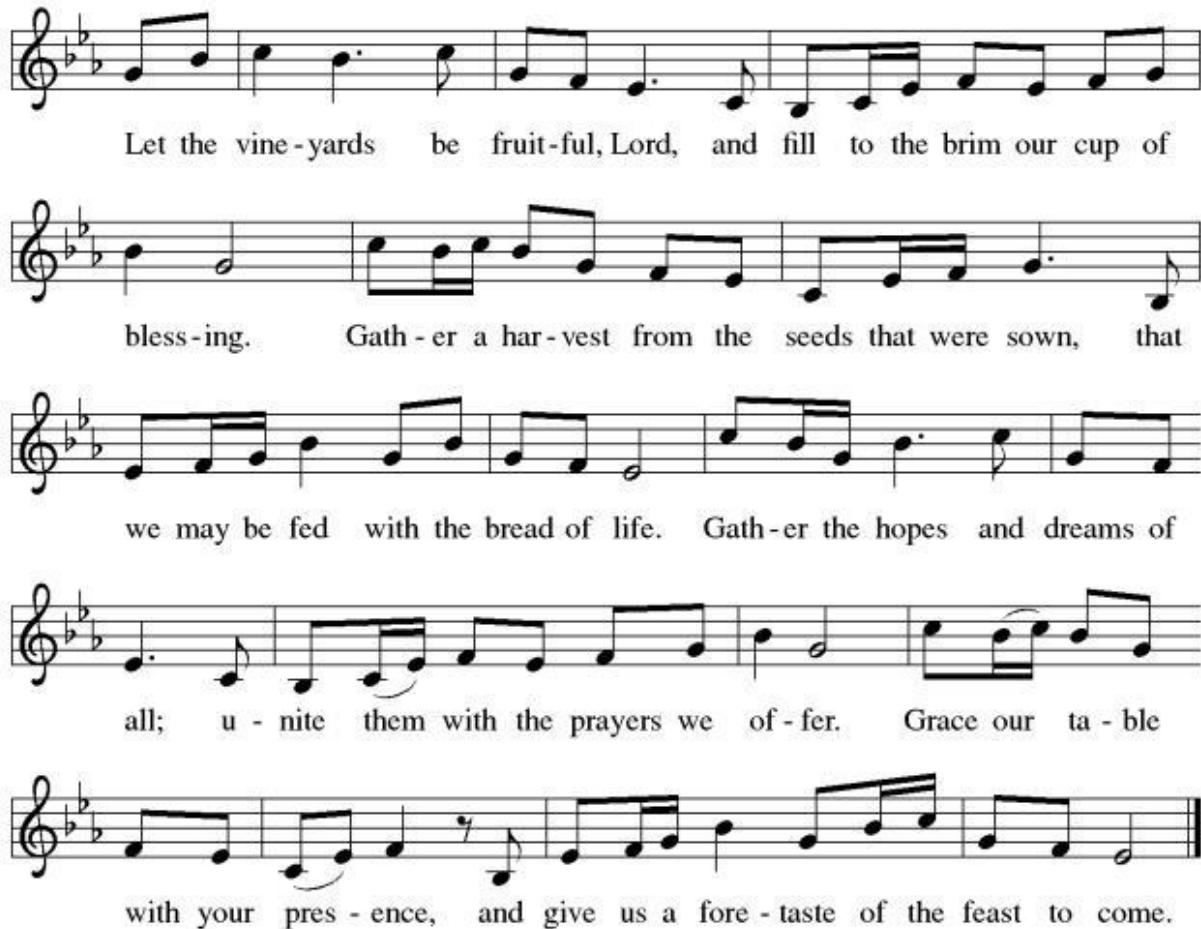
The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

In our reading from Romans, we were reminded: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another.” So come, let us love one another and all of God’s creation by sharing what we have been given.

### Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u - nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble  
with your pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927

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## OFFERING PRAYER

Abiding God,

Our bonds with one another are a reflection of your divine presence in our lives, and we cherish these relationships as precious gifts. We give thanks for the gift of relationship, and the gifts that were given here today. May all our gifts bring forth your love in the world. In Christ we pray.

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

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.**

## 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:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## LORD'S PRAYER

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

In the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup, we are reminded of God's boundless love and grace. A place where we are woven together as one in the body of Christ. A place where all are welcome to taste and see God's love.

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.

