Service of the Word
12th Sunday after Pentecost
August 16th, 2026

This Service of the Word derives its pattern from the service of Holy Communion. Although a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper is the norm, a service of the word of God is also celebrated regularly or occasionally in many places.

INTRODUCTION

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
Congregation stands as you are able

L. Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Gracious God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

L. In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN All Are Welcome ELW 641 vs. 1, 3, 5
(printed in bulletin)

THE GREETING
L. 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.

KYRIE

A. In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

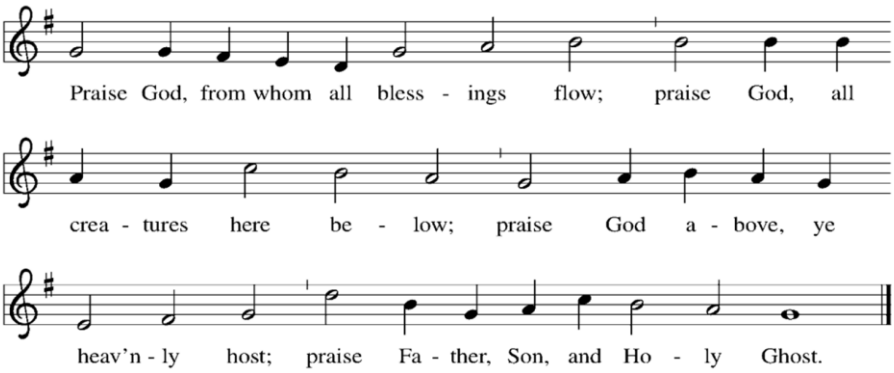
A. For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C. Lord, have mercy.

A. Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C. Amen

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711, alt.
Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L. God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Congregation is seated

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

1 Thus says the LORD:
Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come
and my deliverance be revealed.
6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it
and hold fast my covenant—
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.
8 Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 67 *(read responsively)*

1 May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.
2 **Let your way be known upon earth,**
your saving health among all nations.
3 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
4 **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,**
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth.
5 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

[6] **The earth has brought forth its increase;**
God, our own God, has blessed us.
[7] May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

SECOND READING: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

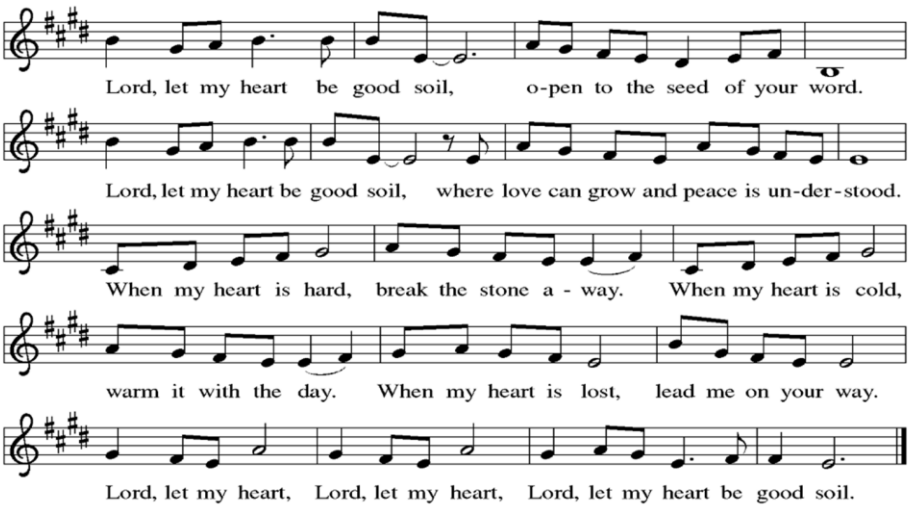
[Paul writes:] [1] I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. [2a] God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

[29] For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. [30] Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, [31] so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy. [32] For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

A. Word of God, word of life. **C. Thanks be to God.**

Congregation stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 15:10-28

L. The holy gospel according to Matthew. **C. Glory to you, O Lord.**

10 [Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and
understand:11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a
person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that
defiles.” 12 Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do
you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what
you said?” 13 He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father
has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone; they are blind
guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both
will fall into a pit.” 15 But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to
us.” 16 Then he said, “Are you also still without
understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the
mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer? 18 But
what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is
what defiles. 19 For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder,
adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These
are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does
not defile.”

21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and
Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out
and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my
daughter is tormented by a demon.” 23 But he did not answer her
at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her
away, for she keeps shouting after us.” 24 He answered, “I was
sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” 25 But she came
and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” 26 He answered, “It
is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the
dogs.” 27 She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs
that fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus answered her,
“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.”
And her daughter was healed from that moment.

