



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church ELCA

CHURCH OFFICE CONTACT:

Church office: 815-845-2061

READINGS for Sunday September 27, 2020.

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel 1–24 record the prophet’s judgments against Jerusalem and Israel. Probably one of the elite who had been deported to Babylon, the sixth-century prophet anticipates the final destruction of Jerusalem, which marked the end of Judah and the puppet king Zedekiah. In chapter 18 the prophet lists many offenses which in his eyes merit the divine punishment exemplified in the kingdom’s defeat. Today’s excerpt opens and closes the chapter by urging individual repentance to avoid what the prophet refers to as “death.” This announcement of personal responsibility contrasts with other parts of Hebrew tradition (for example Exodus 20:5) which indicate that the children do suffer for the sins of their parents.

Philippians 2:1-13

Paul’s call to humility cites what was likely an early Christian hymn. The first three strophes sing of Christ, the second three of God. Grammatically verse 5 might refer to the individual’s imitation of Jesus’ humility or the community’s manifestation of the unity given in Christ. Verses 12 and 13 present the biblical paradox: work out your own salvation; God is working in you.

Matthew 21:23-32

Even at the close of the Sermon on the Mount (7:29), Jesus is said to have preached with authority greater than that of the scribes. In Matthew 21, Jesus has entered Jerusalem in a triumphal procession and has cleansed the temple. This leads narratively to the Jewish religious leaders, who are expected to distinguish true from false prophets, now inquiring about his authority. When Matthew writes, by the year 80, the temple had been destroyed, and the early Christian community is depicted as debating its religious stance with the Jews who were not part of the Christian movement. The fifth section of Matthew (21:1—25:46) includes seven parables. This parable grounds religious authority in following “the will” of God. Recall that both the Lord’s Prayer (6:10) and Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane (26:42) ask that God’s will be done. For Matthew, even disreputable persons might have religious authority, if they follow the will of God as revealed in Christ.

SCRIPTURE VERSE for SEPTEMBER

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
Galatians 3:28

PASTOR JIM’S CONTACT INFORMATION:

His phone number is (563) 599-2096 and his email address is: jamespmehrtretter@gmail.com

PRAYER MINISTRY



- Steven & Jodi Swanson & Family (our missionary family)
- All those who have been affected by Covid-19
- All Essential workers
- Law Enforcement Officers
- Those suffering from racism
- Mary Hesselbacher
- Gail Israel
- Thomas Mosbo
- Dorothy Bohnsack
- Paul & Karron Mills
- Paul Hesselbacher
- Janice McKee (Kay Hesselbacher’s friend)
- Roxann Krull (Paul Mills’ daughter)
- Michael Lorento (Larry & Sue’s neighbor)
- Dean Mysliwicz (Israel niece’s husband)
- Ken Reinert (Israel’s nephew)
- Liam Vogt (Joe & Kirstin Ehrler Vogt son)
- Kate Redfearn (Russ & Brittney’s daughter)
- JoAnn Hesselbacher
- Juliette Schmidt
- Kendall Smith (Hansen’s granddaughter)
- Janice Bradley (Ladora Williams’ daughter)
- Liam Petelle (Edie’s grandson)
- Rich Schelke
- Ali Krug (Jim & Babette’s daughter-in-law)
- Caroline Krug (Jim & Babette’s granddaughter)
- World Leaders & Peace in the World
- Men & Women serving our country

Weekly Giving – September 20, 2020

General Giving	\$1,895.00
Mission Giving	\$160.00
Total	\$2,055.00

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Message & Lessons – September 27, 2020

LINK TO PASTOR'S MESSAGE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8dYoWi-99g>

PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

Our readings for this Sunday come from Ezekiel the 18th chapter verses 1 through 4 and 25-32 and Philippians chapter 2 verses 1-13 and Matthew the 21st chapter verses 23-32. My message will be on the Gospel passage from Matthew 21 verses 23 to 32 and so if you'd like to take a moment and read that, that would be wonderful, and I'll begin with my message.

Today's passage has Jesus teaching in the temple and the leaders of the temple, the elders and the chief priests, they question his authority. They question whether he has the right to be there.

The idea of authority is an important one in our lives. We use authority and our understanding of the authority that different people have to place our trust. Our trust is a very, very important thing and most of us guard it very carefully. We think very, very carefully about who we can trust and who we can't. We make our decisions accordingly.

How do you make your decisions about who is in authority and who you trust?

There are of course, in our world, many people who vie for positions of authority. Sometimes positions of authority are elected. Sometimes they come through careful study and examination, an assurance that the person is capable of doing what they have the authority to do. Sometimes boards examine different professions to give them the authority to make decisions that affect people's lives.

Our faith also is built on trust, and so we need to decide each for ourselves who we believe has authority and what we believe has authority. We, of course, believe that Scripture has authority. We, of course, believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But just like Jesus teaching in the temple and those chief priests and elders, each of us may understand Scripture in a different way or understand the authority of Jesus in a different way.

At some times, that can be troubling. It can give us pause. It can leave us confused. Where should I put my trust? Who really does have the authority to give me the straight answer that I need so that I can put my trust in someone or something that will affect my life?

Not always are there clear-cut answers but I would invite you, first and foremost, to trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to see him as one who has authority. He is the ultimate authority because he is the Son of God. He came down, lived among us, died on the cross and rose again for us. He came for us to trust and to know that He forgives us all of our sins. He has the ultimate authority because He paid the ultimate price for us by giving His life on the cross.

