



...how often should  
I forgive?  
"Not SEVEN times,  
but, I tell you,  
SEVENTY-  
SEVEN  
times."

*Matthew 18:21-22, NRSV*

September 17, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A

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*St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA*

Reverend Maggie Westaby

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**Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
Sixteenth 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.**

**CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving God,

**You lived for us, but we have not lived for you. You have forgiven us, but we have not forgiven others. You have loved us, but we have not loved ourselves nor one another. Forgive us; and teach us how to forgive. Help us to be charitable in our regard for others, and guide us to live in peace with our neighbors. In Christ we pray. Amen.**

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

**Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN**

## Word of God, Come Down on Earth

1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from  
 2 Word e - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to  
 3 Word that speaks God's ten - der love, one with God be -

heav'n de - scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth  
 life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,  
 yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove

faith and hope and love un - end - ing, Word al - might - y,  
 cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the  
 God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to

we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.  
 world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing,  
 all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

Text: James Quinn, st. b. 1919

Music: LIEBSTER JESU, WIR SIND HIER, Johann R. Ahle, 1625-1673

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## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Holy God,

We carry the weight of hurt and anger, and it hinders our ability to live life fully. Teach us how to heal and how to let things go. Help us to mend broken relationships with ourselves and others. May we embody forgiveness as Christ teaches—forgiving not just seven times, but seventy-seven times. Through Jesus Christ we pray.

**Amen.**

## **READING: Genesis 50:15-21**

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

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm 103:1-2, 5-13**

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

**Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits;**

who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

**O LORD, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.**

You made known your ways to Moses and your works to the children of Israel.

**LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

you will not always accuse us, nor will you keep your anger forever.

**You have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

**As far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

As a father has compassion for his children, so you have compassion for those who fear you,

O LORD.

## READING: Romans 14:1-12

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

<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

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

<sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

<sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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 18:21-35**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>21</sup>Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>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.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>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.**

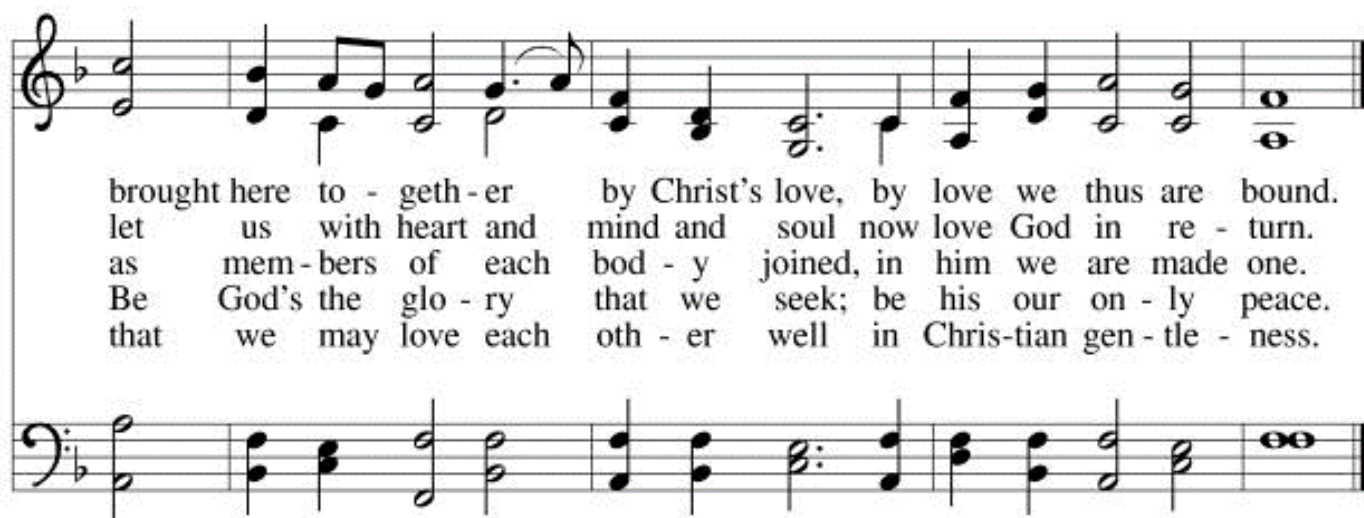
## **SERMON**

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

## Where Charity and Love Prevail



1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found;  
2 With grate - ful joy and ho - ly fear, God's char - i - ty we learn;  
3 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells Christ, God's ho - ly Son;  
4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; let all con - ten - tions cease.  
5 Let us for - give each oth - er's faults as we our own con - fess,



brought here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.  
let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in re - turn.  
as mem - bers of each bod - y joined, in him we are made one.  
Be God's the glo - ry that we seek; be his our on - ly peace.  
that we may love each oth - er well in Chris - tian gen - tle - ness.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.

Music: TWENTY-FOURTH, attr. Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842

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## **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**

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 the faithful hands of Christ, our little is multiplied to serve many. Let us offer of ourselves, so that the love of God may be multiplied in the world.

