

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 27, 2026

**Denotes to stand if able.*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

***Gathering Hymn:** God of Grace and God of Glory **ELW 705**

***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: God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to
overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way
of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

L: The word of the Lord

A: Thanks be to God

Psalm 25:1-9

L: ¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

**A: ² O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.**

L: ³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

**A: ⁴ Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.**

L: ⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

**A: ⁶ Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast
love, for they have been from of old.**

L: ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

**A: ⁸ Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

L: ⁹ He leads the humble in what is right
and teaches the humble his way.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

¹If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,

¹⁰so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

L: The word of the Lord

A: Thanks be to God

*Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

L: The Gospel according to Matthew.

A: **Glory to you, O Lord!**

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

²³ When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

L: The gospel of the Lord!

A: Praise to you, O Christ!

Children's Message: Deacon Jessie Camp

Sermon: Pastor Shane Koepke

***Hymn of the Day:** Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service **ELW 712**

***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:** Take My Life, That I May Be (verse 1) **ELW 685**

**Take my life, that I may be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

***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: Taste and See..... **ELW 493**
We Come to the Hungry Feast **ELW 479**

***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.

***Sending Hymn:** Will You Come and Follow Me **ELW 798**

***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: Dale Buendorf

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS: Jack Zoller & Andy Zoller
