



The Lutheran Church *of* Vestavia Hills
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
September 17, 2023



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF VESTAVIA HILLS

201 So. Montgomery Highway Birmingham, Alabama 35216
Church office: 205-823-1883 PreSchool/MDO: 205-791-5200
Web Site: www.vestavialutheran.org
WORSHIP: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sundays
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:15 a.m.
Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday



PASTOR: The Reverend Michael D. Ahlemeyer – pastor@vestavialutheran.org text: 205-201-8866
PASTOR EMERITUS: The Reverend Clifford Hellmers – vestluth@juno.com 205-422-4951
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BOOK KEEPER: Melanie Goodson - bookkeeper@vestavialutheran.org
ADOPTED MEDICAL MISSIONARIES - Arianna and David Shirk, Madeline & Annabelle - shirkdavid@gmail.com



TO OUR GUESTS: We offer you a warm welcome in the name of Jesus. Please sign the Friendship Register. If you do not have a church home, we would be delighted to have you become a part of our church family. Please feel free to speak with the Pastor about membership in our congregation. If you do have a church home, we pray that God will bless you as you continue your growth in faith and love.



SUNDAY SCHOOL Adult Bible Classes meets in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall at 9:15 a.m. Children, Confirmation, and Youth classes will resume this Fall in the classrooms downstairs.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH and NURSERY Following the Children's Message, all children ages 3-7 are invited to Children's Church downstairs. They will return to the sanctuary after the sermon. A nursery attendant is provided for children ages birth to 3 years during our 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM services.



COMMUNION We invite all baptized Christians who acknowledge their sinfulness, trust in Christ as their Savior, and who recognize the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the bread and wine to join us at the Communion table. The practice of our congregation is to place the bread into the extended hand of the communicant. The wine is offered in individual cups; please take one from the tray as it is offered by the Elder. The common cup will be offered to those who do not take an individual cup. The cups in the center of the tray are filled with non-alcoholic wine, in consideration of persons who should not drink wine. Also, children who have not received Communion instruction are invited to come to the Communion rail, fold their hands and receive a blessing.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN

"How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds"

LSB #524 (v. 1-3,5-6)



1 How sweet the name of Je - sus sounds In
2 It makes the wound - ed spir - it whole And
3 Dear name! The rock on which I build, My



a be - liev - er's ear! It soothes our sor - rows,
calms the heart's un - rest; 'Tis man - na to the
shield and hid - ing place; My nev - er - fail - ing



heals our wounds, And drives a - way our fear.
hun - gry soul And to the wea - ry, rest.
treas - ury filled With bound - less stores of grace.

5 How weak the effort of my heart,
How cold my warmest thought!
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

6 Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With ev'ry fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death!

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition.

Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS



1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;
2 To You, O sole-be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;
3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro - claimed at Je - sus' birth!
O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.
For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor - shiped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,
You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n-ly King.
Where You in pow'r are seat-ed At God's right hand on high—
In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, You reveal Your power by showing mercy and love. Grant us Your grace to receive what You have promised and to forgive as we have been forgiven through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

(Genesis Forgives the Sins of His Brothers)

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." ¹⁶So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph, Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHORAL ANTHEM (10:30 a.m.)

arr. T. Fettke & T. Grassi

"Holy Thy Name"

God of love and truth and beauty, holy Thy name;

Fount of order, law, and duty, holy Thy name.

As in heav'n Thy hosts adore Thee,

As they bow in awe before Thee,

So on earth, Lord, we extol Thee, holy Thy name.

Lord, remove our guilty blindness, holy Thy name;

Show Thy heart of loving kindness, holy Thy name.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

(Parable of the Unforgiving Servant)

²¹ Peter came up and said to [Jesus], "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

CATECHISM

~The Lord's Prayer: The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of those things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Jesus Sinners Doth Receive"

LSB #609 (v. 1-2,5-6)



1 Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive; Oh, may all this
2 We de - serve but grief and shame, Yet His words, rich



say - ing pon - der Who in sin's de - lu - sions live
grace re - veal - ing, Par - don, peace, and life pro - claim;



And from God and heav - en wan - der! Here is hope for
Here our ills have per - fect heal - ing. Firm - ly in these



all who grieve: Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive.
words be - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners doth re - ceive.

