

September 17, 2023 | 9:30 am
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

As children of God and disciples of Christ seeking peace and justice in the world, we welcome, affirm, and include all people into the fullness of God's love. We celebrate and lift up people of all races, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical or mental abilities, economic statuses, political affiliation, appearances, family status, and citizenship as equally loved and valued in the eyes of God and in this place. All are invited to join this community as we worship God, grow in faith, and strive to love and serve one another.

All, without exception, are welcome in this place.



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH BOYERTOWN

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP † INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS † SACRIFICIAL SERVICE † RADICAL GENEROSITY

CORE VALUES

**AUTHENTIC
WORSHIP**



**INTENTIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS**



**SACRIFICIAL
SERVICE**



**RADICAL
GENEROSITY**



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, BOYERTOWN

BAPTISMAL PROMISE

GIFTS OF DISCIPLESHIP



LIVE

among God's faithful people



HEAR

the word of God



SHARE

in the Lord's Supper



PROCLAIM

the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed



SERVE

all people, following the example of Jesus



STRIVE

for justice and peace in all the earth

WELCOME

You are a blessing to us, and we're glad you're here today!

NEW HERE?

Please do not feel obligated to contribute an offering - you are our guest! Rather, please ask an usher for a Let's Get Acquainted card and drop it in the offering plate.

Restrooms are located on the same level as the sanctuary. Exit the back of the sanctuary, turn left into Parish House, turn left again at ramp and continue midway down hallway. Restrooms are on the right.

Gluten-free communion wafers and grape juice are available at the center aisle.

WHERE DO MY KIDS GO?

Children are always welcome to worship. Sunday School is offered for children ages 3 through 6th grade. Families are encouraged to begin worship together at 9:30 in the Sanctuary. Children are dismissed from worship and escorted to their classroom, located on the second floor of the Parish House. Children are released to parents at worship conclusion, approximately 10:30 am.

PRAYER REQUESTS

The importance of prayer is affirmed throughout the Bible. As a church we are committed to pray - your needs are important to us. Prayer request cards can be obtained from an usher and may be filled out and dropped in the offering plate.

GATHERING TIMES

Sunday | 9:30 am | Sanctuary
Worship Celebration with Holy Communion
Livestream on YouTube (St John's ELC Boyertown)

Thursday | 8:00 pm
Service Broadcast on Comcast Channel 98

GET CONNECTED

Connect with God, each other and our community! Follow us on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram!



SERVING IN WORSHIP

Acolyte	Camryn Friz	Altar Guild	Shirley Hartman, Donna Little
Altar Assistants	George Hill, Bonnie Moatz	Media	Shannon Omlor
Lector	Karen Pollock	Sound	Brianna Rohrbach
Prayers	Karen Pollock	Video	Jason Eidle
Musicians	Sam Kulp, guitar/vocals		
Ushers	Ros & Brian Moatz, Carol Sematis, Terry Wadsworth		



Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The congregation may stand.

Blessed be God, the one who forms us, Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete. **Amen.**

Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

Steadfast and faithful God, **you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world's violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Beloved in Christ, God's justice stretches beyond all understanding. God's compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In Christ, you are already and always forgiven. **Amen.**



1 A - wake, O sleep-er, rise from death, and Christ shall give you light;
2 To us on earth he came to bring from sin and fear re - lease,
3 There is one bod - y and one hope, one Spir - it and one call,
4 Then walk in love as Christ has loved, who died that he might save;
5 For us Christ lived, for us he died, and con - quered in the strife.



so learn his love, its length and breadth, its full - ness, depth, and height.
to give the Spir - it's u - ni - ty, the ver - y bond of peace.
one Lord, one faith, and one bap - tism, one God who made us all.
with kind and gen - tle hearts for - give as God in Christ for - gave.
A - wake, a - rise, go forth in faith, and Christ shall give you life.

Text: F. Bland Tucker, 1895–1984

Music: AZMON, Carl G. Gläser, 1784–1829

Text © 1980 Augsburg Publishing House, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Change My Heart, O God

Refrain



Change my heart, O God; make it ev - er true.

End



Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.



You are the pot - ter; I am the clay.



Refrain

Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.

Text: Eddie Espinosa, b. 1953
Music: CHANGE MY HEART, Eddie Espinosa
Text and music © 1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, admin. Music Services

Children are dismissed to Sunday School classes.

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING

Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The congregation may stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia,
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL READING

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. **Glory to you O Lord.**

Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed

him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

The gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The congregation may be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Bob Machamer

The congregation may stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Where Charity and Love Prevail

ELW 359



- 1 Where char - i - ty and love pre - vail, there God is ev - er found;
- 2 With grate-ful joy and ho - ly fear, God's char - i - ty we learn;
- 3 Let us re - call that in our midst dwells Christ, God's ho - ly Son;
- 4 Let strife a - mong us be un - known; let all con - ten - tions cease.
- 5 Let us for - give each oth - er's faults as we our own con - fess,



brought here to - geth - er by Christ's love, by love we thus are bound.
 let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in re - turn.
 as mem - bers of each bod - y joined, in him we are made one.
 Be God's the glo - ry that we seek; be his our on - ly peace.
 that we may love each oth - er well in Chris - tian gen - tle - ness.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. Omer Westendorf, 1916–1997, alt.

Music: TWENTY-FOURTH, attr. Lucius Chapin, 1760–1842

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THE 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.