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

Congregation is seated
SERMON REFLECTION Pam Kucks
Congregation stands

HYMN OF THE DAY Healer of Our Every Ill ELW 612
(printed in bulletin)

APOSTLE'S 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 THE CHURCH
A. With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation. *A brief silence.*

A. For believers around the world who stream to your holy mountain, that all be united in faith and harmony in the body of Christ. Let your church on earth be a witness to the beloved community of your heavenly kingdom. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

A. For your wondrous creation, that it thrives and flourishes as you intend. Raise up wise stewards to defend the natural world against carelessness and destruction. Safeguard endangered species and their habitats. Merciful God**, receive our prayer.**

A. For the nations of the world and all in authority, they heed the cry of the outcast and ensure care for the most vulnerable. Give wisdom to leaders of countries, congregations, and communities, that they lead and serve justly. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. God of the nations, you sent Jesus as peace for all of humankind. Bring an end to war and conflict, bring hope to places devastated by destruction, and sustain those who advocate for peace. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

A. For all who are lonely, grieving, or struggling with chronic pain, that they find comfort, community, and hope. Send relief to all who struggle with illness of any kind. We pray especially for… those we name aloud… and those we hold in our hearts... Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. For this congregation, for visitors and those new to this faith community, that all may recognize the presence of Christ in each new face. Draw this community together in love and strengthen it in unwavering faith. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A. For the saints before us whose work is done, that their faithful example continues to direct your church. May their witness remind us that your gifts and calling are irrevocable, whether in life or death. Merciful God, receive our prayer.

L. Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

L. The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C. And also with you.

L. Let us share with each other a sign of Christ's peace.

Congregation is seated

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Scan to give via Venmo

Offering can be given by putting it in the offering plate when it is passed, online directly via the QR codes for Tithely or Venmo, or by requesting your bank to send a check to the church. Find more details on our website.

Thank you for your generous gifts!

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Congregation stands

OFFERTORY SONG

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

A. Let us pray... O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

SENDING

BENEDICTION

L. Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always. **Amen**.

SENDING HYMN There's a Wideness in God's Mercy ELW 588
(printed in bulletin)

DISMISSAL

A. Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!
C. Thanks be to God.

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Announcements for August 16th, 2026

Welcome *to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church. May you experience the joy of God's presence in our worship!*

If today is your ***first time*** *worshiping at Holy Counselor, please be sure to fill out the "Guest Book" on the table in the narthex and* ***take a welcome bag****. Please ask our ushers any questions you may have regarding worship this morning.* ***Large print bulletins are available.***

The ***Pray-ground*** *is a special place to help* ***support kids and families*** *in worshiping. We love the sound of kids in worship! God made kids wiggly and curious, and we celebrate that here.* ***Tips:*** *explain, participate, and move around together. Need to leave? No problem, but please come back!*

Worship is live streamed *to our church Facebook page, but the camera is pointed away during Communion and is not on the children when they come forward during A Time for the Child in Us All.* ***Anyone on the altar is on camera.***

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Volunteers for Today's Worship

Lay Asst.	Emilie Dupont
Ushers	*Volunteer needed*
Comm. Asst.	*Volunteer needed*
Tech	John Heeren
Tellers	*Volunteer needed*
Refreshments	*Volunteer needed*

***** Join us for refreshments after worship*****

THIS WEEK AT HOLY COUNSELOR

Sunday, August 16: Outdoor Worship Service of the Word,9:30am
Sunday, August 23: Outdoor Worship w/Communion, 9:30am

Holy Humor Sunday: Holy Humor Sunday has become a fun tradition. We hope to see you at **worship on August 30th** for our 3rd Annual Holy Humor Sunday.

Pastor's Community Office Hours: Pastor Peggy will be at **Daily Bean Tuesday, August 25th from 12:30-2:30pm** for Community Office Hours. All are welcome to visit as she is present in the community.
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Make A Will Month: August is Make a Will month! Did you know you can include the church in your will? If you have a will or need help making one just ask. **The ELCA has many resources on this topic**, and Pastor Peggy would be happy to help point you in the right direction. **Including HCLC in your will is as easy as adding 1 sentence:** "I give and bequeath to Holy Counselor Lutheran Church (HCLC) whose legal address is 68 Sand Hill Road, Sussex, NJ 07461, the sum of $_____ (or _____% of my residuary estate) for such purposes as HCLC shall determine are in the best interests of HCLC." **We would love to know if you have HCLC in your will. Thank you** for supporting the future of HCLC with your heart of generosity!

Blessing of the Backpacks and Technology: All students, teachers, and school staff are invited to bring their backpacks and/or technology to worship, for our last Sunday outside, on **September 6th for a special blessing during worship.**

Church Picnic & Group Picture: Mark your calendars now for **Sunday, September 13th**. We will be having our annual **church picnic,** and we will also be taking a **church-wide picture**! Please plan to join us for this special day as we start the new program year and celebrate our church community! All are welcome!

Register for Sunday School: Sunday School begins Sunday, September 20th! Sunday School is from 8:45-9:15am Sunday mornings before worship for ages 3yrs old-6th grade. **Register** for the new program year via this link. Kristina Garnett, is our new Sunday School Coordinator!

Olive Tree Plant Sale: Claire Speroni has a limited number of olive trees available**. Suggested donation is $40-$60 with all donations going directly to our church missions and programs.** Olive trees retail at local nurseries for $60+ **Contact Claire** directly to coordinate pick up/delivery to church or to see the selection.

Food Pantry: Food items to help restock: 4-pack toilet paper, canned tuna, canned chili, canned corn, canned soup, canned green beans, canned fruit, mac & cheese, boxed potatoes, tuna helper, peanut butter, jelly, children's juice boxes or pouches, kid's snacks, toothpaste, shampoo. All donations can be **placed in the blue bin** by the sanctuary doors. Thank you!

vs. 1, 3, 5

All Are Welcome

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen
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Healer of Our Every Ill

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: HEALER OF OUR EVERY ILL, Marty Haugen
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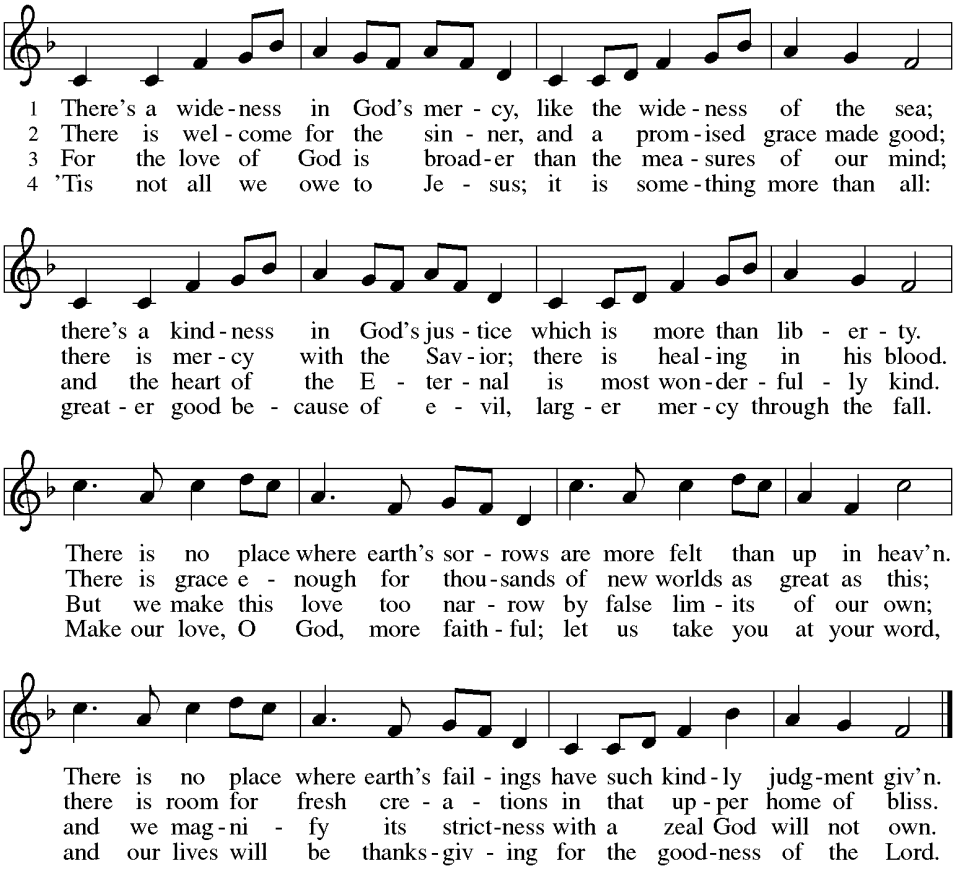
There's a Wideness in God's Mercy



Text: Frederick W. Faber, 1814–1863, alt.
Music: LORD, REVIVE US, North American, 19th cent.

Holy Counselor
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Contact Information
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Director of Music: June Tarantino: music@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Office Administrator: Cathy Nemecek: office@hc-lutheranchurch.org
Bookkeeper: Wynn White: accounts@hc-lutheranchurch.org

MISSION STATEMENT
As Children of God, we are called to share and serve Christ's love and bring God's word to all.

CHURCH COUNCIL
Pastor Rev. Peggy Ludlow
President Nancy Knecht
Vice President Frank Urbaniak
Treasurer Claire Speroni
Recording Secretary Dawn McCormick
Financial Secretary John Heeren
Outreach Coordinator Francine Vince
Nurture Coordinator Fred Schoenagel
Administration Coordinator Diane Rossi

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Kristina Heeren
Pam Kucks
Matt Moller
Aileen Donovan

Holy Counselor is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA