

St. Paul's Lutheran Church – Crossroads (ELCA)

PO Box 394, Batesville, IN 47006

Office Phone: 812.934.3970

Pastor Creighton's Cell: 812.655.4616

E-mail: stpauls.crossroads@gmail.com

Pastor Creighton's e-mail: creighton.leptakjr@gmail.com



Sunday, July 22 2018

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Holy Communion

Mark's gospel makes clear how great was the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.



LET YOUR GUARD DOWN,
LET GOD IN,
BE AMONG FRIENDS

WELCOME . . .

We are privileged to have you as our guest in the Lord's house this morning. We pray that the time you share with us will be meaningful for you and that God will bless you through it. If you have a question that is not answered here, please don't hesitate to ask someone around you.

Registry: Please take time to complete the registry/attendance sheet found in the pew in the black folder at the center aisle. It is important to us that we know who is worshipping with us today. Thank you.

Worship: This booklet is our order of worship for today. Hymns are found in the "Evangelical Lutheran Worship" hymnals located in the racks on the back of the pew in front of you. Everything else is printed in this booklet.

Our worship includes **Holy Communion**. As Christians in the Lutheran heritage, we believe that our Lord Jesus is physically present "in, with, and under" the bread and wine we receive. However, if you believe that Jesus' body and blood were given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins, you are welcome to commune with us, regardless of your faith background. A white grape juice is available at the center of the tray for those who do not wish to receive wine.

If you desire to receive communion but are unable to come forward to the communion rail, inform the usher of such and communion will be brought to you.

. . . WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

Ministers:	The people of St. Paul's Lutheran Church - Crossroads
Pastor:	Pastor Creighton
Greeters:	Doug and Vanessa Westerfeld
Accompanist:	Kathy Westerfeld
Acolytes:	Caroline Niese and Bradley Wirth
Assisting Minister:	Mary Lou Krieger
Lay Reader:	Andrea Westerfeld
Communion Assistant:	Lisa Gausman
Sound System:	Ross Harmeyer
Offering Counters:	Les Kessens and Larry Siebert
Altar Committee:	Gary Westerfeld

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, full of compassion and mercy, abounding in steadfast love.

Amen.

Trusting God's promise of forgiveness,
let us confess our sin against God and one another.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Eternal God our creator,
in you we live and move and have our being. Look upon us, your children, the work of your hands. Forgive us all our offenses, and cleanse us from proud thoughts and empty desires. By your grace draw us near to you, our refuge and our strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. In the mercy of almighty God, Christ died for us while we still were sinners; and for his sake, God † forgives you all your sins. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: *All People That on Earth Do Dwell*

ELW 883

GREETING

The presiding minister and assembly greet one another.

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.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Led by the assisting minister

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come before him with thanksgiving, and extol him with music and song!

For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth; and the mountain peaks belong to him.

The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our maker!

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the flock under his care.

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation!

A canticle of praise may be sung by all.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

♪ Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:1-6

Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the “flock” of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David’s line to save Israel and Judah.

A reading from the twenty-third chapter of Jeremiah.

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

The psalm is read responsively by verse.

¹The LORD is my shepherd;

I shall not be in want.

²**The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:11-22

The author of this letter is reminding his audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, however, they are included in God's household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.

A reading from the second chapter of Ephesians.

¹¹Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to acclaim the gospel.

**♪Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

GOSPEL: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

When Jesus sent his disciples out to teach and heal, they ministered among large numbers of people. Their work was motivated by Christ's desire to be among those in need.

The holy gospel according to St. Mark, the sixth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

Candidates for baptism, sponsors, and parents gather with the ministers at the font. The assembly is seated.

PRESENTATION AND PROMISES FOR HOLY BAPTISM

The presiding minister may address the assembly in these or similar words:

God, who is rich in mercy and love, gives us a new birth into a living hope through the sacrament of baptism. By water and the Word God delivers us from sin and death and raises us to new life in Jesus Christ. We are united with all the baptized in the one body of Christ, anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and joined in God's mission for the life of the world.