It's interesting in the parables that are included in our reading for today, at the end of those, Jesus clearly wins. The leaders of the temple, the elders and the chief priests, they're left a bit befuddled and Jesus makes an important distinction as well. He reminds them that some of the lowly, some of the lowest people in stature on the earth, are the ones who really understand and who really believe. Might you and I think about authority in our lives? Who do we trust? What do we trust? I hope that you will decide with God's guidance and with God's help that Jesus is the ultimate authority in your life. May He be the one who you look to when important decisions need to be made, the one that you look to when decisions of the utmost importance need to be made.

Might we approach that authority with humility, in prayer, in reflection.

Might we revel in the authority that Jesus has, that we are saved. We can live a new life because of Him and because of His authority which is completely free and given as a gift from God. It is filled with grace and built on unconditional love. There are many competing types of authority that might try to woo us in a different direction here in this world.

Let's keep our focus on the real authority, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

C **Amen.**

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

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Faithful God,

C **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection,

Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

C **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9

¹To | you, O LORD,

I lift | up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths. R**

⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

**⁶Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness, O LORD.

**⁸You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

⁹You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way. **R**

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’” ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’” ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

.A brief silence.

- In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy, **C hear our prayer.**
- Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged, so that all of creation confesses you as Lord. Lord, in your mercy, **C hear our prayer.**
- Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions (*especially*), change our minds and teach us to trust your authority. Lord, in your mercy, **C hear our prayer.**
- Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely. Lord, in your mercy, **C hear our prayer.**
- Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community (*especially*); make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **C hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

- Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death. Lord, in your mercy, **C hear our prayer.**

P All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.
C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit; let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

BLESSING

P Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.
C **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Remember the poor.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Sundays and Seasons v.20200325.1254
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Weekly Announcements

WORSHIP SERVICE UPDATE

You will be receiving a call to see if you would like to schedule your service for Sunday or the week following. You can also contact me (Pastor Jim) at (563) 599-2096. Everyone has been very gracious in this process. If weather affects a service, it will not be rescheduled due to the frequency of services.

Communion: Communion will resume using special factory sealed cups that contain both the wafer and juice. Distribution will be carefully organized. The resumption of communion using these cups, during this unusual time, was considered and supported by the church council. Additional changes that help the congregation adapt to our current circumstances are continually explored by Pastor Jim and the council.

Reminder: Please accept a reminder that masks are required at all our outdoor services if you leave your car. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Pastor Jim

The Zoom ELCA Conference Meeting for Monday, October 5th has been cancelled.

BOOK CLUB

Book Club has discussed to continue with Zoom meetings for a while longer at the new time of 1p.m. Thank you! The book that we have decided on for Oct.27 at 1p.m. is "The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" by Kim Michele Richardson. Please join us next month. Thank you.

PAST COUNCIL MINUTES & FINANCIAL REPORTS

If you would like to receive any past Church Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Reports that didn't get sent out during the shutdown of the church because of the pandemic, please let Pastor Jim or Babette know. We will make sure you receive a copy.

NOISY CHANGE SUNDAY

This Sunday we will be taking our Noisy Change collection to help supply health clinics in third world countries. Please don't forget to bring your change. Thank you for your giving.

PORTALS OF PRAYER

The Portals of Prayer for the fourth quarter of this year are now available. Please ask Pastor Jim for one.

ANNUAL STEAK FRY

The canceling of the Annual Steak Fry is an unfortunate turn of events as there are several very worthwhile food pantries that rely on the proceeds of this event.

In lieu of having an actual steak fry at church, we are promoting a "virtual steak fry". With this we are asking that, if possible, please provide a donation to the church with a designation of "steak fry" or "food pantry". Any donations will be held until early October and at that time the monies will be distributed to the food pantries noted. Once distributed, there will be an article in the weekly newsletter advising of the distributions and amounts.

A sincere thank you for consideration to help those in need during these difficult times we are in.

In Peace, please stay healthy and safe, Your Church Council

GIVING WHILE WE ARE CLOSED

Thank you to all who have been faithfully sending your giving to the church during our shut down. Please consider continuing your weekly offering by mailing it to the church office at 536 E Schapville Rd, Scales Mound, IL 61075, or arranging for online banking.

Please stay safe and healthy, Church Council

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS		ANNIVERSARIES			
John Sershon	10/01	Megan Williams	10/13	Ron & Margie Brown	10/12
Vicki Main	10/02	Jan Davis	10/19	Donald & Joelyn Whitehead	10/14
Troy Meusel	10/08	Cole Anderson	10/20	Rich & Penny Folks	10/17
Joe Heim	10/09	Bryce Hesselbacher	10/20	Brett & Cindy Brown	10/20
Richard Jabeck	10/11	Kyle McGivney	10/20	Curtis & Karen Redfearn	10/20
Noelle Mehlretter	10/11	Knox Wiegard	10/23	Brian & Brooke Brown	10/29
Eden Main	10/12	Staci Leitzinger	10/24	Milan & Gloria Blaho	10/30
Luke Meusel	10/12	Vickie Sershon	10/26		
Sydney Meusel	10/12	Louis Hesselbacher	10/28		
Caroline Krug	10/13	Thomas Winter	10/29		
Janice Radabaugh	10/13	Esther Huizenga	10/31		