



13th Sunday after Pentecost – August 22, 2021

WELCOME

Welcome to worship, especially our guests! We are delighted to have you with us. If you are looking for a church home, we are happy to share ours with you. If we haven't seen you in a while, it is great to see you today! May God bless your time with us richly.

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP

Heavenly Father, I have come to worship you. Draw near to me in your gracious Word, and assure me of your loving kindness. Curb my wandering thoughts, that with undivided attention I may hear your voice and sing you praise. Amen.

MORNING PRAISE

OPENING HYMN CW # 284

How precious is the Book divine, By inspiration giv'n!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine To guide our souls to heav'n.

Its light, descending from above Our gloomy world to cheer,
Displays a Savior's boundless love And brings his glories near.

It shows to us our wand'ring ways And where our feet have trod
But brings to view the matchless grace Of a forgiving God.

This lamp through all the dreary night Of life shall guide our way
Till we behold the clearer light Of an eternal day.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740–1817, abr., alt.

M: O Lord, open my lips.

C: And my mouth shall declare your praise.

M: Hasten to save me, O God.

C: O Lord, come quickly to help me.

M: The Spirit of the Lord fills the world: let us worship him.

C: Oh, come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving,

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.

For the Lord is a great God and a great king above all gods.

The deep places of the earth are in his hand; the heights of the hills are also his.

The sea is his, for he made it, and his hand formed the dry land.

Oh, come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Psalm 1 *(sung in unison)*

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked*
or stand in the way of sinners.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,*
and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season*
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,*
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,*
but the way of the wicked will perish.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Refrain Tune: Robert J. Thompson. © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago, IL, www.giamusic.com. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

FIRST LESSON

Ephesians 2:1-10

It has been said that this one section of Scripture combats all errors of teaching that have cropped up over the centuries. While that may be an overstatement, these verses do give a solid understanding of our relationship with God (dead in sin) and how we have been brought from death to life purely and simply by Christ and through faith in him.

You were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked when you followed the ways of this present world. You were following the ruler of the domain of the air, the spirit now at work in the people who disobey. ³ Formerly, we all lived among them in the passions of our sinful flesh, as we carried out the desires of the sinful flesh and its thoughts. Like all the others, we were by nature objects of God's wrath. ⁴ But God, because he is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved! ⁶ He also raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. ⁷ He did this so that, in the coming ages, he might demonstrate the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 6:51-58

Jesus spells out very clearly the two kinds of food for the soul. Those who imagine that only food is for the body and take no care for eternal things, feed their souls on bread that perishes. As the bread perishes and leaves the soul empty, so will its eaters also perish. What supreme folly to spend more time and effort on what perishes than on what endures!

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”⁵² At that, the Jews argued among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves.⁵⁴ The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the Last Day.⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink.⁵⁶ The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like your fathers ate and died. The one who eats this bread will live forever.”

SEASONAL RESPONSE

Come Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in us the fire of your love. Alleluia!

HYMN CW # 290

One thing's needful; Lord, this treasure
Teach me highly to regard.
All else, though it first give pleasure,
Is a yoke that presses hard.
Beneath it the heart is still fretting and striving,
No true, lasting happiness ever deriving.
This one thing is needful; all others are vain—
I count all but loss that I Christ may obtain.

How were Mary's thoughts devoted
Her eternal joy to find
As intent each word she noted,
At her Savior's feet reclined.
How kindled her heart, how devout was its feeling,
While hearing the lessons that Christ was revealing;
All earthly concerns she forgot for her Lord
And found her contentment in hearing his Word.

Wisdom's highest, noblest treasure,
Jesus, can be found in you.
Let me find in you my pleasure;
Make my will and actions true,
Humility there and simplicity reigning,
In paths of true wisdom my steps ever training.
If I learn from Jesus this knowledge divine,
The blessing of heavenly wisdom is mine.

Text: Johann H. Schröder, 1667-99, abr., adapt.; tr. Frances E. Cox, 1812-97, alt.

SERMON

2 Peter 3:14-18

Therefore, dear friends, as you look forward to these things, make every effort to be found in peace, spotless and blameless in his sight. ¹⁵ Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our dear brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom that was given to him. ¹⁶ He spoke about these things the same way in all of his letters. There are some matters that are hard to understand in his letters, which the ignorant and unstable distort, as they also do with the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷ Therefore, dear friends, since you already know these things, be on your guard so that you do not fall from your own firm position by being led astray through the error of the wicked. ¹⁸ Instead grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and forever. Amen.