The presiding minister addresses parents:

Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to have your child baptized into Christ?

*Parents: **I do.***

As you bring your child to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

to live with him among God's faithful people,
bring him to the word of God and the holy supper,
teach him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,
place in his hands the holy scriptures,
and nurture him in faith and prayer,
so that your child may learn to trust God,
proclaim Christ through word and deed,
care for others and the world God made,
and work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help your child grow in the Christian faith and life?

*Parents: **I do.***

The presiding minister addresses sponsors:

Sponsors, do you promise to nurture this child in the Christian faith as you are empowered by God's Spirit, and to help them live in the covenant of baptism and in communion with the church?

Sponsors: **I do.**

The presiding minister addresses the assembly:

People of God, do you promise to support *Wyatt* and pray for him in his new life in Christ?

We do.

The assembly stands.

PROFESSION OF FAITH (congregation joins in the profession)

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

P. Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

C. **I renounce them.**

P. Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

C. **I renounce them.**

P. Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

C. **I renounce them.**

(The Congregation joins in the creed)

P. Do you believe in God the Father?

C. **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

P. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

C. **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 into hell. 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.**

- P. Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?
C. **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.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT

- P. The Lord be with you.
C. **And also with you.**
P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
P. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight. Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family, and through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection you set us free from the power of sin and death and raise us up to live in you.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, the power of your living Word, that those who are washed in the waters of baptism may be given new life. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
C. **Amen.**

The assembly is seated

BAPTISM

- P. *Wyatt Francis*, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
C. **Amen.**

P. Blessed be God, the source of all life, the word of salvation, the spirit of mercy.

C. **You belong to Christ, in whom you have been baptized. Alleluia.**

P. Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life.

Sustain *Wyatt* with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

C. **Amen.**

P. *Wyatt Francis*, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

C. **Amen.**

WELCOME

P. Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Wyatt, let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The assembly stands

P. Let us welcome the newly baptized.

C. **We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.**

INTRODUCTION

HYMN: *Baptized and Set Free*

ELW 453 verses 3-4

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The assisting minister leads the assembly in prayer.

Growing in faith and discipleship, we give thanks for God's merciful compassion as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God, you are our cornerstone, giving your people a strong foundation of faith. Help us to seek meaningful change in the world, and lead us to places of rest where you renew us for mission. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God, you are our shepherd, leading us to green pastures and still waters for our use and pleasure. Renew the face of the earth. Guard the land and seas, the mountains and valleys, cultivated farmland and untamed wilderness. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God, you are our righteousness, proclaiming peace to those who are far off and to those who are near. Remove hostility that divides nations. Make us no longer strangers or aliens but fellow citizens with all your saints. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God, you are our compassion, bringing rest to all who seek treatments and diagnoses and are left without answers or energy. Restore the aching souls and bodies of those who seek comfort, especially those listed in the bulletin and prayer book, and those we name aloud or in our hearts at this time. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God, you are our creativity, creating joy and purpose through all artists in the church: composers, writers, visual artists, musicians, poets, and dancers. Open our hearts to experience your truth in new and beautiful ways through their work. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God, you are our future, leading us through the valley of the shadow of death and preparing a table for us with all of your saints, especially Mary Magdalene. Let your goodness and mercy follow us until we dwell in your house forever. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray and all for whom we have forgotten or neglected to pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. After the offering is gathered, the assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho-ly Spir-it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal-va-tion, and up-hold me with your free Spir-it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
Music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

OFFERING PRAYER

After the table is set, the assisting minister leads a prayer.

