

*Sunday, August 20, 2023
12th Sunday after Pentecost*



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The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Sunday, August 20, 2023 ~ 12th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service arr: Rachel Trelstad Porter
Hans Walter-Peterson, guest pianist

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In Isaiah 56:7, we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who looks upon us in compassion, forgives our sin, and heals our lives.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Have mercy, O God,
against you, you alone, we have sinned. In your compassion, cleanse us from our sin and take away our guilt. Create in us a new heart and give us a steadfast spirit. Do not cast us away, but fill us with your Holy Spirit and restore your joy within us. Amen.

As tender as parent to child, so deep is God's compassion for you. As high as heaven is above earth, so vast is God's love for you. As far as east is from west, so far God removes your sin from you, renewing your life through Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God who crowns us with mercy and love.

Blessed be God forever.

GATHERING HYMN	Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing	ELW 886
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GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;
ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.
Ours be the tell - ing of deeds great - ly done;
yours be the glo - ry, O God, yours a - lone.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

READING: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

God's mercy to all, Jew and Gentile

[Paul writes:] ¹I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

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

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

The healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter

[¹⁰[Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand:¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." ¹⁵But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."]

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY There's A Wideness in God's Mercy

ELW 588

APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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 the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

A brief silence.

#1 O God, your Spirit gathers the church. Shepherd those who are newly baptized and newly ordained in the proclamation of the gospel, breathe life into ecumenical and inter-religious endeavors, and support missionaries throughout the globe. God, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

#2 You created the earth and all its inhabitants and declared it good. Clean polluted skies, seas, and soil, provide nourishment to plants and animals, and make us aware of our impact on the environment. God, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

#3 You call leaders to bridge differences and practice generosity. Inspire all in authority to protect people in harm's way, deliver those in bondage, support fair elections, provide care for military personnel and veterans, and show mercy to those for whom they have responsibility. God, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

By the power of your Spirit, you nurture and bring growth. Strengthen the connections we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Dick & Linda, Bryce, Kris, Terri, and Bob & Donna. Bring new life and growth to the ministry of our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. God, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Breathe your abundance into all people.

We pray for those who are grieving, especially the family and friends of:

- Mary Strecker, mother of John Perry, who died on August 11

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Ray M, brother of Rosemarie K, who is home recovering after abdominal surgery
- Vivian J who is recovering from surgery
- George and Nancy F., who are facing health challenges

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

God, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.
If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.*

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

Children of the Heavenly Father

Swedish folk tune
arr. John Ferguson

Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, soprano

OFFERTORY



☐ Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - sing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were



sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.



Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we



of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,



Lord, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. God of goodness and growth,

all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Word and water, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

God, you open wide your hands

And feed all creation with your goodness.

Open us to receive all that you give us –

Your mercy, your grace, your love, your very self. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who

sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

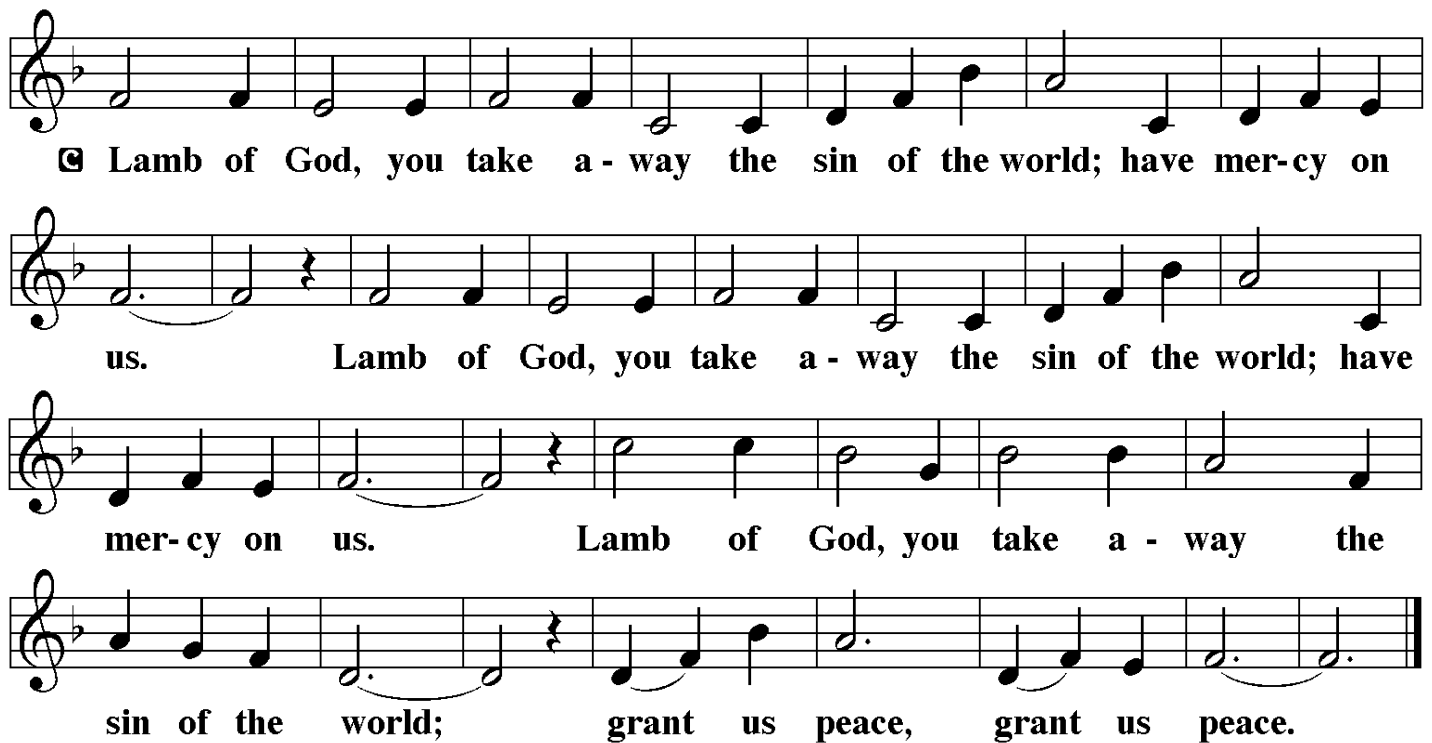
All are called to Christ's table. Come, eat what is good.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



☞ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

Healer of Our Every Ill

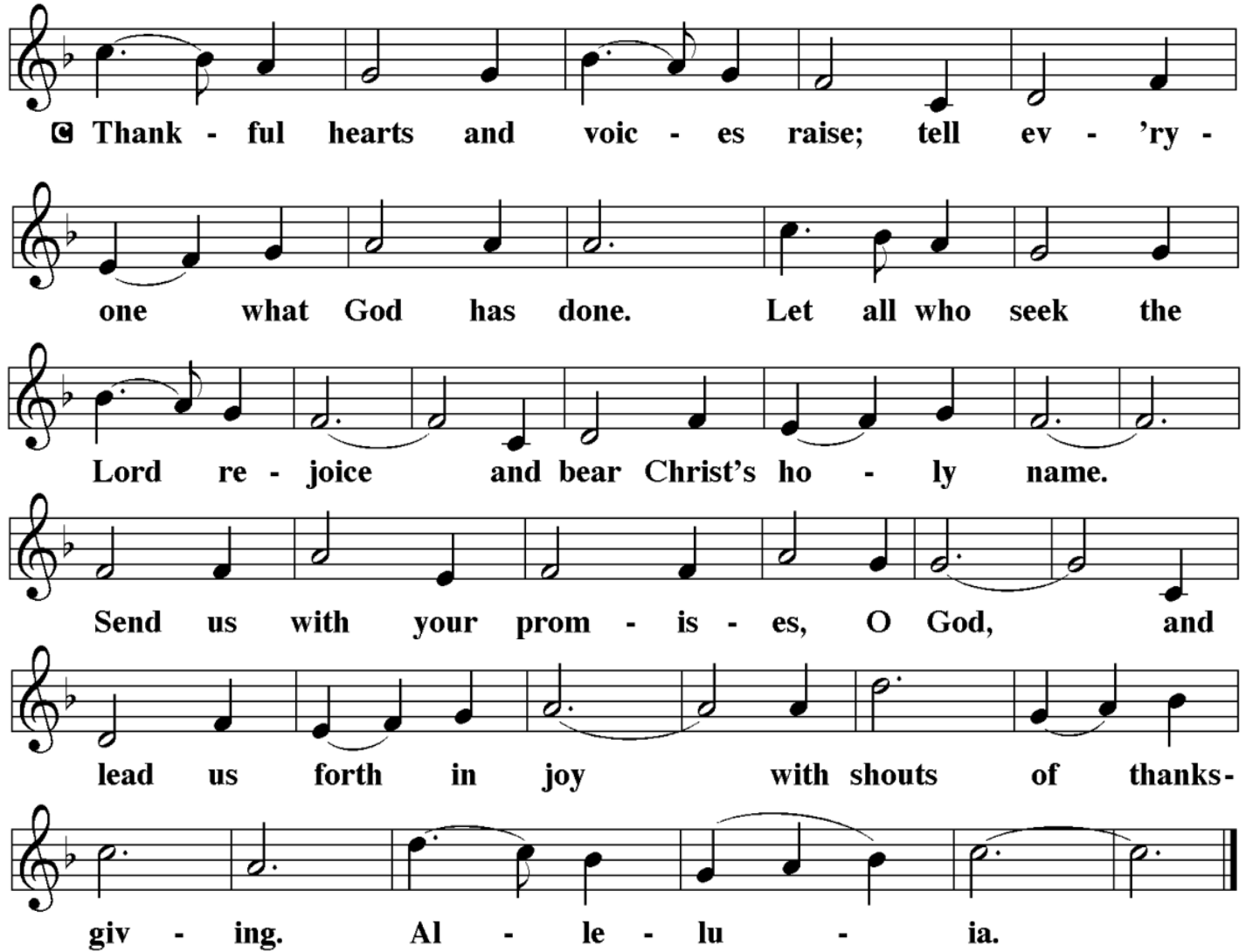
ELW 612

Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

ELW 684

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



☐ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
one what God has done. Let all who seek the
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and
lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks -
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in † Christ Jesus.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	In Christ There Is No East or West	ELW 650
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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Blessed Assurance

arr. Michael Hasell, J. Bert Carlson

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Thank you to Hans Walter-Peterson for serving as our guest musician today while Raelynn is away.

The altar flowers . . . are given by Sue and Tom Dunn in joyful celebration of Nancy and George Feth's *66th Wedding Anniversary*

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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**We'd love to see how
your flowers are growing.**

Tag @blcfairport 

 **Text us
Pictures at
585.364.1554**

**or email at
office@blcfairport.org**

We Are Beggars, This Is True

"We are beggars; this is true," are reported to be Martin Luther's last written words. Christians are "beggars" for God's grace, undeserving but graced nonetheless. A beggar's faith focuses not on what is given or accomplished or believed, but on what is *received*: the healing and sustenance desperately longed for and needed.

In today's gospel, the Canaanite woman is such a "beggar" for Jesus' healing for her daughter. She is denied a place at the table at first, but she will accept even "crumbs" in the faith that Jesus' healing power and love are intended even for her. As a Gentile outsider, she inhabits the margins of Jesus' mission to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus' eventual response to her beggar's faith reveals that the love of God even encompasses the margins.

Marginalized or not, we are *all* beggars before God, as Paul reminds the Romans—all "imprisoned in disobedience" and dependent on God. Thus, our sense of "insider" and "outsider" crumbles in the face of our common need and God's abundant mercy to all. Instead of dividing people between those who have a place at the table and those who get crumbs, we have an opportunity to share hospitality with our fellow beggars.

It can be challenging to see ourselves as beggars. Today the Canaanite woman becomes our model, as she persists with both humility and audacity. As disciples of Jesus and "beggars" for God's grace, we live the same paradox of humility and audacity, boldly coming to Jesus and humbly acknowledging our need. Even though crumbs from God's table would be enough for us, we are offered instead the abundance of Jesus' own self in bread and wine and invited to share this abundance with insider and outsider alike.