

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, August 23, 2020



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
745 Front Street S., Issaquah, WA 98027
425-392-4169

SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus, We Are Gathered—Patrick Matsikenyiri
Jonathan Shue, Jiyoung Lee, Scott Hafso

WELCOME

Pastor Jim Kruse

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. O God,

C: with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD: GOD SPEAKS TO US IN SCRIPTURE READING, PREACHING AND SONG.

FIRST READING

Romans 12:1-8

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia — Jerry Sinclair

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴And they said, “Some say John the Baptist,

but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.”¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

PM: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

A Well-timed Question

Pastor Jim Kruse

Almost a year ago, in the middle of September, I hastily submitted a picture to the office here at Our Savior after I agreed to serve as your Transition Pastor. It is a casual picture of me sitting quietly with our 11-year old Golden Retriever, Chester. And it has been on our website ever since. The picture was taken in July of last year, shortly before Chester passed away. More than a loving family pet and good friend, Chester and my wife, Arlys, had earned notoriety in their field as a champion therapy dog team.

Together, Chester and Arlys visited schools and nursing homes on a weekly basis. And were occasionally called out to the part of the response to a crisis event. Chester loved this work. And he was very good at it. I do not understand how it works. But it is truly amazing. Children who otherwise are turned in on themselves, shunning the outside world for a number of different reasons, would suddenly open up and engage. And adults who were otherwise traumatized by shocking events in their lives would relax and let their feelings come out in the presence of Chester.

If you watched him carefully when he was working, you can almost see him reading the room, taking in all in, and figuring out who needs a warm wet nose and a furry head in the palm of their hand. He was the embodiment of a loving, gracious presence in their difficult world, and It always appeared to come naturally to him.

As human beings, we are surprised at the unconditional grace by which many dogs will engage humans, mainly because it is so different than what we usually see and expect of the created world. We do, of course, experience many sources of comfort and grace as we go through life. But we experience them against the backdrop of struggle, disappointment, and pain. And we have learned to expect that much of the created order is part of this backdrop. Experience tells us that the world as a whole, and the animals in it, both wild and domestic, cannot be trusted to have our best interest at heart.

So when one does, he stands out, like Chester, and we extol our praise.

The words of confession that Peter speaks in the Gospel reading for today are also surprising words of comfort and grace that are spoken in front of a powerful natural backdrop of life’s struggles, disappointments, and pain. As in last week’s Gospel reading, Jesus and his disciples are still traveling way up north, where Jewish and Gentile life and culture intermingle. But in today’s story they have moved away from coast of the Sea of Galilee and into the lush region of Dan, where water bubbles up from underground springs and collect in pools that eventually feed into the lake.

And they come to a spot, just outside of the ancient city of Caesarea Philippi where the underworld seems to open up to the life above it. At the base of a 50-foot high cliff is a large pool of water that is fed by underground springs. Every so often, as the water rises, it washes back into a cave-like opening in the back of the pool.

As a result of this natural phenomenon, the ancient world claimed this as a sacred site. For hundreds of years, long before Jesus and the disciples got there, this opening in the earth was called, “The Gates of Hades,” because it appeared to be an access point into the mysterious underworld of the gods. It was a place where gifts and sacrifices were offered to the gods and then tossed into the pool. If your sacrifice was washed down into the earth and did not wash back up again, it was supposed that it had been accepted by the gods. But if it did not wash down, or if it washed back up again, it was unworthy and not acceptable.

Standing in front of this symbol for all that is confusing and overpowering about life in this world, Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” And you can hear Peter thinking back to the day when a traveling teacher came walking along the beach and invited him into this new life.

We do not know what Peter first saw in Jesus. Perhaps he thought that Jesus was going to be someone like John the Baptist, who stirred up a movement of repentance that seemed to turn the world around. Or maybe he thought that Jesus would be like Elijah, a prophet who could demonstrate the power of God by winning contests with the prophets of lesser gods. Or maybe Peter thought that Jesus would be like Jeremiah, who marched right into Jerusalem and challenged the authorities with words of condemnation. Whatever he saw in Jesus, it is clear that Peter was excited about the possibilities. He left his fishing nets behind and ties his fortune to this man.

But today’s lesson comes many days after Peter had decided to follow Jesus. Jesus and his disciples are about as far away from Jerusalem as you can get and still be in Jewish territory. Over time, Peter has had a chance to see and hear a lot more from Jesus. Every time that Peter thinks Jesus is really going to let someone have it, like Zacchaeus, the despised tax-collector; or the Pharisees when they invited Jesus into their political circle; or the beggars on the street who cried out shamelessly for a few coins; or when the children danced around Jesus’ feet asking for stories and games – Every time Jesus had the opportunity to show them he was connected to the all wise, all powerful God who would do away with the weak and foolish, Jesus would back down. Instead, Jesus has dinner with the tax-collectors. He parties with the Pharisees. He puts his hands on the sick and dirty beggars. And he plays games with the children.

