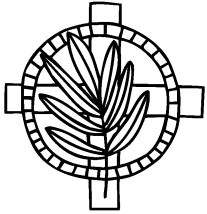


**St. Peter's Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost – August 30, 2020**

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When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*You can say the **BOLD** words with Pastor.*

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

We make the sign of the cross, which was marked on us at baptism.
We bless the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen**

Trusting in the mercy of God, we confess our sin. *Silence for reflection.*
Reconciling God, **we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen**

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY

Gathered on the Lord's Day, we remember that we are baptized
**in the name of the Father, and of the † Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

Jesus promised his followers at his ascension:
I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.

**And we will follow all he has taught us,
making disciples wherever we are.**

Join me in prayer. *A brief silence.* O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**

SCRIPTURES, SERMON, & SONG

READING: Romans 12:9-21 CEV

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflinching standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

Paul writes: Be sincere in your love for others. Hate everything that is evil and hold tight to everything that is good. Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself. Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying. Take care of God's needy people and welcome strangers into your home.

Ask God to bless everyone who mistreats you. Ask God to bless them and not to curse them. When others are happy, be happy with them, and when they are sad, be sad. Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people. Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone.

Dear friends, don't try to get even. Let God take revenge. In the Scriptures the Lord says,

"I am the one to take revenge
and pay them back."

The Scriptures also say,

"If your enemies are hungry,
give them something to eat.
And if they are thirsty
give them something to drink.
This will be the same
as piling burning coals
on their heads."

Don't let evil defeat you, but defeat evil with good.

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:21-28 (CEV)

After Peter confesses that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a "rock."

P: This is the Good News of the victory of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
as the Word was given to Matthew.

From then on (after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah), Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, "I must go to Jerusalem. There the nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of

the Law of Moses will make me suffer terribly. I will be killed, but three days later I will rise to life."

Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that. He said, "God would never let this happen to you, Lord!"

Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Satan, get away from me! You're in my way because you think like everyone else and not like God."

Then Jesus said to his disciples:

If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find it. What will you gain, if you own the whole world but destroy yourself? What would you give to get back your soul?

The Son of Man will soon come in the glory of his Father and with his angels to reward all people for what they have done. I promise you that some of those standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

- 1 What can you let go of as a follower of Christ's cross?
- 2 What does suffering for the sake of Christ mean for us as a church?

HYMN of the DAY: # 810 "O Jesus, I Have Promised"

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
remain forever near me, my master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.**
- 2 Oh, let me feel you near me; the world is ever near.
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer to shield my soul from sin.**
- 3 Oh, let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.
Now speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
now speak and make me listen, O Guardian of my soul.**
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
oh, give me grace to follow, my master and my friend.**

Text: John E. Bode, 1816-1874, alt.

MESSAGE: Good & Evil

Would you consider it lying if we try to use reverse psychology on our kids? How often do we need them to behave in a positive, helpful manner, so that we might trot out some trickery? Could we be accused of manipulation? It's a slippery slope if we were to justify it by saying that it's for their own good. A parent learns how punishment & reward *may* work, shakily at times, to get them to behave. When **you** were a child, couldn't you see thru the attempt to withhold TV or video games as a method they wouldn't stick to? In the bid to trick you, were they going to let you play with matches or run away or use the car by yourself at night? Eventually someone will call the other's bluff, & kids are craftier & more patient than we give them credit –we were!

In this 2nd half of chapter 12, Paul continues to put forward positive, helpful behaviors that 'walking in newness of life' will bring about in a believer. We have read thru these exhortations so often we might take for granted how counter they are to how things get done in some aspects of today's lifestyle. To see how some things look to be the right way to go, while some set us apart as Christians, let's play the opposite game; I'll say something to the reverse of these commended actions & see what we find. Today I wanted to use the Contemporary English to make it clear what we are to do, or not!

Paul did not write: *Be insincere in your love for others—let them think you really care about them. Don't hate what is evil and don't worry about having to do good—you may not get what you want. Loving others is weak; put your own honor 1st. If you have to give up, blame someone else. Follow your gut & serve your own interests. Don't give up hope, but keep looking for an advantage. Don't be patient if you can get ahead when all is chaos; never stop working to gain a profit. Take care of others only as it helps you gain favor; welcome friends when they can offer you something in return.*

Curse anyone who mistreats you. Don't let others' feelings affect you. Be on guard with everyone. Take pride in your power and believe that you are smarter than others—because you are. Make friends with people who can help you climb the ladder of success. Mistreat anyone who mistreats you. Earn the respect of others thru fear, & use conflict to your advantage. Try to get even at just the opportune moment; for sometimes patience works. Don't ever let evil defeat you, & do whatever it takes to get the goods.

So I could have just changed some things to their opposite & it would have sounded ridiculous. But this game I played sounds like it might just be the playbook for the rich & powerful of our world, who follow the rules of self-regard over any concern for the community that we share. If we were to

ask, as Jesus does in the gospel, what do you gain if you own the world but lose your soul? –I'd guess that some, maybe many, will happily say that having it all is great! Wealth makes power & power can make more wealth.