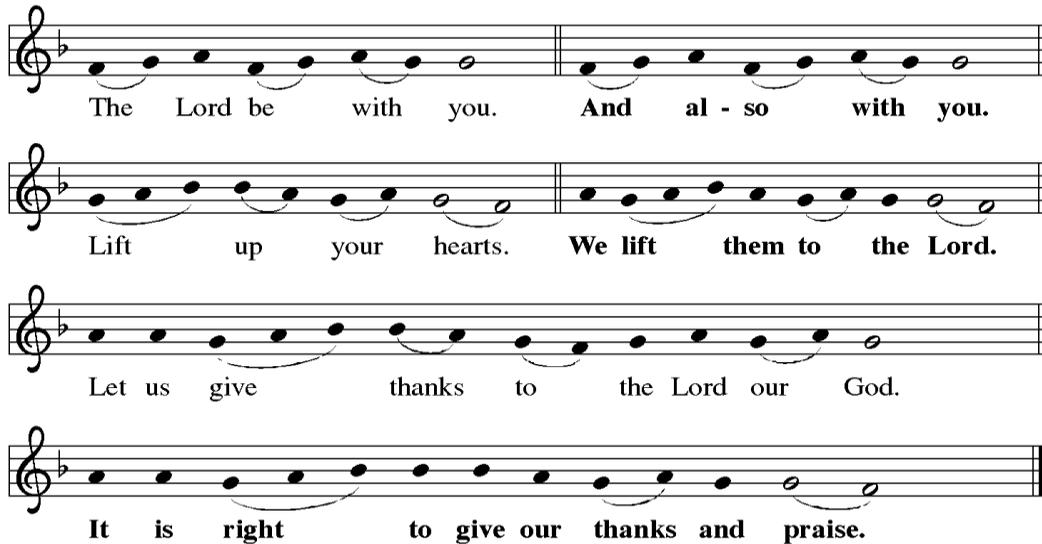
Let us pray together.

Merciful God,
you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DIALOGUE

ELW p. 144

The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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, ...
... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p. 144

♪ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

The presiding minister continues.

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God,
You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

The presiding minister addresses the assembly in invitation.

The assembly is seated.

All are welcome at Christ's table! If you are a visitor and receive communion at your home church, you are invited to do so here. Everyone is invited to receive communion or a blessing.

COMMUNION SONG

ELW p. 146

**♪Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond
Amen.

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

After Holy Communion has been distributed, the assembly stands and the presiding minister may say:

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

The assisting minister leads the assembly in prayer after communion.

Let us pray.

Jesus Christ, host of this meal, you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*

ELW 779

DISMISSAL

The assisting minister may address the assembly.

Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.

We are a family of believers who meet to:

enjoy life together

worship and learn about God

make a difference in the world.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

We remember in Prayer:

Carol Bergman Angela Siebert Mikayla Siebert
Todd Siebert Sarajane Wilson
Art and Karen Salvitti Marlin and Julia Siebert

Edith Masheck (Paul Gausman's sister)
Stella Long (Paul Gausman's sister)
Mike Trenkamp (Tim Mack's brother-in-law)
Travis Wenning (son of former BHS Ag teacher)
Ruth Booster (wife of former pastor)
Melody Briner (Marilyn Gausman's daughter)
Zach Briner (Marilyn Gausman's relative)
Lois Bastien Brown (Tim Salvitti's grandmother-in-law)
Marie Dierckman (Ginny Low's mother)
Louise Eads (Michelle Wehr's grandmother)
Bonnie Haughn (Sabrina Salvitti Haughn's mother-in-law)
Leonard (husband of Lisa Gausman's friend)
George Lerose (Art Salvitti's brother-in-law)
Tessa Mayer (wife of Wanda Siebert's principal)
Bekah Netherton (daughter of Debbie Mack's friend)
Ronnie Nicholson (Darrell's brother)
Barry Norman (Lisa Gausman's former principal)
Carol Rayve and Ron Price (Karen Salvitti's mother and friend)
Ted Rayve (Karen Salvitti's brother)
Beverly Richardson (Laura Nicholson's mother)
Kristina Salvitti (Art's daughter)
Gary Schopmeyer (friend of Anita and Bob Krieger)
Charlie Seibert (friend of Anita and Bob Krieger)
John Ward (Eunice Sisson's brother-in-law)
Jasmine Westerfeld (Sharon Brown's great-granddaughter)
Melinda Wilson (wife of Ben Wilson)

anyone affected by natural disasters, warfare and violence
all who serve in the military

Honored Members:

Allen and Mary Lou Narwold

Bill Westerfeld

Our members at St. Andrew's: Julia Siebert

Ruth Thackery

Our Partner Churches: Church of Christ in Thailand and St. John Lutheran Church, Hubble’s Corner

Today:

“To God’s holy people ... faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father” (Colossians 1:2, NIV). Welcome to worship!

