



*You are welcome here!*  
**We are disciples of Jesus,  
growing in Faith, Hope, and Love**

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**Worship Times**

Sunday 10:15 am  
Wednesday 7:00 pm



**Pastor**

Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal



*September 17, 2023*  
*16<sup>th</sup> Sunday After*  
*Pentecost*

# Gathering

## ✘ INTRODUCTION

*In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.*

## ✘ CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be God, the one who forms us, † Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

C **Amen.**

P Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Faithful and steadfast God,

C **you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

**Amen.**

P Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

C **Amen.**

## ✘ GATHERING HYMN – Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death (ELW #452)

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## ✘ GREETING

P 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.**

## ✘ NOW THE FEAST AND CELEBRATION – (ELW #167)

*Refrain:* Now the feast and celebration,  
All of creation sings for joy  
To the God of love and life and freedom;  
Praise and glory for evermore!

1. Now is the feast of the lamb once slain,  
Whose blood has freed and united us  
To be one great people of God. *Refrain*
2. Power and riches, wisdom and might,  
All honor and glory to Christ forever. *Refrain*
3. For God has come to dwell with us,  
To make us people of God;  
To make all things new. *Refrain*

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## ✘ PRAYER OF THE DAY

A Let us pray. O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

# Word

## ✘ FIRST LESSON – Genesis 50:15-21

<sup>15</sup>Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers said, “What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?”  
<sup>16</sup>So they approached Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this instruction before he died,  
<sup>17</sup>‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup>Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.  
<sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

✠ **RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 103:8-13**

<sup>8</sup>LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;

<sup>9</sup>**you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.**

<sup>10</sup>You have not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.

<sup>11</sup>**For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.**

<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup>**As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.**

✠ **SECOND LESSON – Romans 14:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. <sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.

<sup>3</sup>Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup>Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

<sup>7</sup>We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." <sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand as you are able for the reading of the Gospel.*

✠ **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION –**

A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya. A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya. El Se - ñor re - su - ci - tó.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Christ is ris - en, ris 'n in - deed.

✠ **GOSPEL – Matthew 18:21-35**

**P** The Holy Gospel, according to Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

**C** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>21</sup>Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him

into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## ✘ **SERMON**

### ✘ **HYMN OF THE DAY – Forgive Our Sins, As We Forgive (ELW #605)**

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### ✘ **APOSTLES’ CREED (ELW p. 105)**

P With the whole Church, let us confess our faith:

C **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.**

### ✘ **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

A We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God,

C **receive our prayer.**

A We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

P Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

**C Amen.**

## ✠ PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

## ✠ OFFERING

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, here and around the world.*

*After the offering is gathered, the gifts are brought forward to the altar.*

*As this happens, please stand as you are able for the offering prayer and meal.*

## ✠ OFFERING PRAYER

A God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**C Amen.**

# Meal

## ✘ GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## ✘ HOLY, HOLY, HOLY - ELW Setting Three (p. 144)



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



## ✠ EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C Amen.

## ✠ LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:


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.**

## ✠ INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.



## ✘ LAMB OF GOD – ELW Setting Three (p. 146)



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.

## ✘ DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

### ✘ COMMUNION HYMN – Amazing Grace (ELW #779)

### ✘ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

C **Amen.**

### ✘ BLESSING

P The God of glory, ✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

## ✘ ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ✘ SENDING HYMN – **When We Are Living (ELW #639)**

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### ✘ DISMISSAL

**P** Go in peace. God is at work in you.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

Children in attendance are welcome to break away during our services with our Sunday School teachers. Those teachers include Cheri Oertel (director), Julie Bothun, Katie Valencia and Phyllis Bell.

If anyone would be interested in volunteering once a month to teach Sunday School during the service, please contact the church office or talk to Cheri Oertel.

## **Monthly Bible Study --Tuesday, September 19 at 10 a.m.**

Our Bible study this fall will explore what "Holy Places" mean not only in the Holy Land of the Bible but for each of us wherever we may be. This month we will consider the complexity and the promise of "home" through stories of Israel's exile, the ministry of Jesus and the promises of Revelation.

Hope to see you **THIS TUESDAY** on the 19th. Bring a friend and your Bible.

## ✠ SERVING TODAY

|                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Presiding Minister:   | The Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal |
| Music Director:       | John Zacharias            |
| Altar:                | Cindy Dolezal             |
| Assisting Minister:   | Cindy Dolezal             |
| Lay Reader:           | Steve Curry               |
| Usher:                | Cindy Dolezal             |
| Videographer:         | Mel Hammer                |
| Communion Cup Holder: | Kyle Bennett              |

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