## COMMUNION HYMNS

## Holy God, We Praise Your Name

1 Ho - ly God, we praise your name; Lord of all, we  
2 Hark! The glad ce - les - tial hymn an - gel choirs a -  
3 Lo, the ap - os - tol - ic train join your sa - cred  
4 Ho - ly Fa - ther, ho - ly Son, Ho - ly Spir - it,

bow be - fore you. All on earth your seep - ter claim,  
bove are rais - ing; cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim,  
name to hal - low; proph - ets swell the glad re - train,  
three we name you, though in es - sence on - ly one;

all in heav'n a - bove a - dore you. In - fi - nite your  
in un - ceas - ing cho - rus prais - ing, fill the heav'ns with  
and the white - robed mar - tyrs fol - low; and from morn to  
un - di - vid - ed God we claim you and, a - dor - ing,

vast do - main, ev - er - last - ing is your reign.  
sweet ac - cord; "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord!"  
set of sun through the church the song goes on.  
bend the knee while we own the mys - ter - y.

## All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly

1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad - ly; ho - ly man-na is our bread.  
2 All who hun-ger, nev - er strang-ers; seek-er, be a wel-come guest.  
3 All who hun-ger, sing to - geth - er, Je - sus Christ is liv - ing bread.

Come from wil - der - ness and wan - d'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.  
Come from rest-less - ness and roam-ing. Here in joy we keep the feast.  
Come from lone - li - ness and long - ing. Here in peace we have been fed.

You that yearn for days of full-ness, all a - round us is our food.  
We that once were lost and scat-tered in com - mu - nion's love have stood.  
Blest are those who from this ta - ble live their days in grat - i - tude.

Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.  
Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.  
Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993  
Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Cohesion Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version  
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## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Blessed be your name, O God,

For we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BLESSING**

May the beauty of God be reflected in your eyes,

May the love of Christ be reflected in your hands,

May the wisdom of the Spirit be reflected in your words,

And may the knowledge of the Triune ☩ God flow from your heart.

**Amen.**

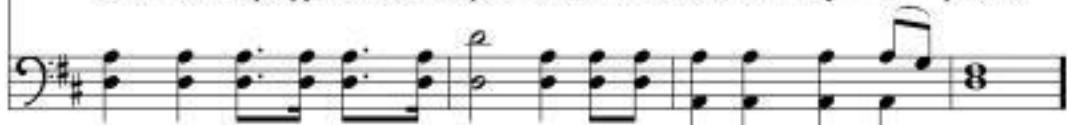
## Shall We Gather at the River



1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,  
2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,  
3 Ere we reach the shin-ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;  
4 Soon we'll reach the shin-ing riv - er, soon our pil-grim-age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow-ing by the throne of God?  
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.  
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro-vide a robe and crown.  
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.



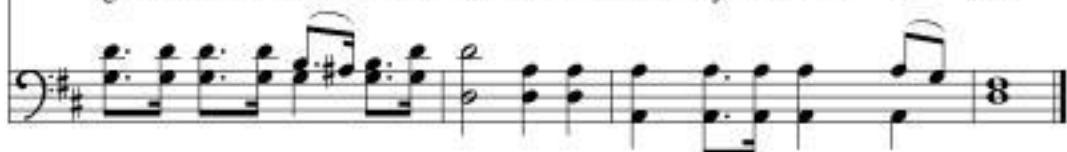
*Refrain*



Yes, we'll gath-er at the riv - er, the beau-ti-ful, the beau-ti-ful riv - er;



gath-er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.



Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899  
Music: HANSON PLACE, Robert Lowry

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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**Welcome to all!** Welcome to worship, Christian education and fellowship — a chance to be fed and nourished by God's Word before being sent again to serve the world in the week ahead.

"Give me understanding, that I may keep your law" (Psalm 119:34); "The one who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). God, help me love my neighbor and so keep your law.

Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones during services.

**To those who are visiting:** Welcome to St. John and thank you for joining us! You are welcome to sign our registry in the narthex. May God bless you today and all days.

**Reminder! If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact St. John's at (715) 675-6950**

**Holy Communion** is celebrated every Sunday. All are welcome to share the Lord's Supper with us.

**Food Basket.** Each week you are invited to bring non-perishable grocery items to be given to a local food pantry. Place your gift in the *Food Basket* next to the main entrance.

### **2024 YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT GATHERING IN NEW ORLEANS**

**July 16-20, 2024, National Youth Gathering!** Registration for this event will take place **Sept. 15–Nov. 1, 2023**. This is for all youth that will be in 8<sup>th</sup> to 12th grade at the time of registration (fall 2023). Please let Pastor Maggie know if you are interested so we can start planning and fundraising.

