

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

918 Garfield Avenue, Albert Lea, Minnesota
www.gracealbertlea.org • Facebook.com/GraceAlbertLea

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost**September 20, 2026**

**Denotes to stand if able.*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

***Gathering Hymn:** Gather Us In..... **ELW 532**

***Confession and Forgiveness**

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

A: Amen.

L: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.
Compassionate God,

**A: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others.

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

Renew us to live as your holy people,

following the way of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

L: Hear this good news:

• We have peace with God through ☩ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

A: Amen.

***Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy
Spirit be with you all.

A: And also with you

***Prayer of the Day**

L: Let us pray,

**A: Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants.
Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and
train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

First Reading: Jonah 3:10—4:11

^{3:10} When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶ The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰ Then the Lord said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

L: The word of the Lord

A: Thanks be to God

Psalms 145:1-8

L: ¹ I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.

**A: ² Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.**

L: ³ Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.

**A: ⁴ One generation shall extol your works to another
and shall declare your mighty acts.**

L: ⁵ They will recount the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works I will meditate.

**A: ⁶ They will proclaim the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.**

L: ⁷ They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

**A: ⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Second Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

L: The word of the Lord

A: Thanks be to God

*Gospel Acclamation



L: The Gospel according to Matthew.

A: Glory to you, O Lord!

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

¹ "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

L: The gospel of the Lord!

A: Praise to you, O Christ!

Children's Message: Pastor Shane Koepke

Sermon: Deacon Jessie Camp

***Hymn of the Day:** There's a Wideness in God's Mercy **ELW 588**

Blessing of the Quilts

***Apostles Creed**

A: 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 life everlasting. Amen

***Prayers of Intercession**

Each petition ends with the words:

L: Hear us, O God,
A: Your mercy is great.

***Sharing Peace**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.
A: And also with you.

Offering

***Offertory Song:** We Give Thee but Thine Own (verse 1)..... **ELW 686**

**We give thee but thine own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from thee.**

***Offering Prayer**

L: Let us pray,
A: God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

***Holy Communion**

***The Great Thanksgiving**

L: The Lord be with you.

A: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

A: We lift them to the Lord.

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***Words of Institution**

***Reflection at the Table**

L: The Empire wanted them frightened, divided, and alone.

A: Christ wanted them together at the table.

L: How many fish had they caught? How many weddings had they attended? How many loaves had they multiplied?

A: How many meals had they shared, just like this one?

L: At this table, Christ continues to gather us.

When we come to this meal, we remember. More than that, we are re-membered – joined again to Christ and to one another as the Body of Christ.

A: Every time we practice community and seek connection, we re-member the body of Christ.

L: The promise given in bread and wine is proximate, as near as my blood to yours. And this promise is universal, for everyone and without condition.

A: Forgiveness is uniquely for you and for everyone else, too.

L: It's just a morsel of bread and a sip of wine. Yet in these simple gifts, Christ is fully present, gathering us in and giving us what we need to live.

A: Christ wants us together at the table.

L: Come to remember and be re-membered.

A: Many voices raised to One God, the Living Voice of Creation.

From Living Voice of Creation. Nourishing Vocation Project, Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

***Lord's Prayer**

**A: 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.**

Distribution

Hymns: You Satisfy the Hungry Heart..... **ELW 484**
One Bread, One Body **ELW 496**

*Prayer after Communion

L: Let us pray,

A: Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

*Blessing

L: The God of grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

A: Amen.

Special offering for Homeless Kit Supplies

***Sending Hymn:** Sent Forth by God's Blessing..... **ELW 547**

*Sending

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

A: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

THANK YOU for joining in worship at Grace Lutheran!

Welcome to all members and visitors! May God bless this time of worship with joy and peace. If you're seeking a church home, we invite you to join the Grace family—please speak with the pastor or deacon for more information.

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

WORSHIP LEADERS: Pastor Shane Koepke and Deacon Jessie Camp

MUSIC: Aaron Bartz

SCRIPTURE READER: Stacy Stauss

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: Mary Tufte & Bill Barber

ALTAR FLOWERS given in loving memory of husband Jim and son Dan by Jane Madson