By the time Jesus asks Peter, “Who do you say that I am?”, Peter is more lost and confused than anything else. And the answer that Peter gives has less to do with who Peter really thinks Jesus is, than it has to do with Peter’s desperate need to believe that his answer is true. To even his own surprise, the former fisherman reaches back to the day when Jesus first called him by name, “Simon Peter, follow me.” And Peter answers as he would have on that day. “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Life has a way of pressing the tough questions, doesn’t it, just when we are the least confident about answering them correctly. We go about our lives and our business before the

insatiable demands of a mysterious, frightening, and powerful force that we do not understand, our own version of “the Gates of Hades.” Stressful relationships, financial uncertainty, the relentless loss of friends and family members so dear to us, and now an endless isolation while we wait for a health crisis to pass. All of these things force us to consider what it is we really believe about God and God’s way of saving us from ourselves. Where do we stand? What is going to get us through? Who is Jesus, really? And how is the God of all things present through his gentle, self-giving ways?

Many people, when they met Chester would ask, “Is he always so calm? Is he always so sweet?” It happens all the time. And the answer, of course, was, “No.” At his core, Chester was still a dog. When he is off of work he still barked and played with his toys, and charged after the rabbits that wandered into the backyard. He still scratched his ears and licked his belly and resisted doing the things he did not want to do, even though he had learned that he had to do them. Chester, for all of his accomplishments, always came home exhausted. Sometimes he would sleep for almost two days straight. As he got older, I sometimes wondered if maybe we were asking too much of him. But he loved it so much.

We forget, don’t we, that grace, like Chester, does not come naturally into our lives. Grace takes work! Peter’s internal struggle with The Gates of Hades has just begun. By next week’s Gospel, Peter’s confident guess will have deteriorated into a strong rebuke of Jesus and his ministry. The work of the Messiah, the Son of the living God, bringing the love of God to the world eventually leads Peter to deny even knowing Jesus at his friend’s trial and crucifixion. And following the resurrection, Peter has to struggle to find the presence of God in this new world and his role in it. He is an old man by the time he has worked out his differences with the apostle Paul and the and the church that Jesus promised finally gets a foothold on this “rock.”

It takes work on our part too, to live into our own desperate confession in the face of the troubles of life. We can take the easy way, give in to the depression, anger, and bitterness. Or we can work to go forward with hope and joy, trusting the there is a new day for us no matter where we are.

“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” This final word to Peter and the disciples is our invitation to participate in the hard work, not just for ourselves but for all people. It is exhausting. It does not come naturally. But it is the way of life in this new Kingdom of Heaven. “And the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

HYMN OF THE DAY *Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God* — Karen Lafferty, b. 1948

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find.
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia.

We do not live by bread alone, but by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, alleluia.

OFFERING

Please take a moment to give thanks to God for all that you have received in life, and remember your generous financial support of the ongoing ministry obligations of OSLC.

OFFERING PRAYER

PM: Merciful God,

As grains of wheat scattered upon the hills
were gathered together to become one bread,
so let your church be gathered together
from the end of the earth into your kingdom,
for yours is the glory through Jesus Christ, now and forever.

C: Amen.

OFFERING SONG

Praise and Thanksgiving

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901-1984; Melody: Gaelic tune

Praise and thanksgiving, God, we would offer
For all things living, you have made good:
Harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard,
Hay from the mown fields, blossom and wood.

Father, providing food for your children,
By Wisdom's guiding teach us to share
One with another, so that, rejoicing with us,
All others may know your care.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

“Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead, it is water used according to God’s command and connected with God’s word. With the word of God. it is a grace-filled water of life and a ‘bath of the new birth in the Holy Spirit.’ It brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it.” -*Luther’s Small Catechism*

AM: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God’s mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.
By water and your word you claim us as daughters and sons,
Making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Adapted from the NW Washington Synod “Weekly Prayer Message” ...

God of life and breath, you are our source of hope.

+ We give thanks for your precious gift of life; embrace us in your love; sustain us when we

are feeling broken or frightened; open our hearts to hear your word and call; strengthen us to seek justice for our neighbors; grant us creativity to joyfully share your Good News.

We give thanks for your creation.

+ Enable us to be educated to be better stewards of your world. We give thanks for our partners at Earth Ministry and Lutherans Restoring Creation.

We pray for our world, nation, and local communities.

+ We lift up people for whom insecurity and violence are the norm. Help us to bring healing and safety to all.

