



St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Highspire
Pentecost 12
August 16, 2026

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.

Overview

We Are Beggars, This Is True

"We are beggars; this is true." These are reported to be Martin Luther's last written words. Christians are "beggars" for God's grace, undeserving but graced nonetheless. A beggar's faith focuses not on what is given or accomplished or believed, but on what is received: the healing and sustenance desperately longed for and needed.

In today's gospel, the Canaanite woman is such a "beggar" for Jesus' healing for her daughter. She is denied a place at the table at first, but she will accept even "crumbs" in the faith that Jesus' healing power and love are intended even for her. As a gentile, she inhabits the margins of Jesus' mission "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). Jesus' eventual response to her beggar's faith reveals that the love of God even encompasses the margins.

Marginalized or not, we are all beggars before God, as Paul reminds the Romans—all "imprisoned . . . in disobedience" (Rom. 11:32) and dependent on God. Thus, our sense of "insider" and "outsider" crumbles in the face of our common need and God's abundant mercy to all. Instead of dividing those who have a place at the table and those who get crumbs, we have an opportunity to share hospitality with our fellow beggars.

It can be challenging to see ourselves as beggars. Today the Canaanite woman becomes our model, as she persists with both humility and audacity. As disciples of Jesus and "beggars" for God's grace, we live the same paradox of humility and audacity, boldly coming to Jesus and humbly acknowledging our need. Even though crumbs from God's table would be enough for us, we are offered instead the abundance of Jesus' own self in bread and wine and invited to share this abundance with insider and outsider alike.

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE "It Is Well (Because He Lives)"

Brian Keyser

The Gathering

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

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

ELW p. 94

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

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

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

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

*GATHERING HYMN “O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” ELW #886

*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.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C Amen.

The Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

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.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 67 (read responsively)

Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)

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,20-32

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

[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.

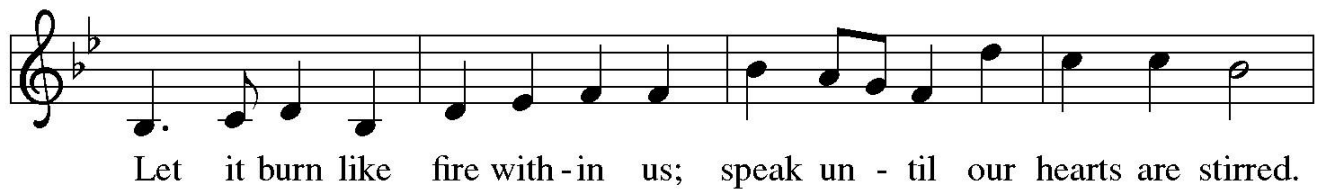
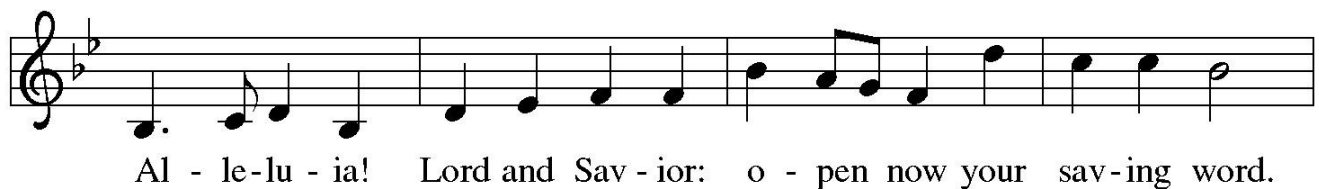
29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy.

32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "Alleluia! Lord and Savior" ELW p. 205



***GOSPEL Matthew 15:[10-20]21-28**

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

P 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.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Alex

SERMON

Pastor Alex

*HYMN OF THE DAY "Healer of Our Every Ill"

ELW #612

*APOSTLES CREED

ELW p.105

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 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.

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.**

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 (especially). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the nations of the world and all in authority, that 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.**

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 especially *Don Alsedek, Connie Barner, Rachel Benkovic, Rose Hoover, Samson Kennedy, Bernie Kunz, and Rob Lipsitt.*
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

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.**

P 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.

C Amen.

*PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Running to a Runaway"

Brian Keyser

The Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

*OFFERTORY HYMN

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

ELW #182

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
 bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
 fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
 nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
 pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

A Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever.

C Amen.

***THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

ELW p.206

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.