“Grow in Grace and Knowledge”

Dear friends in Christ Jesus. What to say in a final sermon? We could review some history. I could compliment you for your good qualities and thank you here for your support. I could warn you about things coming down the pike in society and in churches. And perhaps some of that will happen in this sermon.

But as a pastor concerned for your souls, there's only one thing that I'd like to leave you with. Grow! Grow in grace. Grow in knowledge. By all means possible, keep growing in God's Word.

I'd love to tell you that it will be easy. But as pastor and apostle Peter encourages us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, he tells us that it takes effort. How many students, being honest, would tell you that they want school to be hard work? All of us as learners would probably admit that growing in knowledge should be a challenge but want it to be work—that's another matter. Nonetheless, Peter illustrates that while Christian growth in grace and knowledge is not easy, it is achievable.

As for the difficulty, just consider Peter's estimation of St. Paul. Peter writes, “There are some matters that are hard to understand in his letters.”

Over the years, some have claimed a rivalry between Peter and Paul, after all, Paul was the “Johnny-come-lately” of the apostles. Others point to this comment as evidence that Peter disagreed with Paul in certain doctrinal matters.

Of course, the reason people play up this supposed conflict between apostles is so that they, too, can disagree with Paul. If Paul says something challenging—such as women should not serve as pastors; or that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God—well, if Peter might disagree with Paul, then maybe we can dismiss Paul's writings too.

No, honest evaluation of the New Testament shows no long-term disagreement between these two. Peter wholeheartedly supports what Paul had done and had written. Notice that Peter says, “Our dear brother Paul.” No, Peter is simply stating the obvious, that some of the things Paul wrote about are hard to understand.

That shouldn't surprise us, however, for there are other difficult things in the Scriptures. Peter stated that many prophets “searched...carefully concerning this salvation, trying to find out what person and what time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,” (1 Peter 1:10,11). As God revealed bits of the message of Christ, already in the Old Testament, it didn't all make sense—even to the prophet who spoke it—until the fuller picture was revealed in the actual life of Christ.

Peter would probably point to himself and the other disciples as further examples of fuzzy thinking. Probably with a wry smile, Jesus often said, “Do you still not understand?” (Mark 8:21 et al). It is not always easy.

There are alternate spiritual “truths” that seem better, more palatable to the human nature. “Truths” that seem simpler, more comprehensible. This Triune God—three-in-one God—is something nebulous. Can't we go with the single “Allah” of the Muslim faith? After all, it seems easier to comprehend. Belief in creation puts us at odds with a vast number of the scientific community.

Couldn't we find some common ground such as "theistic evolution", or give up on creation completely? These are doctrines that cause us trouble.

But then again, who's having the trouble? Peter reports that it is the "ignorant and unstable" who distort the message. You've heard the statement, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing". I've read a lot about airplanes: their history, their construction, their uses in war and peace. I've watched a lot of documentaries about airplanes. I've even been a passenger on a plane many times. Would you let me fly yours? I think not! When it comes to ignorance about how to fly, I would be a dangerous pilot. Yet many people get a little knowledge of the Bible and think that allows them to pronounce judgments about any and all of it.

For example, people are quick to point out that Jesus said, "Do not judge!" while completely ignoring the fact that Jesus said that in the context of his judgment on the weakness of people's faith. Jesus judges our unwillingness to grow. Likewise, people spout off the verse, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," ironically missing the point that the passage isn't meant to stop some behavior they don't like, but to encourage us to begin some great, godly attitudes and actions.

Long before we get critical of God's message, we need to learn it, and learn it well. We need to learn its subtleties and its context. All that takes time and effort. We need to be stable Scripture scholars, the way Jesus describes the person "who hears these words of mine and does them...like a wise man who built his house on bedrock," (Mt 7:24). Then, when things get a little fuzzy, we'll go back to our solid foundation in Christ, and work from that to grow in grace and knowledge.

But it is work! Noted educator Harry Wong likes to tell his students that being a student is a job! Jobs are not always easy. School is not just a career for teachers. It is the career of young ones in our classrooms. A student can always change to a new career later but for right now studying, practicing, researching, learning is their job.

Students tend to look for schools that are entertaining and an adventure. But school, says Harry Wong, is not fun! It's not supposed to be boring, but not easy either. Wouldn't it be great if we could learn everything we needed to know just by all-day recess? I think I know a few adults who would love a job that's just play all day. But we know better. That's why they call work, "work".

