

October 18, 2026
21st Sunday after Pentecost



Together we are:

~Called to Worship~
~Committed to Serve~
~Connected in Faith~

Worship with us Sunday mornings at 8:00 & 9:30

St. John Lutheran Church
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Belle Plaine MN 56011

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Everyone is welcome to Worship

In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Hymn

"I Love to Tell the Story"

ELW 661

Confession and Forgiveness

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.

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.

Kyrie (setting 10, ELW #203)

Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.
Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!

Prayer of the day

Let us pray.
Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Psalm: Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]

Ascribe to the LORD honor and power. (Ps. 96:7)

¹ Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

² **Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

³ Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.

⁴ **For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,
more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵ As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

⁶ **Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

⁸ **Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

⁹ Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

[¹⁰ **Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king! The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

¹² **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

¹³ You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.² We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹ For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Gospel Acclamation (205a):

Alleluia! Lord and Savior; open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22

After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

¹⁵ The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. ¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ Then he said to them, “Whose head is this and whose title?” ²¹ They answered, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” ²² When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day “Day By Day”

ELW 790

Apostles Creed

Sharing of the peace

Offering Hymn “What a Beautiful Name”

Prayer:

Merciful God,

accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus, Amen

(9:30)Merciful God,

we bring you the fruits of our work, grateful for all that you have given us. Thank you for setting this table before us—a place where we can come, be fed, and catch a glimpse of the day when no one will hunger or thirst anymore. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus. Fill us with your goodness and mercy, and send us out to share your love with the world you cherish. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Communion Prayer

Words of Institution

The 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.

Hymns During Distribution

ELW 793 – “Dona Nobis Pacem”

ELW 717 – “Let Justice Flow Like Streams”

ELW 574 - “Here I am, Lord”

Post Communion Blessing

Prayers of Intercession

Benediction

Closing Hymn

(8:00) “For the Fruits of All Creation” ELW 678

(9:30) “This Little Light of Mine” ELW 677