+ God of Mercy, guide us to awareness of our prejudices and empower us to act to eliminate racism in our church and community. O God, help us to behold one another as you behold us. Help us to be more firmly rooted in the practices of the gospel—so that the way we live will make real your beloved community within and among us.

+ We pray for school officials, teachers, staff, and parents discerning the best way forward for education of our students while keeping everyone safe.

+ We pray for all in the wake of natural disasters, including recent tropical storms on the east coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. Grant strength to those affected as they recover and rebuild.

+ We lift up all in our community who provide emergency services: medical workers, firefighters, and police. Grant them strength, endurance, and safety.

We pray for all who are in need of healing and strength:

+ We pray for those who are facing ongoing challenges and health concerns: Scott, Gwynn and Don, Dee, Jeremy, Henrik & Patty, Vern, Mike, communities across the country, Mike, Pattie, Paul, Lyle, Dave, Emily, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie.

+ We continue to pray for those affected by the COVID-19 crisis: grant peace to the families of those who have died from the corona virus; provide healing for those diagnosed; protect and sustain care providers and chaplains; guide work to improve testing and work toward a vaccine; sustain those unable to work and facing financial uncertainty; and help us to be wise when we go out in public and catch up with friends.

+ We pray for our neighbors who are fearful or in danger in their relationships. We lift up the work of those who protect, support, and advocate for people who are experiencing domestic violence.

+ We lift up those experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Empower us to reach out to those who need care and support. For those who are in despair, remember you are loved. You are never beyond God's mercy, grace and love.

We pray for those who are grieving:

+ Loving God, wrap your arms of love and hope around all who are experiencing any kind of loss, disconnection, or brokenness. We lift up the family and friends of Marlene, Nikki, Sheila, Dick, Germaine, Bob, Fran, Joe and Don.

We pray for your church:

+ We give thanks for the leaders and members of ministries of our congregation. Grant them

creativity for their work; give them grace to rest when needed.

+ We pray for the residents, staff, and families of nursing homes and care facilities, including those ministries that are part of our synod: Josephine Caring Community, Foss Home, Columbia Lutheran Home, Norse Home, Bethany of the Northwest, and Hearthstone Community.

+ We pray for congregations in the call process. Grant them wisdom and patience as they discern where it is that you are leading them. We lift up transition teams, call committees, transition pastors, congregation staff and lay leaders, and synod staff.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe.

+ Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Trusting in your mercy and grace, we lift our prayers to you.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

BLESSING

PM: God of all grace,
who has called you to life in Christ,
restore, support, protect, strengthen, and bless you
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING SONG

And So, Through All the Length of Days

Text: Henry W. Baker, b. 1821-1877; Music: Irish tune

And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

POSTLUDE

Hail to the King — David Paxton

Jiyoung Lee

Commemorations for the Week

Bartholomew, Apostle, Monday, August 24

Mentioned as one of Jesus' disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Bartholomew's name is replaced in John's gospel by Nathanael, leading many to believe that the two are different names for the same person. Little is known about his work, though some traditions place him later in India or Armenia.

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, died 430, Friday, August 28

Augustine was one of the greatest theologians of the Western church. A native of North Africa, he recovered from a debauched young adulthood through the influence of his mother, Monica, and Bishop Ambrose of Milan. Besides writing influential theological books, he served as bishop of Hippo, in present-day Algeria.

Moses the Black, monk, martyr, died around 400, Friday, August 28

Converted from life as a thief and a robber to Christianity, Moses was an Ethiopian who became a desert monk at Skete. The change in his heart and life had a profound impact on his native country. He was murdered when Berber bandits attacked his monastery.

Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader:	Pastor Jim Kruse
Assisting Minister:	Connie Fletcher
Song Leaders:	Alice Lewis, Leslie Waltzer, Scott Hafso
Mandolin/Guitar/Percussion:	Jonathan Shue
Videographer:	Elizabeth Waltzer
Banner:	Elaine Stamm
Flowers provided by:	Lucille Hersey
Bulletin Cover:	Craig Gillin

Readings for Next Sunday: Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

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Our Savior Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. James R. Kruse, *Transition Pastor*
Shari Lundberg, *Parish Administrator*
Dr. Jiyoung Lee, *Parish Organist*

Scott Hafso, *Director of Worship & Music*
Kate Gagnon, *Lay Visitation Minister*



Flowers for this service provided by Lucille Hersey.

Additional worship resources:

Readings: Psalm 138; Isaiah 51: 1-6

Suggested Hymn for Listening: *Built On a Rock*

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; Music: Ludvig M. Lindeman, 1812-1887

Prayer is putting our faith into action. We invite you to include these people in your daily prayers. You can make prayer requests via email at office@oslcssaquah.org. All written requests will remain on this list for 4 weeks.

