

First St. John Lutheran Church

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www.firststjohn.com

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jessica Miller, Office Manager



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

September 27, 2026 - 10:30 am

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18th Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism. Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion

(2nd Sunday of the month)

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

NURSERY You are welcome to sit with your child downstairs as needed. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ringin' of the Bell

Opening Hymn "God Is Here!" No. 526

Invocation

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

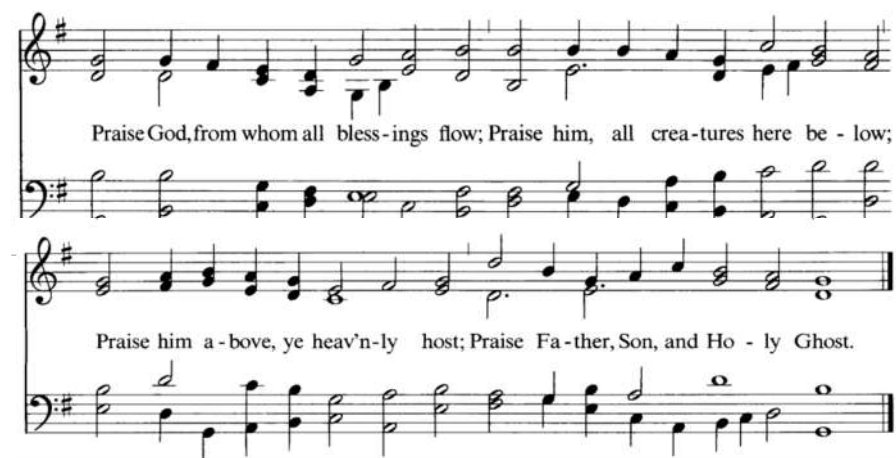
C: And also with you.

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

Passing of the Peace which concludes by singing the Doxology



Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise him, all crea-tures here be - low;

Praise him a - bove, ye heav'n-ly host; Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. 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.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

²⁵ Yet 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? ²⁶ When 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.

²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.

²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet 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?

³⁰ Therefore 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. ³¹ Cast 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? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-9 *(congregation responds in **BOLD**)*

¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² **O my God, in you I trust;**
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.

³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ **Make me to know your ways, O Lord;**
teach me your paths.

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;
 for you I wait all day long.
⁶ **Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,
 for they have been from of old.**
⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
 according to your steadfast love remember me,
 for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!
⁸ **Good and upright is the Lord;
 therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**
⁹ He leads the humble in what is right
 and teaches the humble his way.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, ¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

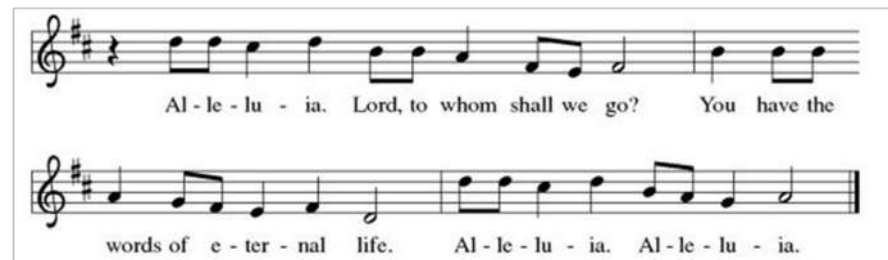
¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Alleluia Verse *(sung in unison)*



Gospel Acclamation

P: The Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 21.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

²³ When [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?” ²⁴ Jesus 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. ²⁵ Did 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?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷ So 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.’” ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. ³¹ Which 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. ³² For 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.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn "O Master, Let Me Walk with You" No. 818

(Please stand)

Apostles' Creed

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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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.

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us, O Lord,

C: your mercy is great.

