

ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Artwork courtesy of fullofeyes.com

A Christian family who cares for you!

*Welcome to historic Zion Evangelical
Lutheran Church*

2901 N. Highland Ave., Tampa, FL. 33602

www.ZionLutheranTampa.com

813-228-8272 to leave message or for emergency call:

Rev. Kenneth Redmann, Pastor 941-457-7576 (cell)

revredmann@gmail.com

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost September 20, 2026

In Christian Love: A Statement on the Lord's Supper

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church believes, teaches, and confesses that in the Sacrament of the Altar—also known as the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, and Communion—we receive the true body and true blood of Christ given to us under the bread and the wine for the forgiveness of our sins and for the strengthening of our union with Him and with one another. The Lord Jesus Christ invites sinners to His table, sinners who repent of their sins and trust His promises. Christ Himself makes sinners worthy of receiving His good gifts in this Sacrament.

In Christian love, we are compelled to share that Scripture does warn us that it is possible to receive this Sacrament unworthily! So, what does this mean for us? It all comes down to our Lord's own Words when He instituted the Sacrament: **"Take, eat; this is My body,"** and, **"This cup is the new covenant in My blood"** (Matthew 26:26; 1 Corinthians 11:25). The Apostle Paul says that **"anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself"** (see 1 Corinthians 11:27–32). This is especially true when we ignore, redefine, or disbelieve the words of Jesus, which we, as one body, confess to be true.

Therefore, we ask, please, that those who are not yet instructed, who are in doubt, or who hold to a confession different from that of this congregation and of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod first speak with the Pastor.

Even if you discern not to receive the Sacrament, we invite you to approach the altar rail and receive a blessing! Everyone who comes to our Church is a blessing to us, and we wish to bless you in return. Please simply cross your arms over your chest to receive the blessing from the Lord. Thank you, in Christian love.

The Preparation of our hearts and minds:

Disciples Live in Their Vocations by Grace through Faith in Christ

Those who are sent as “*laborers for his vineyard*” (Matt. 20:1) depict the wide diversity of vocations to which the disciples of Christ Jesus are called. Whatever our particular stations in life may be, we are called to live and serve by faith in His promises. Our labors do not merit anything before Him, for He is already generous to one and all without partiality. In mercy, He has chosen to bear “*the burden of the day and the scorching heat*” on our behalf, to make us equal to Himself and to give us what belongs to Him, that is, the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 20:12–15). This way of the Lord is foolishness to the world and foreign to our thoughts, but He draws near, so that “*he may be found*” (Is. 55:6), “*have compassion*” and “*abundantly pardon*” (Is. 55:7). So it is that we are found in Christ Jesus, and He is honored in our bodies, “*whether by life or by death*” (Phil. 1:20), by “*fruitful labor*” (Phil. 1:22) or by suffering. It is by faith in His forgiveness that our works are “*worthy of the gospel*” (Phil. 1:27).

The Preparation and Sharing the Peace

Please Stand

Hymn We’re Together Again (*located on the front inside cover of: This Far By Faith hymnal*)

Sharing the Peace

We joyfully greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, “Peace be with you,” as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22-24; Eph 4:1-3).

Be Seated

(Order of Worship is taken from Lutheran Service Book, Divine Service, Setting 3, pg 184)

Confession and Absolution

555 Salvation unto Us Has Come

sts. 1-2, 5-6



1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come By God's free grace and
 2 What God did in His Law de - mand And none to Him could
 5 Yet as the Law must be ful - filled Or we must die de -
 6 Since Christ has full a - tone-ment made And brought to us sal -



fa - vor; Good works can - not a - vert our doom, They
 ren - der Caused wrath and woe on ev - 'ry hand For
 spair - ing, Christ came and has God's an - ger stilled, Our
 va - tion, Each Chris - tian there - fore may be glad And



help and save us nev - er. Faith looks to Je - sus
 man, the vile of - fend - er. Our flesh has not those
 hu - man na - ture shar - ing. He has for us the
 build on this foun - da - tion. Your grace a - lone, dear



Christ a - lone, Who did for all the
 pure de - sires The spir - it of the
 Law o - beyed And thus the Fa - ther's
 Lord, I plead, Your death is now my



world a - tone; He is our one Re - deem - er.
 Law re - quires, And lost is our con - di - tion.
 ven - geance stayed Which o - ver us im - pend - ed.
 life in - deed, For You have paid my ran - som.

Text: Paul Speratus, 1484-1551; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.
 Tune: Etlich Cristlich liden, 1524, Wittenberg
 Text and tune: Public domain

Please Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

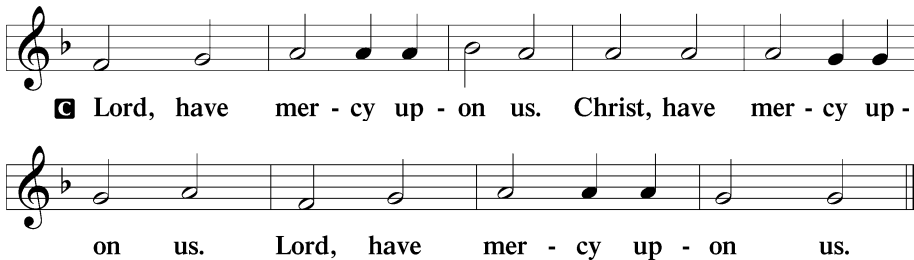
P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Service of the Word

Kyrie

Mark 10:47



C Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -
on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Gloria in Excelsis

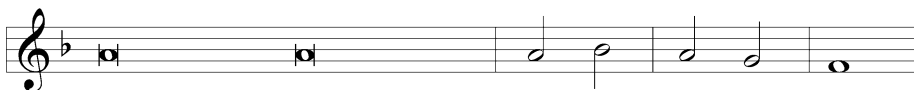
Luke 2:14; John 1:29



Glory be to God on high: and on earth peace, good - will toward



men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,



we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.



O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.



O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;



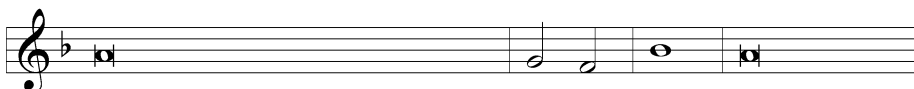
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,



that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up-on us.



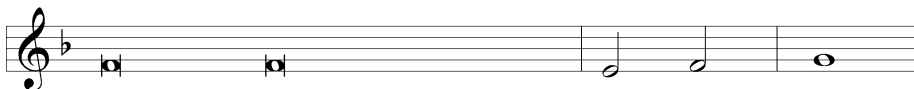
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.



Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up -



on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on - ly art the Lord.



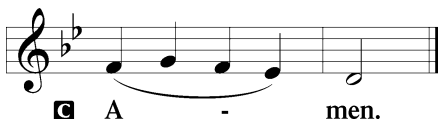
Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,



Salutation and Collect of the Day



P Lord God, heavenly Father, since we cannot stand before You relying on anything we have done, help us trust in Your abiding grace and live according to Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Be Seated

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 55:6–9

“Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

- A** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Philippians 1:12–14, 19–30

¹²I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, ¹³so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. ¹⁴And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. . . .

¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

²⁷Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

- A** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Please Stand

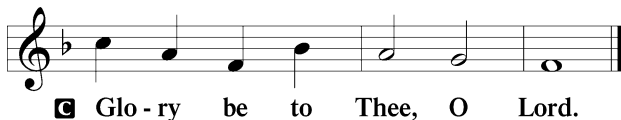
Alleluia



Holy Gospel

Matthew 20:1–16

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twentieth chapter.



¹[Jesus said:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ ⁵So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ ⁸And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ ⁹And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, ¹²saying, ‘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.’ ¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first last.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Apostles' Creed

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✝ everlasting. Amen.**

Be Seated

We invite the children of the congregation to come forward for the Children's Message

827 Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling

sts. 1–3



1 Hark, the voice of Je - sus call - ing, "Who will go and work to - day?
2 Some take up His task in morn - ing, To their Lord re - spond - ing soon;
3 For as rain and snow from heav - en Wa - ter seeds in dust - y soil,



Fields are white and har - vests wait - ing—Who will bear the sheaves a - way?"
Some are called in heat of mid - day, Oth - ers late in af - ter - noon;
Caus - ing them to bud and flow - er, Giv - ing bread to those who toil;



Loud and long the Mas - ter call - eth; Rich re - ward He of - fers thee.
E - ven as the sun is set - ting, Some are sent in - to the fields,
So the Lord sends forth His prom - ise, Words of life and joy and peace—



Who will an - swer, glad - ly say - ing, "Here am I, send me, send me"?
There to gath - er in the boun - ty That God's Word so rich - ly yields.
Nev - er void to Him re - turn - ing, Bear - ing fruit with great in - crease.