We are divided, within our nation & all around our world. It may have been better in times past, but not by much. Today's readings both look squarely at good vs evil, & life vs death. These are supernatural, spiritual forces that make for a cosmic drama that would propel many a summer tentpole movie. But we live in a world of more down-to-earth conflicts of class, race, gender, religious creeds & political doctrines. Where will our healing come from? We know the church has a place in helping humanity deal with its brokenness, & some voices I've heard lately are making the case for the power of godly love found in the Jewish & Christian scriptures. Love is real, & Paul says love must be real for the sake of our call to serve the Lord. When Paul says **hate** what is evil, its definition is not of an emotion, but of the way to disassociate oneself from evil. As children we were taught to stay away from bullies, & we can't be spiritually healthy if we don't distance ourselves from those sinful actions & selfish people that drag us down. Paul makes it clear (& this is the NRSV), "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." To which I would add, don't associate with the proud & the greedy.

In the book of Acts, early Christians became known as the followers of 'the Way.' We are disciples, & we have a discipline in which to live. The book of Proverbs tells us, in many different ways, to teach one's children in the way that they should go, & they will not stray when testing comes. We can find many of these encouragements –*rules & truths*– to be self-evident in how a community would be able to come together in peace & harmony. But in the power structure of Rome, some things Christ-followers did went against the grain of the self-interest & system of patronage & benefits that made that society click. Honor was 1 thing that believers & the Greco-Roman society could agree on, but many other beliefs & actions seemed self-defeating in the world they lived in. Just the call to take up one's cross to follow Jesus is plainly absurd to those who wield the power to execute a religious zealot.

Thinking about doing the opposite, Paul offers this strange counsel from Proverbs 25: "If your enemies are hungry, give them something to eat. And if they are thirsty give them something to drink. This will be the same as piling burning coals on their heads." I don't really want their hair to catch on fire, just change their minds & their ways. This is some of the biblical advice

that the nonviolent resistance movement took to heart for heroes like ML King, Gandhi, John Lewis, & today's racial justice activists, including, this week, NBA players. We don't want to see any more violence in our streets, & I strongly deplore those who have taken advantage of the chaos to destroy our cities. Neither do we want to see videos of another arrest of black men that ends in a shooting. We cannot deny that something is fundamentally wrong in our society, that we are lying to ourselves about all being equal.

What I've read & heard about this question of injustice for people of color is that we have to have some very uncomfortable conversations. Preaching by itself will not resolve our debate, & much that we cling to has to be let go of before we can listen without bias to those voices we only see on a screen. I don't know if all of us here have a heart to try, because the call to change has been sounding a long time. For proof, there's a documentary film that was recommended which I thought both powerful & sad: [A Time for Burning](#).

Here's its summary: In the mid-1960s, 1200 White people attend Augustana Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska. Nearby, [& this is their word] Negro Lutherans worship at Hope Lutheran Church. Rev. Bill Youngdahl, Augustana's pastor, proposes that ten couples visit ten Negro families from Hope. It's a controversial idea; within weeks, Youngdahl resigns. The camera observes: Augustana parishioners discuss the idea, the social ministry committee meets with Hope leaders, and Hope youth talk about race and religion. Ernie Chambers, a Negro barber, predicts Youngdahl's failure, and Chambers' implacable questions help lead Ray Christensen, an Augustana social ministry member, to a conversion.

It's true that this story goes back, but it hasn't been 50 years, or when we fought a civil war, or brought slaves here & pushed out the native peoples. **The** story that the Hebrew Bible centers on is the redemption of a people enslaved by the powerful. The *Messiah* who carried his cross broke the wall between all of us who have feared & hated the **other**. Last week, we heard that we're all one body. We must believe that only God can truly make that happen, & it may only come when the trumpet sounds & we see God face to face. Until then, we will fight against the powers that divide us. & we've been told how: Don't let evil defeat you, but defeat evil with good.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE [*please phone/email your requests by Wednesday*]
Prayer requests will start fresh on the first Sunday of each month.

A: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

God of faithfulness, you bid your people to follow Jesus. Set the mind of your church on divine things. Grant us trust in you, that we lose our lives for the sake of Christ and thereby discover joy in life through him. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of wonder, the earth is yours and all that is in it. Heal your creation and give us eyes to see the world as you do. As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with all creation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all nations, you call us to live peaceably with all. Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies. Fill all leaders with mercy and understanding, that they advocate and genuinely care for those who are poor and most vulnerable in their communities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of salvation, you promise to deliver us. Give those who suffer a strong sense of your presence and love. Accompany those who are uncertain, raise the spirits of those who are despairing, and heal the sick. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of community, you call us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. Make our congregation a workshop of your love. When we quarrel, bring reconciliation. Help us overcome evil with good. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

P: We pray especially for Tonya, the Mastroianni family, Steve, Irene, Caroline, Allan, Jessie, Beth, Stephine, Tom & Doodie, Bill & Nancy, Nita, John & Ann, Nancy, Chris, Dave, Patrick & Doris, Andy, Joe, Duane, Lois, Bob, ... Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Other intercessions may be offered here.