**July 16-20, 2024, National Young Adult Gathering!** Due to the cancellation of the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering, this gathering will be open to individuals who will be 18-35 at the time of the event! Registration for this event will take place **Sept. 15–Nov. 1, 2023**. Please let Pastor Maggie know if you are interested.

### **LIVING RIVER CONCERT, OCTOBER 1, 2023 SAVE THE DATE!!!**

St. John has contracted with Living River Quartet to perform on **Oct.1, 2023**

**at 2:00 pm.** Living River praises God with their music. They share a blend of contemporary praise and worship, gospel and a cappella styles. The lyrics reflect the light that only Jesus Christ can bring to a hurting world. They cannot perform during worship service because one of their members is in ministry, so they are not available Sunday mornings. The polka band that performed in the past is now retired.

We will be offering a **10:30 Worship service** that day with our chili dinner and raffle to follow. The concert will be at 2:00 pm. in the sanctuary.

We are very excited to be hosting Living River and having our traditional chili dinner and raffle. The Nowak's are making their delicious chili and Linda Graveen is in charge of the raffle again this year. We've not been able to share this special time together since Covid interrupted our world. Join us on October 1, to once again enjoy worship, food, fellowship, fun and music.

**Chili & helper's sign-up sheets, now in narthex!** We are looking for helpers to make our chili dinner and raffle a success.

Chili dinner tickets & raffle tickets will be available soon!

If you have immediate questions contact Barb Paulsen, Sue Harris or Linda Graveen (raffle items).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Sunday, September 10 Rally Sunday, Blessing of the Backpacks, Potluck, Parking Lot Meeting, and Maine Elementary School Drive.** Please sign-up for our Potluck. This year's theme is bring your favorite appetizer, and yes your appetizer can be a dessert. During the potluck, we will discuss St. John's parking lot. Also, this Sunday is our kick-off to our "school" year! Kids of all ages are welcome to bring their backpacks to the worship service for a "Blessing of the Backpacks." After worship we will celebrate the start of St. John's educational season with games, crafts, and music! All are welcome!



**Rally Sunday Maine Elementary School, Snacks, Pants, and Pencils Drive:** As we kick off our education season at St. John on Rally Sunday, we would like to also support our neighborhood school, Maine Elementary School! Time is set aside for a snack every day, but not every student has the resources to bring a snack each day. Teachers tend to provide snacks to these students, paying for them on their own. We'd like to help with that! Also, the younger students may have accidents during the day, and the health office is running low on clothes for them to change into. Finally, they're requesting Ticonderoga pencils. This specific name brand is the 'hardest' of pencils, so students can worry about learning and not about constantly sharpening their pencils.

**Items due: Rally Sunday, September 10th**

Individually packaged snacks (NO nuts/peanuts/peanut butter)  
(ex: granola bars, crackers, fruit snacks)

Black leggings: size 5, 6/6x, 7-8

Gender neutral grey or black sweatpants: size 5, 6/6x, 7-8

Ticonderoga pencils (only this brand please)

**Next Adult Study:** *What Is the Bible? How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything* by Rob Bell. This study will be a four-part series and involves purchasing the book. If you are interested, please let Pastor Maggie know.

**Monday, September 25 at 6:30 p.m.** Pastor Maggie's Book Club will be discussing *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

**Monday, October 23 at 6:30 p.m.** Pastor Maggie's Book Club will be discussing *Heaven Is For Real* by Todd Burpo.

**Exciting news!** Pictures that were taken for the new church directory are here and can be picked up in the fellowship hall. Pictures are located on the table and in the box. We are also excited to have our new directories soon, stay tuned.

**Live Streaming and Photography Notice.** When you enter a St. John Lutheran Church service or event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording or live streaming may occur. If you prefer not to be recognized on camera, the back row inside the church is not within viewing distance of a camera and communion will typically be only on a wide shot where it may be difficult to recognize congregants. Parents, please note our children's sermons are being recorded and live streamed. If you do not want your child to be recognized on camera, please refrain from having them participate.

## **Coming This Week @ St. John September 10– September 17**

### **Today**

9:00 a.m. Worship  
10:00 a.m. Potluck/Meeting/Sunday School Fun

### **September 12**

9:00 a.m. Pr. Maggie @ Pr. Meeting  
**September 12**

6:30 p.m. Confirmation (introductory meeting parents & students)

### **September 17**

9:00 a.m. Worship  
10:15 a.m. Sunday School