This morning we welcome into our church family Wyatt Francis Race through the Rite of **Holy Baptism**. He is the son of Kyle and Joann Narwold Race. Wyatt’s sponsors are Lynn Narwold and Grant Johnson.

Please stay for **fellowship** in the Fellowship Room after worship this morning. Spend some time catching up with the events in each other’s lives.

The **August newsletter** is available in the narthex. Please take yours – and any for your family – with you as you leave this morning.

This Week:

Office Hours – Monday 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Thursday 1:00 – 4:00 PM

Pr. Creighton’s office hours –
Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Monday –
Historical Pictures ID’ing Party 1:00 PM

Tuesday –
SEIC Clergy meeting 10:00 AM

Wednesday

Margarita Moms

6:30 PM

Sunday -

Sunday Worship

9:00 AM

Fellowship

10:15 AM

Worship leaders for 7/22:

Greeters:	Gary and Jan Westerfeld
Accompanist:	Andrea Westerfeld
Acolytes:	Hannah and Haley Barker
Assisting Minister:	Aaron Nicholson
Lay Reader:	Alvin Harmeyer
Communion Assistant:	Gene Krieger
Sound System:	Emma Gausman
Offering Counters:	Arnie Wehr and Gary Westerfeld
Altar Committee:	Gary Westerfeld

Upcoming Events / Announcements:

The **Historical Committee** is hosting a **Pictures ID'ing Party** on Monday, July 23rd at 1 pm. Take a walk through our church history and help identify our predecessors who previously participated in Crossroads' ministries.

Handbags for Hope Auction and Luncheon to benefit Safe Passage will be August 11th. They are looking for gently used or new handbags. We will collect those until July 29. If you would like to make a monetary donation to this event, make checks payable to Safe Passage. See the bulletin board for more information on how you can support this community ministry.

Art Salvitti is working to keep our **church's website** updated with current worship information and events. To help this stay current, Art would like pictures and information about our happenings. Please see the newsletter for more information, and how to submit materials. Thanks for your assistance with this project.

Mark your calendars for **Rally Day** on August 12th! There are a lot of fun activities planned for the Sunday School hour: games, crafts, and photo booth, just to name a few. Worship at 10 will include special songs, etc. planned for that day tying it all together. Come and join the fun!



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At Rest among Strangers

The world can be a dangerous place, and we all long for someone, some leader, who will watch over us and protect us from all harm. The prophet Jeremiah issues strong cautions to those who abuse the trust placed in them to care for God's people, and the psalmist sings the praises of the Lord who guards and guides us through life's trials.

But the letter to the Ephesians suggests that lasting safety comes through the healing and reconciling work of Christ, which allows us to share a meal with those we are inclined to regard as enemies, because Christ has "broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." So, in Christ, aliens become citizens and strangers become members of the household of God.

Living into this reality requires all of us to be diligent in our practices with and policies toward all kinds of "strangers and aliens" in our world and in our lives. It means making peace with those whose politics make them strange to us, and creating genuine welcome for the newcomer in our classrooms, workplaces and congregations. It means considering the needs of immigrants and refugees through the lens of Christian faith as well as national identity, and not assuming the two are the same.

The reassuring news this day is that God, unlike so many who hold power in this world, is already reconciling the world to God's own self and us to one another. We enact this new reality each time we pass the peace or come to the Lord's supper, not because we have finally achieved the peace we seek, but because in Christ God's future reign of peace has already broken into our present.