

Home Service for September 14, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, knows us and seeks us out. Great is our joy as we are found in Christ.

Call to Worship:

Loving God, remind us that we are here because you invite us, seek us, come to us, and embrace us. We are here because as a shepherd seeks a lost sheep, you seek us when we are lost. As a woman searches for a lost coin, you rejoice when we are found. Teach us to give thanks. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

O God of heaven and earth, bless us with your mercy and grace. Enter our hearts and make us holy. Be our Shepherd and guide us in your ways, that we might not wander alone. Hear our cries and gather us to yourself, that we may be one with each other, through the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

God of heaven and earth, be with us in our need. Though we often go astray, we seek your love and mercy. Though we often listen to fools who say, "There is no God," our hearts belong to you. Be our Shepherd and guide our ways, for we are lost and afraid and weary of wandering. We long to be welcomed home in your gracious mercy. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Thank you, King of the ages, for coming to us. Thank you for loving us with utmost patience and for fitting us in your glory. Amen.

Read Psalm 14

The fool^[a] says in his heart,
"There is no God."

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

² The Lord looks down from heaven
on all mankind

to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

³ All have turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

⁴ Do all these evildoers know nothing?
They devour my people as though eating bread;
they never call on the Lord.

⁵ But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
for God is present in the company of the righteous.

⁶ You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,
but the Lord is their refuge.

⁷ Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When the Lord restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Prayers of the People:

Loving God, remind us that we are here because you invite us, seek us, come to us, and embrace us. We are here because as a shepherd seeks a lost sheep, you seek us when we are lost. As a woman searches for a lost coin, you rejoice when we are found. Let us remember we are chosen by You to receive faith so that we may serve You, we are forgiven by Your grace so that we may be righteous in Your sight and we are strengthen by You so that we met the challenges of being Your children. Teach us to give thanks. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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

Read the Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28

At that time this people and Jerusalem will be told, "A scorching wind from the barren heights in the desert blows toward my people, but not to winnow or cleanse; ¹² a wind too strong for that comes from me. Now I pronounce my judgments against them."

²² “My people are fools;
they do not know me.
They are senseless children;
they have no understanding.
They are skilled in doing evil;
they know not how to do good.”

²³ I looked at the earth,
and it was formless and empty;
and at the heavens,
and their light was gone.

²⁴ I looked at the mountains,
and they were quaking;
all the hills were swaying.

²⁵ I looked, and there were no people;
every bird in the sky had flown away.

²⁶ I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert;
all its towns lay in ruins
before the Lord, before his fierce anger.

²⁷ This is what the Lord says:

“The whole land will be ruined,
though I will not destroy it completely.

²⁸ Therefore the earth will mourn
and the heavens above grow dark,
because I have spoken and will not relent,
I have decided and will not turn back.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³ Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive

eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 15:1-10

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins^[a] and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Message

As I was reading the Gospel for today, I was reminded of very special thought that I celebrate every day and that is: When God’s forgives, He also forgets. Oh, how I wish that was true for us when we forgive.

God has the magnificent quality about him that he can forgive the past, and accept a person as he or she is in the present. God is so filled with love, that He does not need to remind us of our old sins, to keep us as his children. It is the power of His love that brings us into his arms. It is the power of his love for us that leads us to eternal salvation. God does not need threats to win us over to his side. It is the power of his love as shown through the death and resurrection of Jesus that changes our lives from ones that are filled with worn out clothes, and coats which are filled with holes because of sin, to lives that are new, refreshed washed clean because of the power of God and his love.

Our gospel lesson, this morning is about the forgiveness of God which changes our lives. It is about living a new life because of the power of God’s love to make changes in our lives.

God is joyful when one sinner returns to the flock, or one sinner who is lost is found. And notice, that the two parables in our Gospel are about God, who is He in these parables? He is the shepherd and he is the woman. God finds the lost!!

God loves us out of the sheer power of His love. Not because of something we have done to earn God's love or to seek God's love. God can and does love and forgive with no conditions attached. The shepherd and the woman looked for the lost coin and sheep. The lost sheep, the lost coin do not come looking for the shepherd or the woman. We are the sheep and the coin.

We usually think of repentance as the condition of forgiveness. We say that God will forgive only when we repent. This lesson turns that around. We are forgiven before we repent, and we repent because we have been forgiven. We are forgiven not because we pay God the price of repentance, but God loves us whether or not we repent. Those who know and accept God's love, respond with repentance. It is the kindness of God that causes us to repent.

Like the shepherd and the woman in our gospel lesson, God has patience and keeps after us, keeps looking for us. And when he finds us, he forgives us and then we repent and turn from our ways with the help and power of Christ in our lives. Notice, we are not changed first, we are found, accepted, then changed. God is the one who does the changing, not us. God acts, we respond!! Oh, how the world longs to hear those three precious words: "ALL IS FORGIVEN."

God has tried to tell us just that in so many ways. He sent his only Son into the world, not to condemn the world but to save it. Jesus came to announce that his Father forgives all his people unconditionally, but we find it's hard to believe, isn't it?

There is always that little nagging voice back there somewhere that questions whether it could really be true. There is that little nagging feeling of unworthiness that causes us to ask, "Why would God forgive me? I have not done enough, I have not prayed enough, I have not made a perfect confession or act of contrition, I have not even really asked for forgiveness with any real measure of sincerity still my dear friends in Christ, each of us is a sinner, who needs to hear those words: "ALL IS FORGIVEN," who desperately wants to know that their Father in heaven forgives them.

Jesus knew exactly what the world needed, and that is why his whole life is one striking demonstration that God's forgiveness abounds, His forgiveness without any stipulations, His forgiveness without any conditions, His forgiveness without any fine print exclusions and His forgiveness without any limited warranties and

forgiveness with no expiration of term. God finds the lost, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost person, and even the lost me!!

And notice one other curious thing in the first parable about the shepherd and sheep. It says: “wouldn’t leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness,” we are all in the wilderness. That means we all have a chance of wandering, of leaving the fold. In a sense, we have the potential to become a lost sinner. God has given us the freedom to wander if we want to. We live most of our lives in the wilderness of this world. And in the wilderness, we just might become the lost sheep. So, God’s forgiveness is for all of us, the lost and the found. And if we are honest with ourselves, we know that from time to time we do so wander, and we do become the lost, because we are not perfect.

The good news is that we are forgiven each time we wander. Each time we sin and God seeks us out, we are forgiven and returned to the fold. We try not to wander, to sin, but we do. But through Christ, our sins are forgiven and covered with the forgiveness of Christ, we are forgiven people. We are people who are lost and then found. We are lost sheep and lost coins, but at the same time, we are found people, found sheep and found coins because we are forgiven in Christ. Amen

Benediction:

My friends, go into the world: knowing that it is God who loves us, Christ who strengthens us, and the Holy Spirit who empowers us for service. Go in peace and joy! Amen.