California Wildfires firefighters and those affected. (Marilyn Carlson)

Nancy Anderson comfort and healing. (Cheryl Neeb)

Doyle Watson his caregiver and their families, all positive for COVID 19. (Marilyn Carlson)

Scott safety, health and help. (Karen Hansen)

Gwynn and Don peace. (Karen Hansen)

Delores Bakamus "Dee" strength and healing for pneumonia and heart condition. (Dar Boni)

Jeremy healing broken legs after a motorcycle accident. (brother to Diane Murff)

Henrik & Patty Christopherson comfort and support after experiencing a house fire. (Dianne Tanner)

Vern Lindquist peace and comfort.

Safety and peace for communities being torn apart during these difficult times. (Karen Hansen)

Mike Golick continued recovery and safe travel to an assisted living facility in Anchorage, Alaska. (brother-in-law to Patty Gerde)

Mike special ops military unexpectedly called up. (nephew of Dave and Marilyn Carlson)

Pattie Rutten, peace and strength as she recovers from a broken femur and the loss of her husband. (aunt of Mark Howe)

Paul Salazar continued recovery from a heart attack. (step-father to Cheryl Hauser)

Lyle Bentley successful radiation treatment. (Don Robertson)

Dave Carlson continued strength, healing and comfort following kidney transplant surgery.

Emily Gacek acquired COVID19 from a caregiver, healing and strength. (Connie Fletcher)

Guests of the Community Meals Program safety, health and peace of mind. (Connie Fletcher)

Sonja 3 years old undergoing treatment for cancer. (granddaughter of Henrik & Patty Christopherson)

Nicole DeCamp healing and strength. (Ken DeCamp and Cheryl Leiter)

Josee Jordan peace of mind as she faces health challenges. (Dianne Tanner)

Jeannie Lindquist continued healing and strength.

Healing and peace of mind: Evy Sneva (Karen Hansen), Marian James; Douglas Mandt (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); Gregory (nephew of Joanne Suttmeier); Doug Patur; Katie

Moeller; Margot Inman; Ken Acker (son of Lucy Acker); Marilyn Carlson; Taufik Hidayut (Ken Konigsmark); Don Wilkinson (husband of Gwynn Wilkinson); Rebecca Thomas; Tanisha Foote (Marilyn Carlson); Dorothy Soland; Randi Strom; Jeanne Kuipers; Talton Johnson; John Pass; Florence Kinnune; Carol Harbolt; Sandy Aldworth; Jen Winslow; Larry Pruitt.

Undergoing cancer treatment: Amy Aldworth (daughter-in-law of Sandy Aldworth) Les Carlson (father of Dave Carlson); Harold Mandt (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); Chris Howe (brother of Mark Howe); Peggy Scalise (cousin of Mark Howe); Eileen Letts (cousin of Mark Howe); Keith DeCamp (brother of Ken DeCamp); Barbara Jones (mother of Ron Sordahl); Doug McVety (Helen Nychay); Al Batt (Connie Fletcher); Larry Harbolt (Ray Harbolt); Gerald Welch (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); Joe Martin (father of Stacy Smith); Christy Williams (Bill Bergsma); Diane Powis (Paul Tolo); Dana Mancini (Jan Setterlund); Greg Petersen (Wes Collum); Barry Donker (Joan Parish); Germaine Korum (Lyle and Alice Lewis); Kathryn Aitcheson (Gerrie Hendrickson); Yuko Takiguchi (Teiko Soland); Barb (Janette Singley)

Living with cancer: Liz Kidd (Bob Beck); Duane Jacobson; Mary Lewis (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); Mark Becker (uncle of Paula Seeger); Barbara Krogh Jarvis (sister of Steve Krogh); Suzanne Lewis (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); Mira Bergsma

Mourning the death of loved ones: For peace and comfort during this time of grieving for the family and friends of: Marlene Braun (sister to Cheryl Neeb); Nikki (niece to Doug & Dianne Tanner); Richard "Dick" Birdsall (Dianne Tanner); Germaine Korum (Lyle & Alice Lewis); Bob Gray (Doug & Dianne Tanner); Fran Hildebrand (Karen Hansen); Joe Rutten (uncle of Mark Howe); Don Brannon [former member of OSLC] (Rowan Hinds); Don McWhirter (Rowan Hinds)

Members and friends serving in the military; fire & police departments, & emergency rooms.

Global Missions and Missionaries: For peace in Hong Kong. (Global Missions). Congregations in Chiclayo, Peru: Pepe at Las Brisas, Merci in San Antonio and Harold at Las Lomas. MaaSae Girls Lutheran Secondary School in Tanzania.

