

St. Peter's Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share the Spirit's Healing,
Follow the Way of Jesus.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost– September 13, 2020

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In Romans, 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.

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

GATHERING

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

We make the sign of the cross, which was marked on us at baptism.

We bless the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems,
and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen**

We confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. You may remain seated, or kneel as you are able. *Silence is kept for reflection.*
Faithful God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Leader and Savior. Amen**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we will live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. Amen

GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY *From Philippians 1 & 4*

To all the saints in Christ Jesus, Grace and peace are yours
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with your spirit.

Please join me in prayer. *A brief silence.* 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.**

HEARING GOD'S STORY

READING: Romans 14:1-23

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

Paul writes: Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 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. Who are you to pass judgment on servants 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.

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. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 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. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

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. For it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval.

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat; it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble. The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before

God. Blessed are those who have no reason to condemn themselves because of what they approve. But those who have doubts are condemned if they eat, because they do not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

This reading ends here.

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35 Contemporary English Version

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

P: This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Matthew in the 18th chapter.

Peter came up to the Lord and asked, "How many times should I forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?"

Jesus answered: Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!

This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like:

One day a king decided to call in his officials and ask them to give an account of what they owed him. As he was doing this, one official was brought in who owed him fifty million silver coins. But he didn't have any money to pay what he owed. The king ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all he owned, in order to pay the debt.

The official got down on his knees and began begging, "Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!" The king felt sorry for him and let him go free. He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money.

As the official was leaving, he happened to meet another official, who owed him a hundred silver coins. So he grabbed the man by the throat. He started choking him and said, "Pay me what you owe!"

The man got down on his knees and began begging, "Have pity on me, and I will pay you back." But the first official refused to have pity. Instead, he went and had the other official put in jail until he could pay what he owed.

When some other officials found out what had happened, they felt sorry for the man who had been put in jail. Then they told the king what had happened. The king called the first official back in and said, "You're an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?" The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed.

That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart.

This is the Good News of Christ's victory.

HYMN of the DAY: "Blest Be the Tie that Binds"

- 1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.
- 2 Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
- 3 We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.
- 4 From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740-1817, alt.

MESSAGE: JUDGEMENT

Friends I can't let this last line of the parable stand without addressing its seeming harshness. "That is how my Father in heaven will treat you [*have you tortured?*], if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart."

1. Is there anyone who has **never** failed to forgive another? In Romans 3 it states that we all fall to sin – no one can obey God's ways perfectly, & that includes forgiving. 2. Jesus has paid our account so that we're free of our debt to the law. Jesus has forgiven us, not 77 times, or 70 X 7, but once for all, thru the cross. The punishment for sin & our lack of mercy is gone. OK?

I think it's sad that we've come to a point in our society where most debates we have about a social or political issue leave little room for compromise. & I **don't** want to have a political debate here & now, since we tend to put up barriers that don't allow for mutual understanding. Even saying, 'we'll have to agree to disagree' doesn't satisfy the opposing factions that try to grab the headlines. If we're always tagging *winners* & *losers*, we're in for trouble; there is little room for any undecideds in this season of decision-making.

I also think that it's very important to have convictions; the various issues & concerns that people believe in are evident to those who are looking around at where we are. In our society's struggles, taking a principled stand can be very costly. Of course this is something the Church knows very well; wars were fought over competing religious beliefs, both within Christianity around Reformation times, & with the Ottoman Turks & Islamic Arabs during the many Crusades. Heresies were violently stamped out; Luther was lucky to have escaped martyrdom when he would not compromise his belief. Today's thought in our own Lutheran church allows for many issues of conscience. If

we think the issue of women's ordination is settled, don't you think there might still be some quiet voices saying: *but then you made them bishops!* But our debates have become hotter, more controversial, & thus more likely to divide us – sadly, some folks are only happy when they are fighting.

Paul talks about 2 items of faith practice that don't have to be divisive, & these can serve as examples of how we can think of issues today where 1 side doesn't have to label the other as wrong. Essentially, it is okay to have differing beliefs & practices—look how many denominations we have & we don't have to go to war with them to prove we're right. We make judgments about certain things for ourselves, & Paul states, "Let all be fully convinced in their own minds." His 2nd example is fairly straightforward: some believe that holy days are worthy of remembering, while others can say that all days are equal in honor. How we celebrate Christmas & Easter gives strength, hope, & peace to our faith, despite how the world muddies their meaning. These are central stories to Christianity, & yet, the Incarnation of Christ & his Resurrection have an impact on each day we live, because 'we walk in newness of life.' But while this may be a secondary concern, we can see that keeping Sabbath, having a day of worship & rest from work, is a primary teaching of Jesus & the Church—it is an essential way we honor the Lord.

The contention that the early Church of the Bible struggled with about eating meat versus vegetables seems less significant to our ears for all the time that Paul spends on it. Quarrelling about it was hurting the 'weak in faith' –I take that phrase to refer to new believers who knew Jewish dietary laws, or that meat is often sacrificed to idols, & might grow confused about what is important & what isn't. Paul had written to the Corinthians about a similar question & how their choices could be a detriment to other people's faith. In either situation, he offers his opinion, 'the weak will see what you are doing & they may make too much of idols, believing they are wrong in eating what was sacrificed to a false god.' Paul states what he knew of Jesus' proclaiming all foods fit to eat, but offers that while a believer is free to eat anything, another may stumble into sin by our use of Christian freedom. Then, he says, "you are no longer walking in love." Our example matters as a witness.

This example isn't just about food & drink, but doing the right, the faithful thing, having both peace & joy thru living 'according to the Spirit.' Judging other believers has seldom done the Church any good—how often have we been 'a house divided' due to arguments we couldn't resolve thru listening?