The congregation may kneel.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

We pray for the church. Bless the missions and ministries of diverse congregations, that they uplift the good news of salvation in ways that can be understood. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and healing to rivers clogged with pollution. Enrich the soil for trees and plants. Protect the crops needed to feed those who hunger. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern. Encourage those in positions of power to lead with empathy, practice forgiveness, and care for those who struggle. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for our neighbors who face illness of any kind. For those strained financially; for all living with chronic pain, mental illness, the disease of addiction, or otherwise afraid or in harm's way. Protect all who cry out for mercy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation. Open our hearts to practice intentional invitation. Help us to forgive each other, practice patience, and choose welcome over judgment. Move us to care for those in our community seeking refuge and safety. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Please verbally add your personal prayer requests

We give thanks for the saints who died in faith. Show us how to live faithfully, creatively, and lovingly in your church and world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

OFFERING MUSIC

OFFERING PRAYER

God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

COMMUNION MUSIC

Mercy

Chris Renzema

Centricity Songs

(Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

The rejects, the dropouts
Those used to being passed by
The addicts, the burned out
Who've lost their way so many times
There's room at His table for you
There's room at His table for you
'Cause His mercy's new with the morning
Even when you sleep through the day
And if you're too drunk to notice
He'll hold your hand 'til you wake

The stressed out, the worried
Those terrified of right now
The wandering, the hurried
Who don't know how to slow down
There's room at His table for you
There's room at His table for you

'Cause His mercy's new with the morning
Even when you can't sleep at night
And if you're too anxious to notice
He'll hold your hand while you cry

And through the tears we'll sing
Hallelujah, how can it be?
You're not too tired to keep holding on to me
Hallelujah, how can it be?
You're not too tired to keep holding on to me

The congregation may stand.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the night of his betrayal
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.

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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 invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

The congregation may be seated.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

All without exception, are welcome at the table of God's grace and love. Please fill out a communion card and hand to an usher or place in the box at back of sanctuary. Today we receive the sacrament at the altar rail. Please come forward at the direction of the ushers. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available at the center aisle. Return to your seats by the side aisle. If you do not wish to come forward for communion, please let an usher know and a communion pack will be brought to you.

The congregation may stand.

BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

The God of glory, Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**



1 Praise the Lord, rise up re - joic - ing, wor - ship, thanks, de -
 2 Scat - tered flock, one shep - herd shar - ing, lost and lone - ly,
 3 Sins for - giv - en, wrongs for - giv - ing, we go forth a -



vo - tion voic - ing: glo - ry be to God on high!
 one voice hear - ing, ears at - ten - tive to your word;
 lert and liv - ing in your Spir - it, strong and free.



Christ, your cross and pas - sion shar - ing, by this eu - cha -
 by your blood new life re - ceiv - ing, in your bod - y,
 Part - ners in your new cre - a - tion, seek - ing peace in



rist de - clar - ing yours the fi - nal vic - to - ry.
 firm be - liev - ing, we are yours, and you the Lord.
 ev - 'ry na - tion, may we faith - ful fol - l'wers be.

Text: Howard C. A. Gaunt, 1902–1983, alt.
 Music: ALLES IST AN GOTTES SEGEN, Johann Löhner, 1645–1705, adapt.
 Text © Oxford University Press.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 AM	Worship Celebration	Sanctuary
9:30 AM	Sunday School	Sanctuary
10:30 AM	New Member Class	Conference Room

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Preschool Opening Day

6:30 PM	Girl Scouts	Fellowship Hall
7:00 PM	Joint Parking Lot Committee	Good Shepherd UCC

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

6:30 PM	Becoming Barnabas	Conference Room
6:30 PM	Finance Team	Main Office

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

9:30 AM	Pottstown Soup Kitchen	Pottstown Salvation Army
6:00 PM	Congregation Council	Conference Room

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

9:30 AM	Community Leaders	Conference Room
10:00 AM	Chestnut Knoll Service	Chestnut Knoll
8:00 PM	Worship Broadcast	Comcast Ch 98

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

7:00 AM	Men's Small Group Bible Study	Telephone Conference
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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

4:30 PM	Come to the Table	Fellowship Hall/Parking Lot
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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 AM	Worship Celebration	Sanctuary
9:30 AM	Sunday School	Sanctuary

Scan the QR Code with your phone's camera to connect to our website and view more of what's happening at St. John's!



GUESTS are always welcome to the Table!

MEMBERS (*two types*)

Voting & Non-voting

KEEPING MEMBERSHIP SIMPLE

1. The only way you can ever be removed from the membership roll at St. John's, or any ELCA congregation:
 - You request a transfer
 - You ask to be removed
 - You depart this life
2. Voting members must make a record of having:
 - Filled out a communion card and received the Lord's Supper ONE time per year
 - Contributed ONE time per year, making sure your name is included



2023
SUMMER
LEARNING

Becoming Barnabas - A Ministry of Coming Alongside
by Robert E. Logan & Tara Miller
(2 sessions) Tuesday, September 19 and 26 at 6:30 pm

DESCRIPTION & REGISTRATION
ON OUR WEBSITE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

We believe God's purpose for the people of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to develop joy-filled children of God who love the Lord and share God's Word.

We do this by:

- Maintaining a trusting and welcoming environment.
- Praying daily.
- Reading scripture regularly.
- Sharing our faith through action-based service.
- Encouraging holy conversations.
- Feeding our faith with music.

With a focus on:

- Activities that build relationships.
- Worship that is relevant.
- Meeting the needs of the vulnerable in our community.

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Office Hours | Monday-Thursday 8:30am - 3:30pm | Friday 8:30am - 12:00pm