Wouldn't it be great if you could just read a chapter of the Bible, and have it all figured out? Or complete a Confirmation Class and be done for life! Peter has to remind us that we must "make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with (God)" (v 14). It takes work to be a knowledgeable Christian. That continues through life. So, Peter says, "Grow in grace and knowledge."

But be confident that though growth in grace and knowledge is not easy, it is achievable.

At the beginning of this letter Peter reminded his readers, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." The reports in the Bible are not myths. They are not tales imagined in order to teach a moral, as Aesop's fables were. These are eyewitness accounts of actual people. They are trustworthy.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus—hard to comprehend as they may be—is nonetheless truth. Those had many eyewitnesses. And it wasn't just twelve who had a vested interest in maintaining the message of Christ. At the time when the early Christians considered replacing Judas, since he had committed suicide, they sought individuals who had been with Jesus "beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up..." (Acts 1:22). Besides the eleven, at least two individuals, Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias, were fellow eyewitnesses of Jesus' whole ministry. We might even think of Jesus' own mother, who was certainly there at Jesus' birth all the way through to his death, resurrection, and ascension. There were many who witnessed the whole ministry of Christ Jesus. It's not vague or uncertain.

And if you were to break it down into smaller segments, there were even more eyewitnesses of specific events. Better than 5000 saw Jesus multiply the five loaves of bread and two fish into enough food for all of them—with twelve baskets of leftovers! The apostle Paul comforts us with the fact there were over 500 eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection (I Cor 15:38). What God said happened, happened.

Even what God said would happen, happened. Peter asserted, “We also have the completely reliable prophetic word,” (II Peter 1:19). Remember that the prophets themselves didn’t understand everything that they were prophesying? But as Jesus lived his life, the prophet’s words were made certain; those words came true and became reliable witness. Bethlehem did become the birthplace of God’s anointed one, as Micah foretold. Jesus did heal the sick and lame—and suffer—events presented by Isaiah. In time, all those words of the prophets were made more certain, solid, sure. There is something to lay our foundation upon. No matter the obstacles to our understanding, and no matter the effort it may require, God promises that growth in grace and knowledge is attainable. You can do this! You can grow.

Therefore, in our text, Peter speaks of our “secure position”. Paul can assure the Philippians, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus,” (Php 1:6). Jesus would speak of the success of those who grow in his words: “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on bedrock. The rain came down, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house. But it did not fall, because it was founded on bedrock,” (Mt 7:24,25). You can do this! You can grow.

Successful growth in the word of God is our goal and our promise from God. If learning didn’t work, we wouldn’t have any kind of schools, would we? Education works. Education in the Word of God works. Did not God say that his word would not return to him empty (Isaiah 55:11)? Stick with it, and you will grow.

It may not be easy. There are obstacles to our faith. There will be so many outside of this congregation, and outside of Christianity, who will criticize it. You know that some difficult days are coming when congress is debating whether making mention of homosexuality’s wrongfulness will be called a “hate crime.” And then, God challenges us with difficult concepts of eternity and trinity and so on. It’s not easy to understand everything God gives us to know. So, it takes work and effort. But under God’s promise, it is achievable. Let’s make “Grow in Grace and Knowledge” more than a slogan, more than a nice phrase in a final sermon! Make it your spiritual life goal. AMEN.

Te Deum

**C: We praise you, O God, we acclaim you as Lord;
all creation worships you, Father everlasting.
To you all angels, all the pow’rs of heav’n, cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of heav’nly hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praise you. The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you. Throughout the world the holy Church acclaim you:
Father of majesty unbounded, your glorious, true, and only Son,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
You, Christ, are the King of glory, the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free, you humbled yourself to be born of a virgin.
You overcame the sting of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
We believe that you will come to be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people, bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.**

OFFERING

THE 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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Almighty God, Heavenly Father, once again we have enjoyed the privilege of gathering in your house of worship to hear your holy and precious Word.

C: May its message of salvation through Christ bring faith and produce the fruits of good works in our lives.

M: Keep your Word in the minds and hearts of our loved ones not present with us this day and return them soon to fellowship with us.

C: Through the Spirit open the Scriptures more and more to our understanding that we may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent to save us.

M: Father, we greatly need the comfort your Word brings. We are by nature sinful and our flesh is continually opposed to your will.

C: We often find that we act against your commandments, doing the things you forbid and neglecting the things that you command.

M: In spite of our deserved judgment, we plead your love and mercy which is revealed to this world of sinners in your Word.

C: Let the blood of Christ, your Son, blot out our sins and present us faultless before your throne.

M: May our hearts truly tremble at your Word of Holy Law, and really rejoice in your promises revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

C: Make us zealous to hear and learn it; that it may ever be a glorious beacon lighting the way to heaven through Christ.

M: When we stumble at difficult teachings, guide us by the Spirit to find the Word to be what Jesus said it is: "Your Word is truth."

C: Motivated by Christ's actions revealed in this true Word, may we live in accordance with your will, and strengthen our concern for others.

M: In that Spirit-given concern, we pray for these people...

Special intercessions or brief silence for personal prayer and meditation.

M: Also cause your Word, which does not return to you empty, to be preached in all the world, and through it deliver sinners from the power of Satan into the kingdom of Christ.

C: Allow us to listen with all diligence when it is preached, and believe wholeheartedly all your promises, for the glory of your name and our spiritual growth and good. Amen.

PRAYER FOR GRACE

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

M: Let us praise the lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

BLESSING *(sung)*

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

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN CW # 616

Feed your children, God most holy;
Comfort sinners poor and lowly.
Jesus, bread of life from heaven,
Bless the food you here have given.
As these gifts the body nourish,
May our souls in graces flourish
Till with saints in heav'nly splendor
At your feast due thanks we render.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647; tr. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis, 1941, alt.

Thank you for worshiping with us! Please Join us again.

God bless your retirement, Pastor Suckow

This is Pastor Suckow's final weekend serving Our Savior's. Please join us for refreshments as we offer our thanks and good wishes to Pastor Suckow upon his retirement.

Asleep in Jesus In his great mercy, God called home to himself the soul of Virene Cramer. A Christian funeral service was held on Friday, Aug. 20. May God continue to grant his comfort and strength to Lori Cramer and her family through Jesus' cross and empty tomb.

Memorials

We thank Alan and Susan Prast for their gift to Our Savior's church given in memory of Alan's parents, Earl and Meta Prast. Earl and his brother were charter members of Our Savior's and helped found our church. Alan and Susan now live in Fountain, Colorado.

We also thank DuWayne and Shirley Marquardt for their gift to OS School given in memory of Arlene Schield.

Blessed be their memories. Thanks be to God for the love which led to these gifts.

Special Congregational Open Forum A Pre-Call Open Forum meeting with Western WI District President Michael Jensen will be held on Monday, August 30 at 6:30 PM. All members are encouraged to attend.

Hymnal Orders for Home Use Hymnals are a great reference tool for home devotions and for viewing livestream worship services. The new edition includes a rich variety of prayers, the small catechism, familiar cherished hymns and new favorites.

If you'd like to order a hymnal for home use, please see the order form in the narthex. Cost is \$24 plus shipping. A gift version with a bonded leather cover is also available for \$52.

**Orders will be placed this week and will arrive later this fall.*

This Week's Opportunities for Growing in Christ

Today 8/22	9:00 AM	Worship
Wednesday	8:00 AM	OS School Opening Service
Thursday	6:30 PM	Worship with Communion
Friday		First Day of PreK
Saturday		OS Day at Dime & Dollar
Sunday 8/29	9:00 AM	Worship with Communion

Our Stewardship of God's Gifts: August 15, 2021					
<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Vision</u>	<u>Debt Red</u>	<u>Plate</u>	<u>Missions</u>	<u>OS School</u>
\$3,664.00	\$35.00	\$155.00	\$75.00	\$115.00	\$30.00
<u>NLHS Tuition</u>	<u>Memorial</u>	<u>Worship Resources</u>			
\$5.00	\$2,150.00	\$6,775.00			

Attendance May 6 & 9: Thursday – 23, Sunday – 57, online – 21 Total= 101



Our Savior's Ev. Lutheran Church & School

703 Flieth St, Wausau WI 54401
715-845-3253

Email: OSInfo@oursaviorswausau.org

Website: www.oursaviorswausau.org

Facebook: Our Savior's Lutheran Church and School



Thank You, Pastor Suckow

The work you have done for Our Savior's
has truly been a blessing.

God has used your faithfulness to
encourage us to grow in faith.

We pray that God will continue
to use you in mighty ways.