Text (st. 1): Daniel March, 1816–1909, alt.; (sts. 2–3): Stephen P. Starke, 1955

Tune: Joseph Barnby, 1838–96

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Sermon

Paul and the Providence of God

Rev. Kenneth Redmann

Please Stand

Offertory

Psalm 51:10–12

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres-ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

Offering

When you come forward for Holy Communion OR to receive a blessing, please place your tithes and gifts in the Offering plate at the front of the left pew.

Prayer of the Church

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

L: Divine Master, Your ways are high above the ways of men. You put the last first, abundantly pardon sinners and make death great gain for Your servants. Enlighten our hearts with this wisdom from Your Word, that we may lead fruitful lives in the midst of a foolish world. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Heavenly Father, keep us all ever mindful that it is only by Your grace we are included in Your kingdom and privileged to serve in it. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Lord God of life and death, whether we live or die, we are Yours. Embolden Your Church, including every dear saint here gathered [], to honor You with our bodies in this life,

that we may also depart this life in faith to be with Christ, which is far better. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Gracious God, bless this nation and all people in their rightful callings. Grant that we may serve our neighbors in love, and that all authorities would exercise their callings with humility and wisdom on behalf of the defenseless. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: O Lord, have mercy on all Your servants who are sick, depressed, lonely, ignored, shut in or in hospice care [*especially* _____]. Guard them and keep their faith strong, that they may know with certainty that to live is Christ and to die is gain. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Merciful Lord, Your Son's body and blood provides us a foretaste of the feast to come. Bless the pastors who serve us these sacred mysteries. Strengthen all who commune today through the forgiveness of sins You bestow. Nourish all who are still being instructed, and bring them soon to Your table. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Hear us, heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136]



P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.



P Lift up your hearts.



C We lift them up un - to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.



C It is meet and right so to do.

P It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,



bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9–13

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C 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.

The Words of Our Lord *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

Pax Domini

John 20:19



P The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



C A - men.

Agnus Dei

John 1:29



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a - way the sin of the

world, have mer-cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that
tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the
world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Be Seated

618 I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table

sts. 1, ref, 2

1 I come, O Sav - ior, to Thy ta - ble, For weak and
2 Thy heart is filled with fer - vent yearn - ing That sin - ners
wea - ry is my soul; Thou, Bread of Life, a -
may sal - va - tion see Who, Lord, to Thee in
lone art a - ble To sat - is - fy and make me whole:
faith are turn - ing; So I, a sin - ner, come to Thee.
Refrain
Lord, may Thy bod - y and Thy blood Be for my soul the high-est good!

Text: Friedrich Christian Heyder, 1677–1754; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, abr.
Tune: Emskirchner Choral-Buch, 1756, Leipzig
Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110000932
Tune: Public domain

Distribution

Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

Amen.

Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

Amen.

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

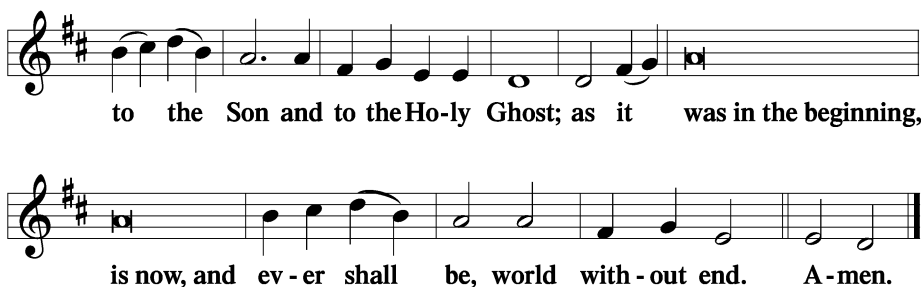
C Amen.

Please Stand

Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29–32

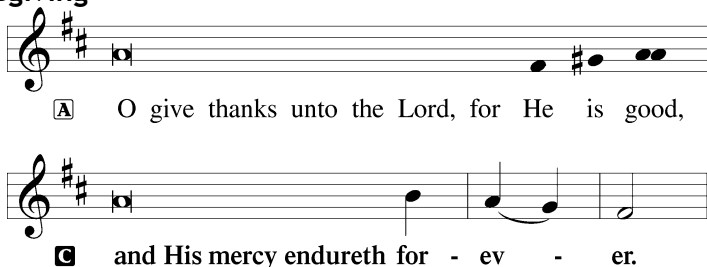
C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac -
cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,
a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy
peo - ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry be to the Father and



to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ev-er shall be, world with-out end. A-men.

