



God's work. Our hands.



September 7, 2025

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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WELCOME

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful God, you free us to love others, but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way. You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace, but we turn away from the abundant life you offer. You surround us with patience, kindness, and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right. In your mercy, forgive us. Do not give up on us. Heal us, break our bonds, and show us the path of life.
Amen.

We belong to Christ Jesus and we are God's children through faith. In the cross of ✠ Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, our sins are forgiven. Clothed with Christ, we are a new creation.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Gather Us In

ELW 532

GREETING

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

KYRIE



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.



- 1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
- 2 That we may live out your im - passioned re - sponse to the
- 3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for
- 4 For your Spir - it to guide; that you cen - ter our lives in the



u - ni - ty of all; for
hun - gry and the poor; that
friends and fam - i - ly; for
wa - ter and the word; that you



this ho - ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,
we may live out truth and jus - tice and grace,
life and for love, for our work and our play,
nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod - y and blood,



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy One, you stretch wide your tent that all may be welcomed in, and in Jesus you stretched out your hands in expansive love for a weary and wounded world. Help us to reach out with your own wounded hands of love, that through us your life may be known in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Moses speaks to the Israelites, who are about to enter the land promised to their ancestors. In this passage, he lays out the stark choice before them: choose life by loving and obeying the Lord; or choose death by following other gods.

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you do not hear but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall certainly perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, ²⁰ loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him, for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 1

read responsively

REFRAIN: *They are like trees planted by streams of water. (Ps. 1:3)*

¹ Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

² **Their delight is in the law of the LORD, and they meditate on God's teaching day and night. R**

³ They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; everything they do shall prosper.

⁴ **It is not so with the wicked; they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**

⁵ Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

⁶ **For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall be destroyed. R**

SECOND READING

Philemon 1-21

Onesimus, a new Christian and a man enslaved by Philemon, has helped Paul, who is in prison. Paul writes this letter to his friend Philemon to encourage him to receive Onesimus, upon his return, as a sibling in Christ.

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To our beloved coworker Philemon, ² to our sister Apphia, to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church in your house:

³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I thank my God always when I mention you in my

prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. ⁶ I pray that the partnership of your faith may become effective as you comprehend all the good that we share in

Christ. ⁷ I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my

brother. ⁸ For this reason, though I am more than bold enough in Christ to command you to do the right thing, ⁹ yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰ I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. ¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. ¹³ I wanted to keep him with me so that he might minister to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴ but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. ¹⁵ Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for the long term, ¹⁶ no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸ If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. ²⁰ Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹ Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Let your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. Alleluia. (Ps. 119:135)

GOSPEL

Luke 14:25-33

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus speaks frankly about the costs of discipleship. Those who follow him should know from the outset that completing the course of discipleship will finally mean renouncing all other allegiances.

²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus], and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

God’s Work, Our Hands

ACS 1000

BLESSING OF HANDS FOR MINISTRY

We are called to proclaim the good news:
God is at work!

This good news is not left in some history long ago or a place far away:
God is at work in the world still today!

In us and through us, God is glorified in our work. When we offer a helping hand, God is praised. When we share of our abundance, God is known in the world.

God is at work in us!

In our service today and in our daily lives, let us live out what God has called us to in baptism.

God is at work through our hands!

Turn to your neighbor and provide a blessing of their hands, making the sign of a cross on the backs of the hands:

God bless your hands and your work, that through you God's love may be known. Amen.

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,
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

Trusting God at work in and among us, we raise our hearts and voices in prayer for the needs of the world.

For your work in the church, we give thanks. Plant and tend relationships among faith communities, both ecumenical and interfaith, that in faithful listening, speech, and action, our hands work to bear fruit for the sake of all in need. God of grace, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in creation, we give thanks. Sustain peoples and places affected by climate change, ecological devastation and natural disasters. Prosper the work of creation-care ministries locally and globally, that with our minds and hearts opened, our hands work to lovingly care for the earth. God of life, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work among the nations, we give thanks. Direct leaders in paths of honest service, that both their words and actions are carried out on behalf of those whom they serve. God of righteousness, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in places of need, we give thanks. Sustain all who are wearied by unemployment or lack of adequate food or housing, that we advocate for relief and just policy. Bring healing to all who are sick through the skillful hands and compassionate hearts of physicians, nurses, therapists and caregivers. (We pray especially for....) God of restoration, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in our neighborhoods, towns and cities, we give thanks. Guide our common life together so that children, youth and adults of all ages flourish. Teach us to listen attentively to our neighbors, that any new endeavors consider those who may be left out or underserved. God of wisdom, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work in this worshiping community, we give thanks. Bless the service project this day and throughout the year. Foster deeper connections among those who serve and a spirit of accompaniment as we work

alongside those in our community. Strengthen our faith, that we trust God moving in and among us. God of love, we pray, **hear us when we call.**