5 Oh, how blest it is to know:
Were as scarlet my transgression,
It shall be as white as snow
By Thy blood and bitter passion;
For these words I now believe:
Jesus sinners doth receive.

6 Now my conscience is at peace;
From the Law I stand acquitted.
Christ hath purchased my release
And my ev'ry sin remitted.
Naught remains my soul to grieve:
Jesus sinners doth receive.

SERMON

"Forgive as You Have Been Forgiven"

Matthew 18:21-35

Vicar Matthew Vathauer

OFFERING

~please sign the Record of Fellowship during the Offering

VOLUNTARY

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For [*names of synodical and district presidents*], for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For [*name of president or monarch*], for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For . . . [*additional bids for prayer may be inserted here*] . . . let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

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.

SANCTUS



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;



Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI



1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,



You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;



O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,



Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

~Please be seated for the Distribution~

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"

LSB #575



1 My hope is built on noth - ing less Than Je - sus'
2 When dark - ness veils His love - ly face, I rest on
3 His oath, His cov - e - nant and blood Sup - port me
4 When He shall come with trum - pet sound, Oh, may I



blood and righ - teous - ness; No mer - it of my
His un - chang - ing grace; In ev - 'ry high and
in the rag - ing flood; When ev - 'ry earth - ly
then in Him be found, Clothed in His righ - teous -



own I claim But whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
storm - y gale My an - chor holds with - in the veil.
prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
ness a - lone, Re - deemed to stand be - fore His throne!

Refrain



On Christ, the sol-id rock, I stand; All oth-er ground is sink-ing sand.

"Change My Heart, O God" (10:30 a.m.)

LCVH Adult Choir

"Just as I Am, without One Plea"

LSB #570



1 Just as I am, with - out one plea But that Thy
2 Just as I am and wait - ing not To rid my
3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout With man - y a
4 Just as I am, poor, wretch - ed, blind; Sight, rich - es,



blood was shed for me And that Thou bidd'st me come to
soul of one dark blot, To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each
con - flict, man - y a doubt, Fight - ings and fears with - in, with -
heal - ing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to



Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

6 Just as I am; Thy love unknown
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

~Distribution Hymns continue on the following page~

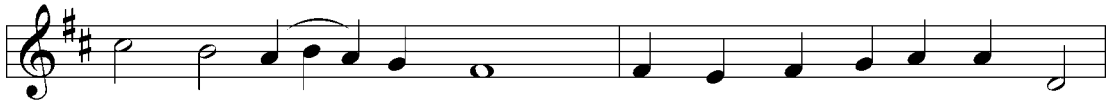
DISTRIBUTION HYMNS (continued)

"At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"

LSB #633 (v. 1-4)



1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing Praise to
2 Praise we Him, whose love di - vine Gives His
3 Where the pas - chal blood is poured, Death's dread
4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Pas - chal



our vic - to - rious King, Who has washed us in the tide
sa - cred blood for wine, Gives His bod - y for the feast—
an - gel sheathes the sword; Is - rael's hosts tri - um - phant go
vic - tim, pas - chal bread; With sin - cer - i - ty and love



Flow - ing from His pierc - ed side. Al - le - lu - ia!
Christ the vic - tim, Christ the priest. Al - le - lu - ia!
Through the wave that drowns the foe. Al - le - lu - ia!
Eat we man - na from a - bove. Al - le - lu - ia!

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake, You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve you; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

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 HYMN

“Beautiful Savior”

LSB #537



1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion, Son of
2 Fair are the mead - ows, Fair are the wood - lands, Robed in
3 Fair is the sun - shine, Fair is the moon - light, Bright the
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions, Son of



God and Son of Man! Tru - ly I'd love Thee, Tru - ly I'd
flow'rs of bloom - ing spring; Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is
spar - kling stars on high; Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines
God and Son of Man! Glo - ry and hon - or, Praise, ad - o -



serve Thee, Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
pur - er, He makes our sor - r'wing spir - it sing.
pur - er Than all the an - gels in the sky.
ra - tion Now and for - ev - er - more be Thine!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE