

OUR PATH OF WORSHIP

Pentecost 18 – September 28 & October 1, 2023

SERVICE THEME: Our Just God

Liturgy: Setting 2

HYMN 510 ♪ In Christ Alone

- 1 In Christ alone my hope is found; he is my light, my strength, my song;
this cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my all in all; here in the love of Christ I stand.
- 2 In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe;
this gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied;
for ev'ry sin on him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.
- 3 There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
for I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.
- 4 No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

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STAND

M: In the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

C: Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

M: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**C: Almighty and merciful Father,
we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.
We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.
We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.
We have done those things that we should not have done,
and we have not done those things that we should have done.
Have mercy on us, Lord! Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,
according to your promises in Christ Jesus.**

(Silence for meditation and reflection)

M: God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

C: Amen.

M: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

M: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

THE WORD

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray. Mercifully grant, O God, that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, for without your help we are unable to please you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BE SEATED

FIRST READING – Ezekiel 18:1–4,25–32

“The Way of the Lord is Just”

¹The word of the Lord came to me: ²“What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

“ ‘The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

³“As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. ⁴For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child— both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.

²⁵“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die. ²⁷But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. ²⁸Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. ²⁹Yet the Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

³⁰“Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? ³²For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – Philippians 2:1–11

“Be Imitators of Christ”

¹Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

STAND

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Psalm 51:17

M: Alleluia. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise. Alleluia.

GOSPEL – Matthew 21:23–32

“The Just Judge Judges Hearts”

²³Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

²⁴Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

²⁹“ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰“Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹“Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

BE SEATED

♪ Change My Heart Oh God

Change my heart oh God Make it ever true.

Change my heart oh God May I be like You. [Repeat]

You are the Potter, I am the clay

Mold me and make me, this is what I pray

Change my heart oh God Make it ever true.

Change my heart oh God May I be like You.

Refrain: Jesus, oh Jesus, Come and fill Your lamb.

Jesus, oh Jesus, Come and fill Your lamb.

Change my heart oh God Make it ever true.

Change my heart oh God May I be like You.

You are the Potter, I am the clay

Mold me and make me, this is what I pray

Change my heart oh God Make it ever true.

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Refrain: Jesus, oh Jesus, Come and fill Your lamb.

Jesus, oh Jesus, Come and fill Your lamb.

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SERMON TEXT – Matthew 21:23–32 (See the Gospel Lesson)

SERMON THEME – “The Way of Righteousness”

STAND

APOSTLES’ CREED

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

I believe 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 is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty.

From there 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

WELS CONNECTION

OFFERING Please fill out the Friendship Register.

STAND

OFFERING HYMN 750 ♪ We Give Thee But Thine Own

- 1 We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.
- 2 May we thy bounties thus as stewards true receive
and gladly, as thou blessest us, to thee our firstfruits give.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- M: Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.
- C: Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.**
- M: Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.
- C: Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.**
- M: Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.
- C: Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.**
- M: Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.
- C: Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.**

M: Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends.
Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

C: Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.

M: Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind.
Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.

[Special prayers and intercessions may follow]

M: Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

[Silent prayer]

M: Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

C: In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

BE SEATED

♪ Just A Closer Walk with Thee

**1 I am weak and Thou art strong, Jesus keep me from all wrong.
I'll be satisfied as long, As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.**

**Refrain: Just a closer walk with Thee, Grant it Jesus is my plea.
Daily walking close to Thee. Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**2 Through the world of toil and snares, If I falter Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares? None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.**

Refrain

**3 When my feeble life is o'er, Time for me will be no more.
Guide me gently, safely o'er, To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.**

Refrain Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

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STAND

M: Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

C: Amen.

BE SEATED

♪ In the Sweet By In By

1 There's a land that is fairer than day, And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way To prepare us a dwelling place there.

Refrain: In the sweet, by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore;
In the sweet, by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

2 We shall sing on that beautiful shore The melodious songs of the blessed;
And our spirits shall sorrow no more, Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

Refrain

3 To our bountiful Father above, We will offer our tribute of praise
For the glorious gift of His love And the blessings that hallow our days.

Refrain (x2) We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

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Preacher: Sr. Vicar Zachary Meier — Accompanist: Richard & Rebecca Piontek

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