For your work among those who came before us, we give thanks. We remember those who have died and are held forever in your loving hands. Hold us in your presence now and always. God of heaven and earth, **hear us when we call.**

Receive these and all our prayers, gracious God. We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

Thank you for your continued support with your offering. Offering may be placed in the offering plate on the table in the rear of the sanctuary, by mail or our on-line giving.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Come To The Table



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

OFFERING PRAYER

Holy God, giver of all good things, receive the gifts we bring, fruit of the earth and the work of human hands, that they may be used to your purposes for life and love in the world. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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:

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

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Honor, praise, glory and thanksgiving to you, God, our loving Creator.

In the beginning you reached your hands into the earth and formed humanity in your own image. You breathed into us your own breath of love and gave us hearts and hands and voices to live your loving purpose in the world.

Seeing the lonely creature of earth, you created a partner that we would know the joy of community. Throughout the history of your people, you

never abandoned us, but brought us into community with one another and with you, and guided us through your prophets. With endless patience and love, you called to us time and again to return to life with you.

In the fulfillment of all things, you came to us in Jesus, born into a human family, raised in a hometown, who gathered around himself a community formed by your love, and yearned to gather all people under the loving wings of a mother hen.

Sitting at dinner with friends and knowing one among them would break the bonds of love, 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.

In the same way 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 sins. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Trusting in his promise to be among us whenever we gather in his name, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Gathered as your people, meeting in Jesus' name, and preparing ourselves to feast upon Jesus' very body and blood, we plead with all creation:

Come, Lord Jesus.

Send your Spirit upon this meal, the body and blood of Jesus, that we overflow with your selfless love. Turn us to face our neighbors, that by us and through us your love may be known in the world.

Again, we beg:

Come, Holy Spirit.

All honor and praise and glory to you, God of creative, dirty hands,
God of holy, wounded hands, God who strengthens and guides our hands,
now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Come to this meal of mercy.

The assembly may be seated. Communion will be served at the altar rail. Prefilled cups with either wine or grape juice are available.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy Jesus, in this meal you have fed and nourished us to work in your beloved world. Send us now, filled with yourself and strengthened by your Spirit to live your love for others. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

God who sets forth the law of love, Jesus who fulfills the law for you, and the Spirit through whom you are called to love, + bless you this day, that you may be God's hands and heart and voice at work in the world.

Amen.

SENDING SONG The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve ELW 551

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. You are God's hands at work in the world!

Thanks be to God.

Pastor

Rev. Karla S. Leiby

Director of Music

William Jacavage

Greeter

Trish Long

Lector

Julie Shearer

Acolyte

Van Bedisky

Communion Assistant

Brenda and David Herbert

THE ALTAR FLOWERS, BULLETINS and CANDLES are presented in memory of Tom Snyder by Robyn Snyder and family.

This month's Special Pink envelope is designated for the Shikellamy Backpack Food Program. They are currently sending out approximately 380 food backpacks *per week*, and their funds are running low. Please consider making a pink envelope donation.

Thank you to everyone who donated snack items for our God's Work, Our Hands project. Social Ministry will meet Thursday to make up a snack basket for each of our 4 fire departments. Social Ministry will also be providing and delivering lunches to the Northumberland and Point Township Police Departments.

School kit donations need to be brought to the church on or before September 14th.

Youth Game Night: Sunday, September 14, 2025 2-4:00 p.m.

No registration required! Just show up with a game!

Calling all youth! Do you enjoy church but wish there were more kids your own age? Well then we have good news for you! You are invited to the Upper Susquehanna Synod Youth Group's first gathering for the new school year on Sunday, September 14, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at

Christ's Lutheran Church in Lewisburg. The theme is game night, so bring your favorite board game. We will spend some time getting to know each other, playing games, and enjoying some refreshments. All youth grades 6-12 are invited! We hope to see you there! This is a program of Camp Mount Luther and the Upper Susquehanna Synod Youth Initiative.

Seafarer bags available. WELCA is once again sponsoring the Synod's seafarer collection for crew members who will be away from home during the Christmas holiday. Satchels are available on the table in the rear of the sanctuary. Inside you will find a list of items that are needed. Also on the table, there are hat and scarf sets that were generously knitted by the group at Nottingham if you need them to complete your bag. ***Bags are due back to the church no later than October 26th*** in order to get them to Synod for transportation to New York.