Instead we shall resolve "never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another." Paul has walked us thru these arguments over matters of opinion pretty thoroughly, which, as we finish the letter today, is why I wanted us to read the entire chapter. It's been good to keep going thru the whole of Paul's teaching to the Romans, his *last* testament. Looking ahead, there's more in chapter 15 about building each other up, learning from one another how the Spirit works among us, welcoming Jews & Gentiles, & making a witness to the unity & harmony that we claim in Christ. It is that 'mutual upbuilding' which we need in the face of so many evils in our midst. Quarreling over opinions may get the better of us, but the Church will stand or fall on the questions of showing & living in love, & for making peace with all: the weak, the unforgiving, the stubborn & the doubting. We do not live for own sake alone, but we live belonging to God & to others. We are to love God, & we do. We are to love our neighbor, & we do. WE are the Lord's, & it is right & good to join together in Christ's way of peace & power to forgive.

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

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence.*

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth in our elementary school in this new season. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world.

We ask that you help & protect all those in the American West suffering from wildfires. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom in responding to our many crises in our land & throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

P: We especially pray for those with coronavirus and their caregivers, Mitzi, Hollie, Suzette & family, Andy, Stephine, Beth, Bob, Linda, Tonya, ... Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you especially John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, whom we commemorate today. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GIVING THANKS for GOD'S WORD

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. *A brief silence.* 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

Jesus said, "Ask, and you will receive," 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

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen**

SENDING into MISSION

Live in peace. Remember the poor.

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 Honor of Amy Williams for her September 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by her mother, Marcia Darney.

In Honor of my daughter, Sharyn Diepold's  
September 11<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Love, Mom.

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Today's Bulletins are Given to the Glory of God

In Loving Memory of Wilhelmina Weinreich.
Given by the Mills family.

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Attendance for September 6, 2020: 38

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

**Couch for Sale:** We have a much-loved couch in the conference center that is no longer needed for our facility. If you, or someone you know, would like to purchase it for \$20 (or best offer), contact the church office to schedule a pick up.

**Mar-Lu-Ridge 5K Cookie Run:** Our VIRTUAL Cookie Run or 1mile Fun Run is the perfect way to support MLR from the comfort of your own neighborhood. You can walk, jog, or run the 5K anytime in the month of September. Register at <https://form.jotform.com/202193921881053> to receive your race packet then share your photo using #mlrcookierun!

**No Senior Eats Alone Day:** While it would be unsafe to gather in person for the Baltimore County Department of Aging second annual No Senior Eats Alone Day on Thursday, September 17th, BCDA still wants to draw public awareness as to how social isolation can be harmful to older adults physically and mentally. Many County restaurants have joined BCDA by offering specials to those mentioning No Senior Eats Alone Day. To see the latest specials, please visit the County web page at:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/aging/nosenioreatsalone.html>. We are encouraging individuals to outreach to the older adults in their lives that may be feeling isolated to share a meal safely. Whether it is taking them out for a meal that day or delivering a meal to their home, we want older adults to know that someone is thinking about them.

**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.

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Mountain Service Days:** Sept. 22, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17. Join us as we assemble kits and create quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Each session capped at 10 participants so please register at <https://form.jotform.com/202255719670053> to reserve your space. This is a great way to serve our siblings around the globe!

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Walkathon:** September 27: 1-4 pm. This event will be in-person, with plenty of space to spread out and be safe. Walk the 5 mile camp road to raise gifts to support our year-round ministry. A box supper and community worship will wrap up our day.

**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! See attached flier for more information.

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Giving Thanks Auction:** November 16-22. This online event will benefit the year-round ministry of MLR. Our items are handmade by local artisans and community members, plus we have some great MLR packages available too! Mark your calendars to join the fun. The event will end with a live online gathering November 22 to celebrate and give thanks for all of you!

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Advent Family Gathering:** December 6: 1-4 pm. Begin your holiday season with a day of fellowship and crafting! We'll share a meal and a campfire too.

**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:** September 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!*



# Baltimore Cancer Support Group

## 7th ANNUAL CAR SHOW



Held at Joppatowne Plaza, on the corner of Rt 40 Pulaski Highway and Joppa Farm Road

**Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2:30pm**

### CLASSES

- A. Antiques (1920-1949)
  - B. Classics (1950-1970)
  - C. Muscle Cars (1965-1975)
  - D. Future Class (1976-1996)
  - E. Late Model (1997 -2010)
  - F. Recent Model (2011-Present)
  - G. Motorcycles (All Years)
  - H. Street Rods (All Years)
  - I. Trucks (Pre 1978)
  - J. Trucks (1979- Present)
  - K. Jeeps (All Years)
  - L. Imports (Pre 2000)
  - M. Imports (2001- Present)
  - N. Customs (All Years)
- BEST OF SHOW**

**\$15 Entry Donation**  
**Cars and Bikes will be on Black-Top**  
**Registration will be from**  
**10am to 12pm** the day of the event.  
**First 175 receives a dash plaque!!!**  
 Judging will be conducted and  
**Awards presented at 2pm**  
**DJ BY: DANNY**



Food and Concessions by

**TOWNE GRILL & PUB**

**Dine-In • Carry Out • Delivery • Catering**  
**Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner**

1006 Joppa Farm Road (Joppatowne Shopping Plaza) ☎ 410-538-4665

Call Geri Booker with any questions (410) 671-6828/Anita H (410) 960-6294

*Proceeds Benefit Baltimore Cancer Support Group*

<http://baltimorecancersupportgroup.org/>