***LET THE VINEYARDS BE FRUITFUL***



## 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.

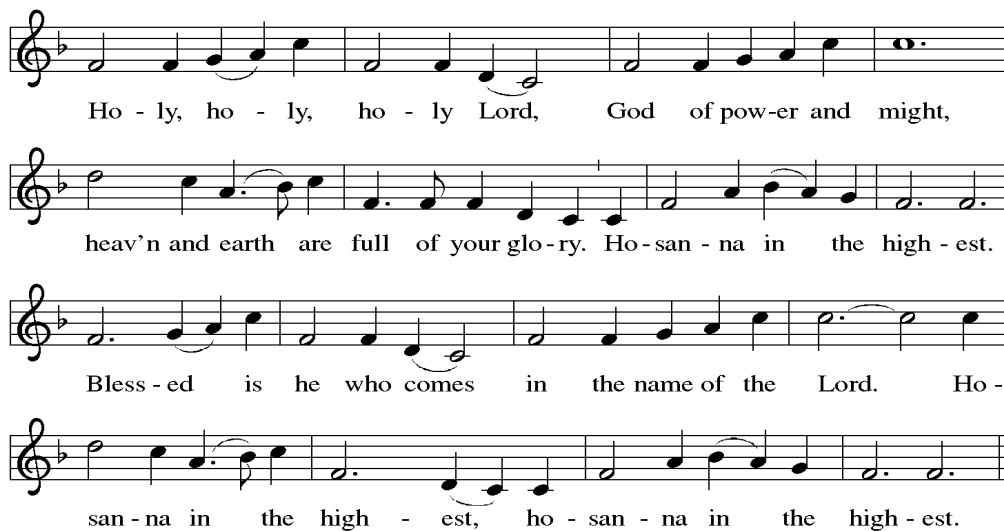
**We lift them to the Lord.**

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

*Here Is Bread (ELW 483), I'm sorry but these lyrics are not available.*

## What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?  
 3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?

What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!  
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged— take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge— take it to the Lord in prayer.

Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; oh, what need - less pain we bear—  
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor - rows share?  
 Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!  
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness— take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a so - lace there.

Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820–1886  
 Music: CONVERSE, Charles C. Converse, 1832–1918

## **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 love of God thrive in your heart,

May the compassion of Christ be heard in your words,

May the movement of the Spirit be seen in your actions,

And may the peace of the Triune † God be with you every day.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING SONG**

## On What Has Now Been Sown

1 On what has now been sown your bless-ing Lord, be - stow; the  
 2 To you our wants are known, from you are all our pow'rs; ac -  
 3 Oh, grant that each of us, now met be - fore you here, may

pow'r is yours a - lone to make it sprout and grow. O Lord, in  
 cept what is your own and par-don what is ours. Our prais - es,  
 meet to - geth - er thus when you and yours ap - pear, and fol - low

grace the har - vest raise, and yours a - lone shall be the praise!  
 Lord, and prayers re - ceive and to your word a bless - ing give.  
 you to heav'n, our home. E'en so, A - men! Lord Je - sus, come!

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt.  
 Music: DARWALL'S 148TH, John Darwall, 1731-1789

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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**Welcome to all!** In the words of the Israelites: “The Lord is ... the reason for [our] song, because he has saved [us]” (Exodus 15:2, CEV). Welcome to worship!

We tend to think of clouds as gloomy, Lord, but your pillar of cloud protected the newly escaped Hebrews from their Egyptian enslavers. May we sense your protection in the clouds of life. Amen.

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.

### **JULY 16-20, 2024 YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT GATHERING IN NEW ORLEANS**

Registration for these events will take place **Sept. 15–Nov. 1, 2023**. This is for all youth that will be in 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade at the time of registration (fall 2023). The Young Adult gathering will be open to individuals who will be 18-35 at the time of the event! Please let Pastor Maggie know if you are interested so we can start planning and fundraising.

### **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. Please note, all food items need to be at St. John by September 27<sup>th</sup>

Chili dinner tickets & raffle tickets are available! All raffle items also need to be at St. John by September 27<sup>th</sup>

The proceeds from the chili dinner will go to St. John's youth group, and the proceeds from the raffle will go to St. John's parking lot replacement fund.

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Church Security.** If you have a key to St. John and find yourself here during the week, please make sure the doors are securely locked behind you. If you leave through the double glass sanctuary doors, please make sure they are securely locked by giving them a few good pulls from outside the church!

**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.

**Men's Breakfast.** Pastor Will from Trinity in Stettin and St. Peter's in Marathon has invited all men from St. John to meet the second Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. At LC Restaurant, in Marathon (Formerly the Village Inn).

**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 17– September 24**

#### **Today**

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

#### **September 19**

8:30 a.m.      Quilting  
9:00 a.m.      Pr. Maggie @ Pr. Meeting

#### **September 20**

6:30 p.m.      Confirmation

#### **September 24**

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