The Offering

Musical Offertory

"Majesty"

*FSJ Chancel Choir
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director*

Offertory Response – *(sung by the congregation, as the offering plates are brought forward to the Altar).*



Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. 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 ends of the earth into your kingdom, for yours is the glory through Jesus Christ, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

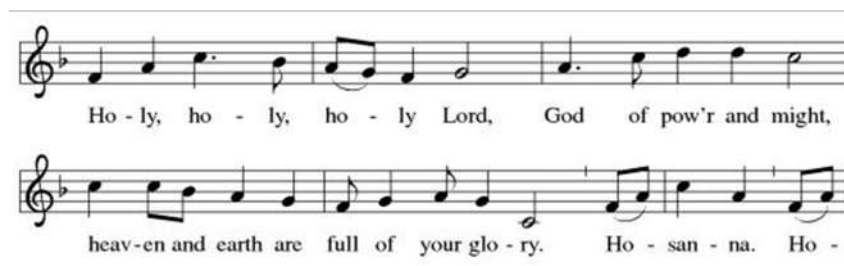
P: Lift up your hearts.

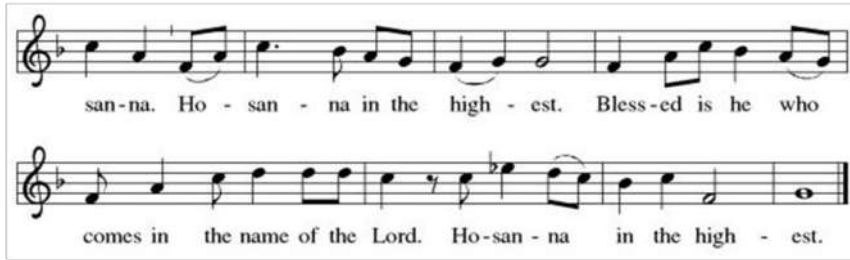
C: We lift them to the Lord.

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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; 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 the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:





P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, 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.

P: 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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

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

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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: The risen Christ invites us to this table.

C: Come, eat and be satisfied.

(Please be seated)

The Communion *(distribution will be continuous)*

All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome

to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."

**** Please be certain to fill our a communion record card then put it in the offering plate or hand it to the usher when directed to go up to receive the bread and wine.*

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Response *(sung in unison)*

Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980
Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
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Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that you welcome us to your table and satisfy our deepest hunger and thirst. By your gifts of word and holy meal, strengthen us to take up the cross as we go about our callings in this world, following after Jesus Christ, our servant Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

P: Like children held in the arms of Jesus, receive the blessing:
The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you
with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and (+)
give you peace.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

"The Lord Now Sends Us Forth"

No. 538

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve your neighbor with joy.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Kevin Ruedy

Bill Nelson

READER

Ross Church

SOUND BOARD

Amy Nelson

September 27, 2026

18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Get Going . . . Now!

In today's gospel Jesus tells a story about two sons. Both are asked by their father to work in the vineyard. One says he will not work but ends up going anyway; the other agrees to the task but never actually goes. Neither one was true to his word, but everyone agrees that the son who first said "no" actually *did* what his father asked.

Perhaps the son who agreed to work meant to do the tasks . . . sometime. He never *said* "no" to his father; he merely *did* "no." The answer he gave with his mouth was not as strong as the answer he gave with the rest of his body. The problem began with his delay. Good intentions melted into postponed commitments, which revealed his real priorities and laid bare his true heart.

Have you put off making good on your commitments? Have you said "yes" with your mouth but ended up saying "no" with the rest of you? Have good intentions melted into procrastination?

The son who said "no" reminds us that second thoughts are not always bad. Sometimes we make up our minds too fast, or we make a promise on impulse. Other times we are too quick to ignore or underestimate an opportunity that could mean life and health for another. Sometimes our hesitation, delay, or inaction harms human relationships. Second thoughts are at the heart of forgiveness. They can reflect the generosity and graciousness of God.

It is not too late. Only stubbornness can keep you out of the vineyard and out of God's new day. There is a gracious invitation being addressed to you this day. It comes with an expectation that those called to service will seize the opportunity to work for what is good. No matter how you have answered in the past, you are invited to respond anew today. Live your "yes." Get going . . . now!