

Home Service for August 9, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

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

If you find yourself in raging waters, deep waters, do not fear. Look . . . trust . . . your rescue is near.

Call to Worship:

Christ comes for us in sunshine and in the dead of night. Welcome the presence of Christ. We welcome you, O Christ! Blessed be your name! Christ reaches out to us in the stillness of peace and in the rage of the storm. Nothing overwhelms our Savior. Nothing overcomes. Our hope and trust are in you! Blessed be your name!

Opening Prayer:

Liberating God, we seek your journey. With parted waters, set us free. With cloud and fire, guide us. With gushing waters, quench our thirst. With food from heaven, feed us. Draw us out with joy and singing, that we might know your ways. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Lord, please forgive our weakness and our lack of trust in you. We are like the disciples who, in the midst of fears and storms, could only tremble and wonder about the threatening events. Even when Jesus called to the disciples, they shook with fear. But Jesus offered words of encouragement. Impulsive Peter asked Jesus to call him and bid him come out of the boat. Jesus complied and Peter stepped over the edge onto the waves, but fear claimed him again and he began to sink. Many of us can identify with that moment when we let go of our faith and clutch onto our fears. Help us to place our trust totally in you and your call to us. You will guide and lift us to safety; that is the promise you have given to us and we believe it. When our faith slips, scoop us up and bring us peace. Be patient with us, for we are flawed and yet loved by you. Give us strong hearts and willing spirits to be your disciples. AMEN

Words of Assurance:

Keep your focus on Jesus. He is your Savior and your Guide. He will never fail you. Rejoice, dear friends, you are called precious by our Lord. AMEN.

Read Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

² Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

⁴ Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.

⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

⁶ you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

¹⁶ He called down famine on the land
and destroyed all their supplies of food;

¹⁷ and he sent a man before them—
Joseph, sold as a slave.

¹⁸ They bruised his feet with shackles,
his neck was put in irons,

¹⁹ till what he foretold came to pass,
till the word of the Lord proved him true.

²⁰ The king sent and released him,
the ruler of peoples set him free.

²¹ He made him master of his household,
ruler over all he possessed,

²² to instruct his princes as he pleased
and teach his elders wisdom.

⁴⁵ that they might keep his precepts
and observe his laws.

Praise the Lord.^[a]

Prayers of the People:

As the summer days move rapidly toward the busyness of autumn, our attention is drawn forward. We begin to think about all that is coming; children preparing for the new school year; young people off to service, work or college; return to regular work schedules, preparations for retirement. There are so many things looming on our horizons that our focus is placed on them. Be with us, loving God. Remind us to place our focus on Jesus, who calls us to trust in his mercy and care. Keep the needs of others in our hearts and minds; needs for healing, for comfort, for friendship. Help us to reach out to them and offer our gifts and service in your name. We name these dear ones with our voices and in our hearts to you in the earlier moments of silence. As you have loved and healed us, so we ask your healing mercies on these whom we have named. We also ask your guidance and patience with us as we march through the last weeks of summer. Confident in Jesus' love for us, we pray. 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: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

² This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate^[a] robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

¹² Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, ¹³ and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

¹⁴ So he said to him, “Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, ¹⁵ a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶ He replied, “I’m looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?”

¹⁷ “They have moved on from here,” the man answered. “I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’”

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. ¹⁸ But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

¹⁹ “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. ²⁰ “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. ²² “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels^[a] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Romans 10:5-15

Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: “The person who does these things will live by them.”^[a] ⁶ But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’”^[b] (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’”^[c] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,”^[d] that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised

him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”^[e] ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”^[f]

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”^[g]

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

²⁸ “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹ “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Message

Both today’s Gospel and Epistle lessons remind us just how much we totally depend on Jesus for our salvation. No one can save him or herself. We certainly do not deserve eternal life. There is not enough money in all of creation to pay for a single sin. Time and time again the Scripture clearly point to the fact we are saved by grace; God’s grace alone. God’s grace is a gift to and for us so that we do not and cannot boast.

Think about it, we human beings have a knack for making even the simplest things complex. Someone that we meet says “Good morning” to us and we start wondering what they meant by that. A husband buys his wife some flowers and she begins to think that he must have done something wrong unless it is her birthday or their anniversary. So often, we cannot accept the simplest explanation of things. We always suspect that others have devious motivations when they do something nice for us. We tend to think that when someone gives us a gift, it is only because they want something from us. We sometimes even do not enjoy the gift because we worry what it is really going to cost us. We always seem to want make things more complex than they actually are and it just causes problems for us.

We also make our relationship with God way more complex than it needs to be. We have been given a gift, the greatest gift that has ever been given, the greatest gift possible; eternal life in the presence of God. There are no strings attached. It is a gift that is given freely by God to each one of us who will accept it. This is a gift that came with a massive price tag, the suffering and death of the only Son of God, but it is given to us at no cost to us. I think that not to accept this gift is the most foolish thing that anyone can do and yet many people refuse to accept it. They refuse to accept it, because they have made it more complex than it truly is.

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Here is the key to eternal salvation. It is so simple. Believe and confess. That is all there is to it. What could be simpler than that?

How and why do we make this simple truth more complex? We always think that something worthwhile having comes with a cost. Many people think that the greater the cost, the more worthwhile it is to have. How wrong they are, God’s grace, god’s salvation is the greatest gift possible. Paul tells that we do not have to ascend into the heavens or descend into the depths to find Christ. We do not have to go searching all over creation to receive this gift. It is placed right into our hands, all we have to do is take hold of it. Christ comes to us, we do not have to search for Him. But we seem to have to make it harder, more complex, than that because that is part of our nature. We just cannot accept how simple it is. We just cannot believe that it is a free gift. We think there must be strings attached.

The only cost or string attached is that we have to submit to Christ. We have to confess that Jesus is Lord. Because you see, the cost of salvation, of confessing and believing that Jesus is Lord of my life is actually no cost at all. It is simply acknowledging the reality that Jesus is Lord. He is the Lord of all creation, the

ruler of the heavens and the earth. Through Him all things were created and God the Father has declared Him to be Lord of all. To confess with our mouth and believe in our heart that Jesus is Lord is no different than confessing that the sky is blue and the sun is hot. It is simple, not complex. And the simple fact is that Jesus is Lord, whether we confess that He is or not. The simple fact is that all people will bow down before Him and acknowledge that He is Lord when He returns in judgment. The cost to us of salvation is simply recognizing the truth that Jesus is Lord. Believe and confess that Jesus is Lord and you will be saved.

Another way that many people make the simple into the complex is by believing that we have to rely on our own righteousness. Just like the Jews who rejected Jesus because they believed that the path to God is through following God's laws, even today many try to earn their salvation through doing all the things that good Christians are supposed to do. We go to church every Sunday and put our offering in the plate. We love our spouse and care for our children. We help an old lady across the street. All these things are wonderful and great and pleasing to God unless we begin to believe that these things that we do pave our path to heaven. But Paul writes that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We cannot ever be righteous in the eyes of God through our own efforts. But the simple good news is that the path to eternal life has already been paved by Christ. When we try to pave our own path to heaven through good works, we actually pave a path to our own destruction. There is only one path that leads to eternal life and that path has been paved through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. We are to do good works not to earn salvation but simply as a response to God's love for us in Christ. We are love our neighbors as ourselves because God first loved us. Believe and confess that Jesus Christ is the one true path to righteousness before God and you will be saved.

Another way that we make the simplicity of salvation complex is when we believe that we are so unrighteous that we are unable to accept that God could forgive us and declare us to be righteous. We do not believe that we are worthy to receive God's gift of righteousness through Christ. Maybe there is some sin in your past that burdens you. Maybe you have done something that you consider to be so terrible that you believe that there is no way that God could possibly forgive you. But you are wrong for God is full of grace and mercy and desires all people to receive the forgiveness of their sins. He so loved you that He sent His Son to live the sinless life that you are unable to do. And Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for your sins, all of them, even that terrible sin that you think is unforgiveable. Christ suffered and died and rose from the grave to offer you forgiveness of all of your sins. You are forgiven. The beauty of the Gospel message is that we all are unworthy and only when we recognize our unworthiness

to receive this great gift are we deemed worthy to receive it. Repent of your sin and seek the forgiveness that has already been provided. Then allow God to remove your burden of guilt and be free. Believe and confess that Jesus forgives your sins and you will be saved.

We make the message of Christ so complex when it is so simple. Salvation is a free gift that God offers to us through the blood of Christ. It is a simple fact that we only need to accept. We cannot make ourselves worthy of receiving this gift and we can't be too unworthy to be eligible for it. Salvation is what God has done for us simply because of who God is, not because of who we are. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Amen.

Benediction:

*Go from this place with joy, giving thanks to God, proclaiming His goodness, celebrating His love, and worshipping Him with your lives.
For God is faithful to a thousand generations. And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you and among you in the days ahead. Amen.*