Needed – 2 Sunday School teachers for the children's class. This team would teach the second Sunday of each month beginning in October. If you are interested, please see Pastor Karla or call the church office.

Catechism class begins September 21 from 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. On the 4th Sunday of the month beginning September, we will also have our Intergenerational Sunday School Class and Breakfast fellowship worship. **Childrens and Adult Sunday School Classes begin October 5** at 10:15 a.m. following worship service. Everyone is invited to attend.

WELCA will be holding a Basket Raffle at our annual Christmas Bazaar in December. Let us know if you are willing to donate the items for any of the baskets below/have a theme idea of your own, ***or*** would like to donate the money and we'll do the shopping. Money and any donated items need to be at the church by November 2nd. You don't need to wrap anything – we'll take care of that for you! If you have any questions, please contact Karen Smeltz @ 570-490-1558 or Robin Heintzelman @ 570-847-2048. **THEME BASKET IDEAS:** still available are -

- Spa basket – any type of lotion/cream, luffa sponge, candles, aromatherapy, pampering item
- Italian (pasta pot, pastas, sauces, strainer)
- Family Fun Night – assorted board games
- Movie night – popcorn, snacks, movies
- Auto care basket – bucket, cleaners, soap, rags/sponge, air freshener

The Quiet Cash/Noisy Coin collection is designated for Camp Mount Luther. Donations can be placed in the yellow bucket in the rear of the sanctuary.

PRAYERS: Mike Payne; Doug Manning; Sharon Pittiglio; Jen Long; Kathryn Lebo; Teresa Meisinger; Deb Shearer-Shutt; Diane Hoffman; Mary Siemsen; Brenda Drachler; Jayne Burns; Phyllis Lahr

HOMEBOUND Jason Gulden; Helen Snyder; June Diehl; Mary Rogers; Nevin Brungard; Elaine Kohl; Nancy Hendricks; William Wagner; Betty Yerg; Jane Ressler; David Bartholomew; Marti Row

Gather Us In



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing, now is the dark - ness
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the old who
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will take the
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con - fin - ing, not in some heav - en,



van - ished a - way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings
 yearn for your face; we have been sung through-out all of his - t'ry,
 bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,
 light years a - way— here in this place the new light is shin - ing,



brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu - man race.
 call us a - new to be salt for the earth.
 now is the king - dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for - sak - en, gath-er us in, the
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty, gath-er us in, the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas - sion, give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er, gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en,
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low - ly,
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash - ion
 make us your own; gath - er us in, all peo - ples to - geth - er,



we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour - age to en - ter the song.
 lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.
 fire . . of love in our flesh and our bone.

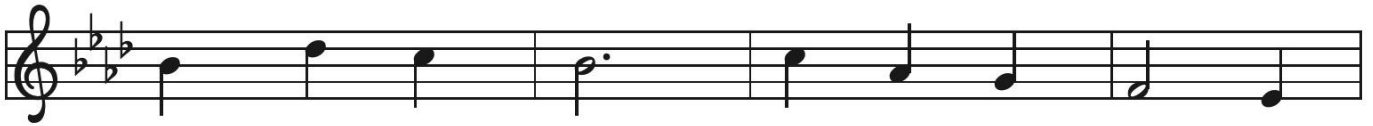
God's Work, Our Hands



1 God's work, our hands: work - ing to - geth - er,
2 God's work, our feet: trav - 'ling to - geth - er,
3 God's work, our voice: sing - ing to - geth - er,
4 God is at work in and a - round us:



build - ing a fu - ture, re - pair - ing the world,
fol - low - ing Je - sus to plac - es un - known,
prais - ing, pro - claim - ing to all who will hear,
seed - lings are sprout - ing and bread's on the rise!



rais - ing up homes, plant - ing new gar - dens,
walk - ing as friends, march - ing for free - dom,
pray - ing for peace, shout - ing for jus - tice,
Washed and set free, hum - bled and hon - ored,



feed - ing the hun - gry and shelt - 'ring the cold.
run - ning the race with God's fu - ture the goal.
claim - ing God's love for the lost and the least.
gift - ed by grace, we re - spond in God's love.



Bless, God, our hands as we work in your name,
Bless, God, our feet as we fol - low your way,
Bless, God, our voice as we speak in your name,
Bless, God, our lives as we an - swer your call,



shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.
shar - ing the good news of your gos - pel.

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in
 2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set the
 3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scat - ter
 4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gos - pel

Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings
 bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to
 joy to like seed and, all our days, to
 to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -

to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.
 share a dream and help the blind to see.
 cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.
 pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: CHESTERFIELD, attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

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