*PREFACE

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

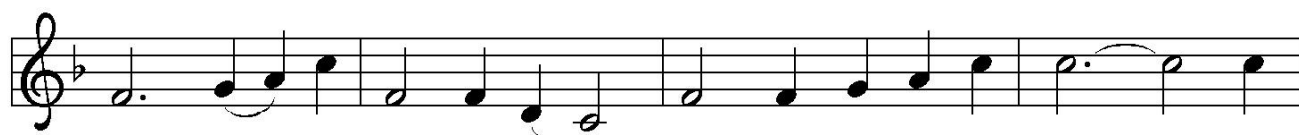
ELW p.207



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

***EUCCHARISTIC 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.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P 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.

*SHARING THE MEAL

P Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast.

COMMUNION HYMNS:

"Lamb of God"

ELW p.208

"One Bread, One Body"

ELW #496

"In Christ There Is No East or West"

ELW #650

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever.

C Amen.

The Sending

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

*BLESSING

P Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, ☩ one God,
bless, heal, and hold you today and always.

C Amen.

*SENDING HYMN "My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

ELW #759

*DISMISSAL

A Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Grady Daub

We appreciate Grady Daub and Brian Keyser for sharing their musical talent with us this morning. Thank-you.

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Prelude - "It Is Well (Because He Lives)" words & music - Tommee Profitt, Bill Gaither & Gloria Gaither @2026 Capitol CMG Genesis CCLI Songs # 7279568 Brian Keyser, solo

Gathering Hymn - "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" ELW #886 words - Charles Wesley music - Carl G. Glaser AZMON PUBLIC DOMAIN

Gospel Acclamation - "Alleluia! Lord and Savior" p. 205, setting 10

Hymn of the Day - "Healer of Our Every Ill" ELW #612 words & music - Marty Haugen @1987 GIA Publications, Inc.

Special Music - "Running to a Runaway" words & music - Phil Wickham & Paul Duncan @Phil Wickham Music CCLI Songs #7260976 Brian Keyser

Offertory Hymn - "Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful " ELW #182 words -

John W. Arthur music - Richard Hillert @1978 Augsburg Fortress Publishers

"Holy, Holy, Holy" p.207, setting 10 ELW

Distribution of Communion - Lamb of God, p. 208 ELW

"One Bread, One Body" ELW #496 words & music - John Foley, SJ

@1978 OCP Publications

"In Christ There Is No East or West" ELW #650 words - John Oxenham

music - African American spiritual, adapt. Harry T. Burleigh MCKEE

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Sending hymn - "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" ELW #759 words - Ray Palmer

music - Lowell Mason OLIVET PUBLIC DOMAIN

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If you are in need of Pastoral care, please reach out to our church office at 717-939-3492 or by email at stpetershighspire240@gmail.com.

You can also reach out to Pastor Alex, at 717-434-5037.

Special Music for July, August and September

8/23/26 - Pentecost 13 - Caity Hawkins, solo

8/30/26 - Pentecost 14 - Hymn sing

9/6/26 - Pentecost 15 - Deb Dillane, Organ solo

Worship Participants for August 16 , 2026

Presiding Minister

Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt

Music Director

Stephen Strauss

Worship Assistant

Karl Hawkins

Musician

Grady Daub

Lector

Mary Hunt

Worship Participants for August 23, 2026

Presiding Minister

Pastor Alex Sheppard-Witt

Music Director

Stephen Strauss

Worship Assistant

Brian Keyser

Musician

Juliet Mitton

Lector

Doris Reynolds

ALTAR VASES: Presented to the Glory of God by Nancy Wilson in honor of Mary Brandt Hoke's and Nancy Brandt Wilson's birthday August 21st, and granddaughter Elise Smith's birthday on August 22nd.

CENTERPIECE: Presented to the Glory of God by Don and Carol Dell to honor Brian and Diana Keyser on their 30th Wedding Anniversary on August 19, and in memory of Fred Dell, whose birthday anniversary is August 19.

All are Welcome Bible Study

The All are Welcome Bible Study meets on Tuesday nights at 6:30pm. We are currently reading Isaiah.

We send out a weekly email with the Zoom link, as well as a brief summary of what we covered the previous week. To get the link for attending the Zoom session, or just to get on the weekly email list, please contact Matt and Mary Hunt at allarewelcomebiblestudy@gmail.com .

A Friendly reminder from Sally:

Please remember to take 1 or more Samaritan Bags to hand out to those who may be in need of this outreach .They are located in a basket in the back of the sanctuary to grab and keep available in your travels.

Come to church and stay for Fellowship every Sunday in the Parlor. Enjoy coffee and snacks and friendly conversation! If you would be interested in "Hosting a Sunday" please check the sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board located in the hallway outside the Music Room/Church Office.