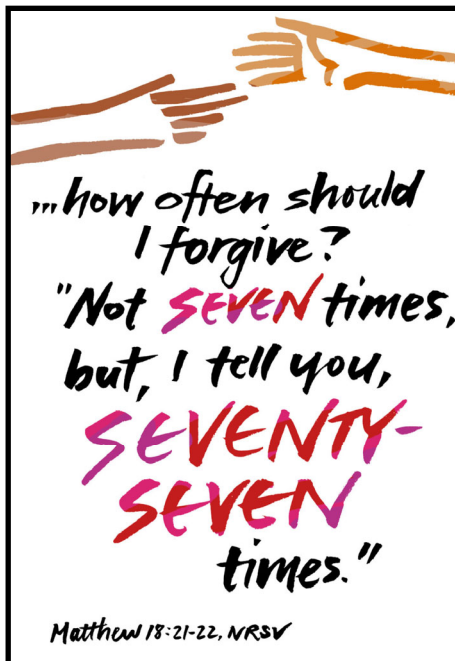


St. John's Lutheran Church
Biggerstaff Christian Retreat Center
9 am Worship Service
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2026



Welcome!

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

Welcome to Worship!

PRE-GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

GATHERING SONG *"I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord"*

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,
I will sing, I will sing.

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.

With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness, thy faithfulness.
With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

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.**



OPENING SONG

“Ten Thousand Reasons”

Refrain

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul;
Worship His holy name.
Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship Your holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning;
It's time to sing Your song again,
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes. *Refrain*

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger.
Your name is great, and Your heart is kind.
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. *Refrain*

And on that day when my strength is failing,
The end draws near, and my time has come;
Still, my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore! *Refrain*

THE APOSTOLIC GREETING

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.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: 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.**

YOUTH MESSAGE

Adriana McMurphy

THE FIRST READING

Genesis 50:15-21

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.

Psalm 103:1-13— *Read Responsively*

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 always 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.

THE SECOND READING

Romans 14:1-12

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.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Thy Word” (2x)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 18:21-35

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.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Rachel Connelly



SONG OF RESPONSE “There is a Redeemer”



- 1 There is a Re - deem - er, Je - sus, God's own Son,
- 2 Je - sus, my Re - deem - er, name a - bove all names,
- 3 When I stand in glo - ry, I will see his face;



pre - cious Lamb of God, Mes-si - ah, Ho - ly One.
 pre - cious Lamb of God, Mes-si - ah, hope for sin - ners slain.
 there I'll serve my king for-ev - er, in that ho - ly place.

Refrain



Thank you, O my Fa - ther, for giv - ing us your Son and



send - ing your Spir - it till the work on earth is done.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

After each prayer petition— Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

THE SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always. **Congregation: And also with you.**

THE OFFERING

*Our gifts and offerings are gathered for the mission of the church.
Plates are passed by the ushers.*

THE OFFERTORY SONG

“As the Grains of Wheat”

Refrain

*As the grains of wheat once scattered on the hill
were gathered into one to become our bread;
so may all your people from all the ends of earth
be gathered into one in you.*

As this cup of blessing is shared within our midst,
may we share the presence of your love. *Refrain*

Let this be a foretaste of all that is to come
when all creation shares this feast with you. *Refrain*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting: 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 MEAL

All are welcome at the table of communion

THE 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.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION SONGS

“Sanctuary/I Exalt Thee Medley”

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary
Pure and Holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You.

I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee O Lord
I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee, I exalt Thee O Lord

Holy Spirit, fill this vessel
Make my heart to, burn within
Purify me, make my life be
A sanctuary for You.

THE PASTORAL BLESSING

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Assisting: 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 BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

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

“Blessed Assurance”

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long:
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. *Refrain*

Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. *Refrain*

THE DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

Serving Today



in Worship

Pastor:

Lay Assistant:

Lector:

Greeters:

Musicians:

Videographer:

Serving Today

The Rev. Dr. Rachel Connelly

Allen Harding

Patty Shepard

Stan & Kay Gartner

Tom Ward, Ray Burroughs and Dave Devoe

Jason Dickard

Our Church Family

Sandy Yuda, healing (AnMed Rehab)
Libby McLean, healing
Wilma Cobb, healing
Gary Cabbage, healing
Michael Pode, healing
Deb Blackmore, healing
Andrea Carlson, healing
Stephanie Jackson, healing
Chris Radford, healing
Tina Barrett, healing
Tiffany Chapman, healing
Charlie (health) & Debbie (lung cancer) Busch

Those Grieving

The family of Betty Mantell
The family of George Rogers (brother of Micky Ward)
The family of Caren von Hippel (BabyRead)

Our Elders at Home or Assisted Living

Andera Stroud, Foothills
Thelma Miller, The Residences (Wells Highway)
Brenda Cantrell, home
Linda Humphries, home
Frances Carter, home/hospice
Marie Palmatier, home
Lynne Williams (Pawleys Island)

Other Prayer Concerns

For those affected by the flooding in Nepal & China and in the Grand Canyon.
For those affected by earthquakes in Japan & Columbia.
For those affected by military actions in the Middle East.
For our country amidst on-going nationwide violence.
For wisdom for military leaders involved in the events unfolding in the Middle East.
For those dealing with loss from recent natural disasters and severe weather.
For all those who have lost their jobs due to recent government changes.
For peace for our country and protection for our government officials.
For colleges & universities across our country.
For those dealing with loss and fear from gun violence.
For peace in the Middle East, and comfort to those impacted by violence.
For Bishop Wade Roof and Synod staff
All military Personnel



Our Extended Family and Friends

Archie Yusef, tests (great nephew of Sandra Pruitt)
Kyle Hollandsworth, job search (grandson of Millie)
Charlotte Eaker, breast cancer (sister-in-law of Ann Brackett)
Valarie Bentley (infant) hole in heart (Tina Barrett)
Mary Jane Rees, healing (mother of Rod Rees)
Bobbie Williams, hospice (aunt of Jan Day)
Susan Ward, cancer (daughter of Joan Lewis)
Barbara Williams, hospice (mother of Cathy Plowden)
Jon Fowler, brain cancer (cousin of Wilson's)
Jean Deal, healing (sister-in-law of McLean's)
Joan Kramer, successful treatment (friend of Williams')
Riley Medlin, cancer diagnosis (WHS student)
Kathy Quickel, healing (mother of Mike Goynes)
Doug Scanlon, healing (friend of Grace Schmeelcke)
Maggie Ormes, healing (friend of Mary Sprouse)
Barbara Cary, comfort (sister of Dave Devoe)
Buffy McCarthy, healing (daughter-in-law Kathy Scherter)
Stephanie Williams, cancer/chemo (cousin/ Pastor Rachel)
Kathy Smith, liver cancer (cousin of Cathy Plowden)
Isabel Fogel, healing (granddaughter of Fogel's)
Dwight Amick, hospice (Stephanie Champion, step dad)
Danny Childress, comfort (nephew of Safrin's)
Larry Smith, (friend of Jane Harris)
Bonnie Blanchett, healing (mother of Ryan Raab)
E. Christian Gauderer, hospitalized in Lisbon, Portugal (brother of Michael)
Janelle Gibson, healing (aunt of Jan Day)
Erica McKee Skinner, healing (friend of Tina Barrett)
Ben Harding, healing (brother of Allen Harding)
Chad Cobb (son of Wilma)
Kay Davis, recovery (mother of Stephanie Champion)
Kelsey Bowman, healing (daughter-in-law of Bowmans)
Lauren Bowman, Lyme disease (daughter of Gary and Barb Bowman)
Jacquelyn Moore, (niece of Kathy Scherter)
Bennie Smith, health (nephew of Wards)
Dohnvan (grandson of Kathy Scherter)
Dolorico Perez (father of Josie Perez)
Gina Daly, health (daughter of Bob Johnson)

Please let the church office know of any updates to our prayer list.



The Bell Tower— Ministry News



ALL AGES BINGO

TODAY at noon there will be “All Ages Bingo” in the Fellowship Hall. Gloria Shealy Circle will be providing a simple lunch. Prizes will be available for children, teens and adults. Contact Adriana with any questions.



Betty Mantell Memorial Service

There will be a Memorial Service for Betty Mantell in the Sanctuary on **Monday, September 14 at 10:30 am**. A reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.



MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Monday Evening Bible study is at 6pm. We are studying the book of Proverbs. Contact Adriana with any questions.



TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Tuesday Bible Study on EZRA at 11am in the Sanctuary - Come share in a discovery of the Book of Ezra, which tells a story of rebuilding and renewal for God’s people. This powerful Old Testament text speaks directly to what it means to rebuild community, restore faith, and navigate major life transitions after a period of exile and disruption. Whether you are a lifelong Bible reader or picking up the Scriptures for the very first time, your voice and perspective are welcome at the table.



JESUS BY THE LAKE

On **Sunday, September 27**, we are hosting our first "*Jesus by the Lake*" at Biggerstaff from 4-6pm. This is a new, "holy experiment," collaborating with the youth and families from University Lutheran, to be every fourth Sunday of the month. The theme of the day will be "*Who is my Neighbor?*" and the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is an exciting opportunity for the entire family (children, teens, AND adults) to come together, see old and new faces, and make new friendships in a new way of doing faith formation. Games, music, small group discussions, and food are all included. Contact Adriana to learn more about this exciting new event.



CHURCH OFFICE STAFF

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Additional St. John's Staff

Ray Burroughs, Facilities Manager
Joan Lewis, Spiritual Gifts Coordinator
Cathy Plowden, Congregational President

Ways to Help with the Disaster in Nepal

Below are three options if you wish to help those affected by the flooding in Nepal.

Lutheran World Relief: <https://give.lwr.org/page/199466/donate/1>

Water Mission: <https://watermission.org/nepal-flooding-disaster-response>

Lutheran Disaster Response: <https://give.elca.org/page/88370/donate/1>

Our tithes and offerings are an important part of our faith journey.

- Electronic offerings may be given through the GIVELIFY app.
- You may also go to our website: www.stjohnswalhalla.org and click on the "Give Now With Givelify" button
- Another option is to scan this QR code to go directly to our Givelify page.

