

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Sunday, September 7, 2025

13th Sunday after Pentecost

Optional Introduction: Moses speaks to the Israelites, who are about to enter the land promised to their ancestors. In this passage, he lays out the stark choice before them: choose life by loving and obeying the LORD; or choose death by following other gods.

First Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

The word of the Lord.

Psalm: Psalm 1

¹ Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel | of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats | of the
scornful!

² **Their delight is in the law | of the LORD,
and they meditate on God's teaching | day and night. R**

³ They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due
season, with leaves that | do not wither;
everything they | do shall prosper.

⁴ **It is not so | with the wicked;
they are like chaff which the wind | blows away.**

⁵ Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when | judgment comes,
nor the sinner in the council | of the righteous.

⁶ **For the LORD knows the way | of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked shall | be destroyed. R**

Optional Introduction: Onesimus, a new Christian and a man enslaved by Philemon, has helped Paul, who is in prison. Paul writes this letter to his friend Philemon to encourage him to receive Onesimus, upon his return, as a sibling in Christ.

Second Reading: Philemon 1-21

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To our beloved coworker Philemon, ² to our sister Apphia, to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church in your house:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I thank my God always when I mention you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. ⁶ I pray that the partnership of your faith may become effective as you comprehend all the good that we share in Christ. ⁷ I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

⁸ For this reason, though I am more than bold enough in Christ to command you to do the right thing, ⁹ yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰ I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. ¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. ¹³ I wanted to keep him with me so that he might minister to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. ¹⁵ Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for the long term, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹ Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

The word of the Lord.

Please rise for the gospel acclamation

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Sunday, September 14, 2025

14th Sunday after Pentecost

Optional Introduction: While Moses is on Mount Sinai, the people grow restless and make a golden calf to worship. Today's reading shows Moses as the mediator between an angry God and a sinful people. Moses reminds God that the Israelites are God's own people, and boldly asks for mercy for them.

First Reading: Exodus 32:7-14

⁷ The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸ they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' " ⁹ The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰ Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation."

¹¹ But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " ¹⁴ And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

The word of the Lord.

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-10

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your | steadfast love;
in your great compassion blot out | my offenses.

² **Wash me through and through | from my wickedness,
and cleanse me | from my sin.**

³ For I know | my offenses,
and my sin is ev- | er before me.

⁴ **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil | in your
sight;**

**so you are justified when you speak and right | in your
judgment. R**

⁵ Indeed, I was born | steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my | mother's womb.

⁶ **Indeed, you delight in truth | deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom | deep within.**

⁷ Remove my sins with hyssop, and I | shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be pur- | er than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear | joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken | may rejoice.**

⁹ Hide your face | from my sins,
and blot out | all my wickedness.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean | heart, O God,
and renew a right spir- | it within me. R**

Optional Introduction: The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles because they contain advice especially intended for leaders in the church. Here the mercy shown to Paul, who once persecuted the church, is cited as evidence that even the most unworthy may become witnesses to the grace of God.

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

¹² I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Please rise for the gospel acclamation.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Sunday, September 21, 2025

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Optional Introduction: Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.

First Reading: Amos 8:4-7

⁴ Hear this, you who trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
⁵ saying, “When will the new moon be over
so that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath,
so that we may offer wheat for sale?
We will make the ephah smaller and the shekel heavier
and practice deceit with false balances,
⁶ buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”
⁷ The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

The word of the Lord.

Psalm: Psalm 113

¹ Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants | of the LORD;
praise the name | of the LORD.
² **Let the name of the | LORD be blessed,
from this time forth for- | evermore.**
³ From the rising of the sun to its | going down
let the name of the | LORD be praised.
⁴ **The LORD is high a- | bove all nations;
God’s glory a- | bove the heavens. R**
⁵ Who is like the | LORD our God,
who sits en- | throned on high,
⁶ **but stoops | to behold
the heavens | and the earth?**

⁷ The LORD takes up the weak out | of the dust
and lifts up the poor | from the ashes,
⁸ **enthroning them | with the rulers,
with the rulers | of the people.**
⁹ The LORD makes the woman of a | childless house
to be a joyful mother of children. | Hallelujah! **R**

Optional Introduction: The pastoral epistles offer insight into how early Christians understood many practical matters, such as church administration and worship. The church's focused prayer for others is an expression of the single-minded passion God has toward us in Jesus.

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

⁵ For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,

Christ Jesus, himself human,

⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time.⁷ For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

The word of the Lord.

Please rise for the gospel acclamation.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church

Sunday, September 28, 2025

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Optional Introduction: The prophet Amos announces that Israel's great wealth is a cause not for rejoicing but rather sorrow, because God's people have forgotten how to share their wealth with the poor. The wealthy will be the first to go into exile when judgment comes.

First Reading: Amos 6:1a, 4-7

- ^{1a} Woe to those who are at ease in Zion
and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria.
- ⁴ Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory
and lounge on their couches
and eat lambs from the flock
and calves from the stall,
- ⁵ who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp
and like David improvise on instruments of music,
- ⁶ who drink wine from bowls
and anoint themselves with the finest oils
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
- ⁷ Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile,
and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.

The word of the Lord.

Psalm: Psalm 146

¹ Hal- | lelujah!

Praise the LORD, | O my soul!

² **I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;**

I will sing praises to my God while I | have my being.

³ Put not your | trust in rulers,

in mortals in whom there | is no help.

⁴ **When they breathe their last, they re- | turn to earth,**

and in that day | their thoughts perish. R

⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,

whose hope is in the | LORD their God;

⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;**

who keeps promis- | es forever;

⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who
hunger.

The LORD sets the | captive free.

⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those
who | are bowed down;**

the LORD | loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD cares | for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of
the wicked.

¹⁰ **The LORD shall | reign forever,**

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R

Optional Introduction: Timothy is reminded of the confession he made at his baptism and of its implications for daily life. His priorities will be different from those of people who merely want to be rich.

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 6:6-19

⁶ Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment,
⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it, ⁸ but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.

⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

¹¹ But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

¹³ In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴ to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶ It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷ As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

The word of the Lord.

Please rise for the gospel acclamation.