Thanksgiving

Psalm 107:1

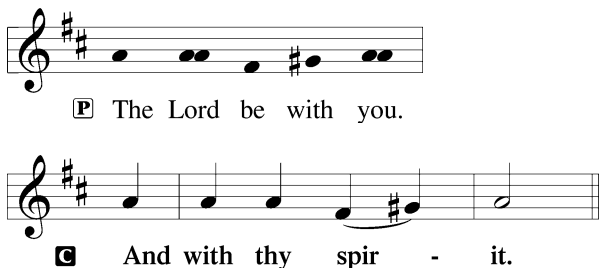


A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
C and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.



P The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spir - it.

Benedicamus

Psalm 103:1



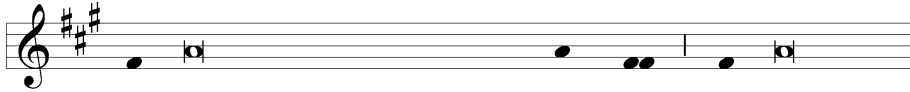
A Bless we the Lord.



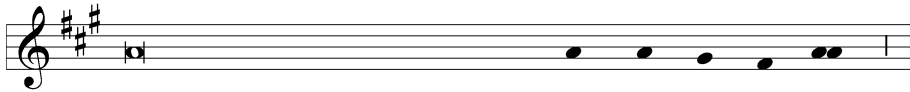
C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

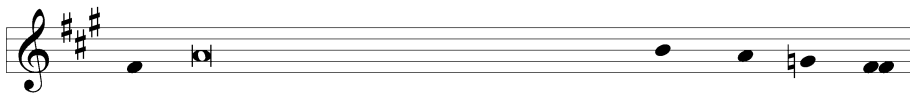
Numbers 6:24-26



P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make



His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.



The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.



C A-men, a-men, a - men.

Be Seated

729 I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus



1 I am trust-ing Thee, Lord Je - sus, Trust - ing on - ly Thee;
 2 I am trust-ing Thee for par - don; At Thy feet I bow,
 3 I am trust-ing Thee for cleans - ing In the crim - son flood;
 4 I am trust-ing Thee to guide me; Thou a - lone shalt lead,



Trust - ing Thee for full sal - va - tion, Great and free.
 For Thy grace and ten - der mer - cy Trust - ing now.
 Trust - ing Thee to make me ho - ly By Thy blood.
 Ev - 'ry day and hour sup - ply - ing All my need.

5 I am trusting Thee for power;
 Thine can never fail.
 Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me
 Must prevail. (next page)

6 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–79
Tune: Henry W. Baker, 1821–77
Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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The Promise of our Lord:

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, (or imagine) according to the power that worketh in us, ²¹ Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen (Eph 3:20-21 KJV).

Thank you!

We are so blessed to have you worship with us!

CALENDAR of MINISTRY EVENTS:

Sept	Sun	20	8:00am Divine Service with Holy Communion 9:15am Bible Study 10:00am We adjourn to serve and love our neighbors
	Mon	21	1:00-6:30pm Office hours*** 7:00pm Bible Study, verse by verse in Matthew with Pastor Redmann
	Thur	24	10:00am Have whiteboard, will be with James and Leona 2-6:30pm Office hours***
	Fri	25	11:00am Have whiteboard, will travel to Homosassa Springs for AIC*

*AIC = Adult Information Class

***Please call or text Pastor to let you in the building

UPCOMING MINISTRY EVENTS:

Sept	Sun	27	8:00am Divine Service with Holy Communion 9:15am Bible Study 10:00am We adjourn to serve and love our neighbors
	Mon	28	1:00-6:30pm Office hours*** 7:00pm Bible Study, verse by verse in Matthew with Pastor Redmann
	Wed	30	FL/GA DISTRICT President's Equip Conference in Orlando, 3 days
Oct	Fri	2	Pastor Redmann will return home from the conference

***Please call or text Pastor to let you in the building

SERVANTS of THE LORD for TODAY:

Organist: Linda Redmann
Altar Guild: Sheryl Herold
Counter: Sarah Brown
Communion Asst.: Don Campbell

Tambourine: Paula Lewis
Greeter/Usher: Don Campbell
Asst. Counter: Paula Lewis

Lutherans for Life

September 20 – Pentecost 17 – Thanks be to God for faithful servants of God who have lifted up the truth of God’s Word in their times. Believers who recognize the difficulties of this life often yearn to be with the Lord as Paul says, “...for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). So, today, we need not fear death or any enemy, but we can rejoice and stand firm in the Holy Spirit, speaking the truth about God’s gifts of life, eternity, and forgiveness. The Lord’s Word makes clear that He wants people everywhere to repent and be cleansed of their sins that they may dwell with Him forever (Psalm 27:4).

