

**Southwest California Synod Digital Worship
July 26, 2020 | Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of Call**

Welcome | Bishop R. Guy Erwin

Welcome to the digital worship service provided by the Southwest California Synod for the 8th Sunday of Pentecost. I am Bishop Guy Erwin, and this is my final Sunday presiding as your bishop. Today's service will include greetings from throughout the synod and readings provided by members of the Synod staff. We will conclude with a ceremony used throughout the Christian church as a pastor, deacon, or bishop leaves their office called Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of Call.

I am disappointed to not be able to have this conclusion of call service in person. I hope to return to Southern California in February of 2021 for a dedication of the bishop's chapel and hope we can be together in person at that time.

In today's first lesson, Solomon prays for wisdom, as we too 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!

May God bless our worship today.

Gathering Song | "O Day Full of Grace" – Association of Lutheran Church Musicians

Thanksgiving for Baptism | Pastor Brenda Bos & Pastor Matt Keadle

In the beginning God hovered over the formless void and instead of seeing chaos, God saw possibility. Out of the maelstrom God created the heavens and the earth, the waters which brought forth life and abundance. For the glory of creation, **we give you thanks, O God.**

In the Great Correction, God sent a flood to destroy the earth, but instead of seeing total destruction, God saw a path to salvation for Noah and his family. For hope in the midst of life's torrents, **we give you thanks, O God.**

In the Exodus, God delivered Moses and the Israelites from their oppressors, only to lead the nation to the banks of the Red Sea. Instead of seeing an obstacle, God saw a chance for a miracle, parting the waters and sending the nation to a new life. For rebirth after violence, **we give you thanks, O God.**

In the Judean desert, God sent Jesus to John the Baptist's congregation. Instead of seeing a simple human ritual, God saw a way to sanctify the earth's waters forever, dipping our Savior's

body into the Jordan River, rising him up to His sacred calling, baptizing Jesus with the water and Spirit, just as we have all been baptized ever since. For the gift of baptism, **we give you thanks, O God.**

In these days of disease and disarray, of racial tension and greed, of death and deceit, instead of seeing an ending, God sees a new beginning, as God always does, calling us to new life, through this font, through the waters of baptism, offering hope and healing, reconciliation and forgiveness. For these waters which unite us all in ever time and place, **we give you thanks, O God.**

Saving God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, move over the waters of our hearts, creating in our chaos, washing us clean in these storms. Remind us we are baptized, marked by the sign of the cross and sealed by the Holy Spirit forever. May our light shine forth to all people, that You may be glorified in our lives, now and forever. **Amen.**

Greeting | Sheri Dillon

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day | Samantha Henderson

Let us pray:

Scandalous God, sowing weeds among the crop, raising bread with impure yeast, offering treasure beyond price, casting a net that catches good and bad: throw down our mean idols of purity and possession and let the Son of Man show us your inclusive, provocative, wide-branching love; through Jesus Christ, the stumbling block. **Amen.**

Montage of greetings from synod

First Reading | Pastor Marj Funk-Pihl

1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil;

for who can govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God 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, ¹²I 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.”

Word of God, Word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading | Pastor James Phillips

Romans 8:26-39

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For 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. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

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

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

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor 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.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation | “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” – Christopher Ma & Kevin Anderson

Gospel | Bishop Erwin

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

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;³²it 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.”

³³He 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 someone found and hid; 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; ⁴⁶on 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; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and 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.” ⁵²And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Sermon

Hymn of the Day | “A Song at the Center” – Our Savior’s Long Beach

Montage of greetings from synod

Apostle’s Creed | Maria Paiva

**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 God's People

Let us pray.

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ
you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock.
You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them,
and you call them to various avenues of service.
We give you thanks for the ministry of Guy Erwin among the people of God in this place.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit's inspiration for us to call him to this position. We praise you
for the mighty works you have done during his tenure and pray the seeds he planted will
continue to bear fruit. We pray for Interim Bishop Murray Finck and even now we pray for the
bishop you will bring to us next year. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You watch over our going out and our coming in:
bless this time of ending and beginning.
You surround your people in every time and place:
keep us close in your love.
You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial:
prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together;
heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.
Help Guy and Rob and all of us
to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us.
As they has been a blessing to us,
so now send them forth to be a blessing to others; Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks, O God, for the ministry of the Southwest California Synod. Give us courage
to strive for racial justice in our cities, for reconciliation in our suburbs and healing in our
farmlands. Make us a beacon of hope to our broken world. Help us be good neighbors in every
neighborhood to which you have called us. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks, O God, for healing. We pray for those suffering from COVID-19 and those
who care for them. Provide enough resources for front-line workers, those working in
transportation and food distribution and medical facilities. Inspire leaders throughout the world
as they manage nations and governments. Bring us a cure for this disease. Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We give you thanks, O God, that you are the God of all people. Soften our hearts to the needs of
others, especially people of color, immigrants and the LGBTQ community. Embolden our voices
as we cry out for justice and guide our work as we break down oppression. Help us to be strong
enough to see our own complicities in racism, homophobia, transphobia and misogyny.
Transform us in the human family You envision. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, in the name of Jesus our Comforter, **Amen.**

Charge to Bishop Erwin and Rob Flynn | Randy Foster

Your siblings in the Southwest California Synod
and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared.
We promise you our continued support and prayer.
Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this synod,
with hope in God's abundant grace in years to come,
we send you on your way to United Lutheran Seminary with
our love and prayers.
May God continue to bless and keep you.

Sending Song | "The Summons" – Christopher Ma & Kevin Anderson

Montage of greetings from synod

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.
Amen.

Special Music | "Grace" by Tasha Cobbs – Tyralucia Dennis with Darrion Woodard

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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Thanksgiving for Baptism by Rev. Brenda Bos

Prayers of God's People adapted from Thanksgiving at Conclusion of Call from Sundaysandseasons.com

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