God of all grace, you give us everlasting life. In love we recall your holy ones who now live in your undying light. In our remembering, give us a foretaste of the feast to come. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

APOSTLES CREED

Together let us confess our baptismal faith.

**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

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give you thanks that you guide our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your resurrection feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER *From Romans 8*

'When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,' and so we are bold to pray:

**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**

BLESSING *From Romans 8*

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless us and keep us in eternal love. **Amen**

SENDING into MISSION

Live in peace. Christ is with you.

We will Learn God's Truth.

We will Share the Spirit's Healing.

We will Follow the Way of Jesus. Amen

PEACE

The peace of Christ is always with you. **And also with you.**

*Please share words & gestures of peace with those near you,
or in the comments of our FB page*

At the time of this writing, please keep the following in your prayers:
ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Synod Bishop Bill Gohl, those hospitalized or at home recuperating, and our homebound members.

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*Today's Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God*

In Loving Memory of our father, James H. Fry,  
for his August 29<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by his daughters,  
Carol Beecher and Karen McCormick.

For the Glory of God.

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Today's Bulletins are Given to the Glory of God

In Honor of my granddaughter, Greta Anne Hall,
for her 4th birthday, August 19th.
Given by her grandfather, Steve Rosellini.

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Attendance for August 23, 2020: 29

## ***Learning, Serving, & Fellowship Opportunities***

**Gardening Help:** If you can spare an hour or two (during the cooler times of the day), our gardens are in desperate need of weeding. No need to call, just show up when you can.

**Connecting Faith & Justice – Critical Conversations:** CLAIM is sponsoring conversations to help us move forward in understanding and implementing change within ourselves. Each month, we will read a book and then gather to discuss what we have learned and share ideas on how to "make the change." You can get your book in either electronic or hard copy through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Kindle (or any vendor you prefer). The 2 remaining selections are: "How to Be An Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi on Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> and "Dear Church" by Lenny Duncan on Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. RSVP to [claimbaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:claimbaltimore@gmail.com) so we can provide discussion materials and Zoom links. Zoom meetings are from 7-8:15 pm.

**Baltimore Cancer Support Group's 7th Annual Car Show:** Sunday, October 4th from 10-2:30 pm. at the Joppatowne Shopping Center at the corner of Route 40/Pulaski Hwy. & Joppa Farm Rd. Raffles, prizes, and concessions!

**Part-time Positions Available:** Lutheran Mission Society's Compassion Place is in need of a part-time Community Ministry Director. Applicants should call 410-636-0123 or email [dmaack@compassionplace.org](mailto:dmaack@compassionplace.org). They are also in need of a part-time Staff Position. Applicants should call 410-269-5016 or email [asheet1@aol.com](mailto:asheet1@aol.com).

**Flower Sponsorship Needed:** 8/30, and September 6/13/27 for the 10:15 service, call Nancy Barnes (410-592-3922).

**Bulletin Sponsorship Needed:** 9/27, call Anne Seeger (410-821-6161).

**Request from The Village at Rockville:** The Village is requesting in kind donations of used iPods and other items purchased from their Amazon Wish list that will be used in their memory care neighborhood. You can contact Alice Benson at 301-354-8422 with any questions.

**We are branching out on social media!** You can connect with us on Instagram and Twitter (search for [stpeterselcafullerton](#)) and on YouTube (search for [St. Peter's Lutheran Church Fullerton](#)).

**Amazon Smile:** When you shop on Amazon, please consider supporting St. Peter's Elementary School by using Amazon Smile. A portion of every purchase goes back to St. Peter's. To use Amazon Smile, please type in the following and sign in with your Amazon user name and password:  
[smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0796248](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0796248).

**Internet Search:** Help St. Peter's church and school reach the top of the search engine results by typing our web address ([www.st-peterslutheran.com](http://www.st-peterslutheran.com)) directly into the search line/box (not the browser bar) on all of your devices!  
**Help St. Peter's Food Center** by opening a new regular deposit account at Eastern Savings Bank (Fullerton location only). When you do, the Food Center receives \$5! Visit the Fullerton branch at 4113 Wholesale Club Drive, Suite 130, or go online to [EasternSavingsBank.com](http://EasternSavingsBank.com). **By appointment only.**

**Need a floral arrangement** for an upcoming holiday event or special celebration? Consider using our Sunday bouquet florist, Drayer's Florist! Call them for pricing and design information at 410-335-6286.



## Supply Wish List

St. Peter's will be opening its doors on September 8, 2020 and we need your help. Our budget is extremely tight this year due to the decreased enrollment mandates which insure social distancing.

If you are able to donate an item from our list, we would greatly appreciate it. Items may be dropped off at St. Peter's beginning August 24th and anytime after in the school or church office.

~ Batteries in AAA, AA, & C Sizes

~ Clorox Wipes

~ Hand Sanitizer Pumps

~ Reams of White Copy Paper

Thank you so much for your generosity!