The RICHES of our Liturgy • The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

What do the parts of the liturgy mean? This is a frequently asked question; maybe you have asked that question yourself. The following descriptions of worship and the parts of liturgy were first published in an article by the former Commission on Worship for the Reporter Insert entitled “Taking a Tour of Heaven.”

*Worship is like no place else in this world.
But there is one place that it does resemble, and that is heaven*

Nunc Dimittis

Another Lutheran contribution to the church's liturgy is the use of the Nunc Dimittis as the post-communion canticle: “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace.”

At first glance it appears that we're taking the words of Simeon completely out of context. After all, what does his experience have to do with ours?

How can Holy Communion ever compare to Simeon's unique honor of holding the infant Jesus in his arms during the child's first visit to the temple at the tender age of 40 days (Luke 2:25-38)?

Of course, we would love to have been in the temple and shared in the experience with Simeon. For that matter, we would give anything to have been the first — along with the shepherds — to see the infant Jesus, or to have been with the Magi as they offered their gifts to him.

But, as Luther so insightfully taught, we don't find Christ in those places. Through the events of his incarnation, birth, crucifixion, and resurrection our Lord has accomplished our salvation.

But the benefits of his saving work — forgiveness, life, and salvation — are distributed to us through his means of grace, his Word and Sacraments. We can't go back to stand with Simeon in the temple. The good news is that we don't have to.

So when, following our reception of the Lord's Supper, we sing Simeon's ancient song of faith — “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace” — nothing could be more appropriate. Indeed, our eyes have seen his salvation. Better yet, we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8).

So, what could be better than holding the infant Jesus in our arms? How about eating and drinking his body and blood given for the forgiveness of our sins? This truly is heaven on earth, because here we have Jesus and all his benefits.

A Brief History of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Founding & Early History

In 1888, the Lutheran community which would become Zion began as one of six Mission stations served by a single Pastor. In 1889 the first Missionary Pastor to serve Central Florida was called. Under this Missionary Pastor, the first regular Worship Services began in Tampa, attended by 20 adults and 5 children. Services were conducted in the afternoon in a room of the local Methodist Church. Moving several times from rented church rooms to a vacant store, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church was chartered on August 26th, 1893, with a constitution signed by her five male members. Zion celebrated their first infant baptism on October 28th, 1894.

Zion's First Home

On November 18th, 1894, Zion celebrated the dedication of their first home on Marion & Tyler Avenues, a modest, unpainted building constructed from surplus materials. A Christian Day School opening a week later, with 2 pupils. By 1896, school enrollment had increased to 22. Now having a home of their own, Zion began offering evening Services in English, with the first English Confirmation in 1902. English Sunday Morning Services began in 1904, alternating with German every other Sunday.

Zion's Present Home

In 1922, Zion began working toward a new, larger home, dedicating the present building on October 25th, 1925. In 1929, Zion suffered a severe blow when they were forced to re-acquire \$18,000 in debt from the default by the buyer of their former location. It would be 1944, supported by contributions from WWII GI's, before that debt was paid. During WWII, Zion conducted Services at the nearby German POW Camp, even bringing POW's into Zion with special permission for Communion Service and Sunday meals. Zion's present location was finally completed in 1944. The Ascension Window at the rear is a Memorial to all of Zion's former Pastors.

Zion's Legacy & Future

Zion is the "Mother Church" of seven LCMS Congregations in the Greater Tampa Bay area and has always been filled with a spirit of service and evangelism, both within her four walls and to the outside community.

Zion is no stranger to struggle and real adversity. The people of Zion have, with God's help, engaged and overcome real trial in every generation. Zion has proclaimed the Word truly and administered the Sacraments rightly – to every soul within her reach.

During wartime, Depression, civil unrest, countless hurricanes and a pandemic, Zion has always had a passion for true Doctrine, about our common salvation, and contended for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

We, the Faithful Remnant of Zion, are blessed to be the legacy of those faithful souls who persevered and prospered through every trial and hardship and who have now entered their deserved and joyful rest in the loving arms of their Savior. It is our privilege to carry on in their name the Great Commission, to go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that the Lord has commanded. For He is with us always, to the end of the age.

