

Community of Christ Lutheran Church 15th Sunday after Pentecost, September 21, 2025 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome Pastor Stephen Bond

Musical Prelude Vicar Natalie Downs

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, our maker, our helper, and our keeper. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful and loving God, we are your stiff-necked people. We trample on the needy. We grumble about your grace to others. We turn away from the poor. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins. Rejoice over us as ones who were lost and have been found. Amen.

Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. You who were lost have been found. In the name of + Jesus, your sins are forgiven! **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

"Son of God, Eternal Savior"

ELW 655

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 among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Childrens Sermon

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Amos 8:4-7

⁴ Hear this, you who trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
⁵ saying, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale?
We will make the ephah smaller and the shekel heavier and practice deceit with false balances,
⁶ buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals and selling the sweepings of the wheat."

⁷ The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. L Here ends the Reading C Thanks be to God!

The Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,

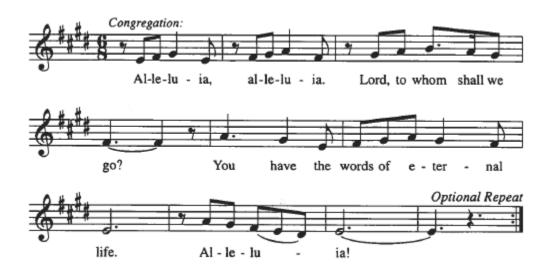
Christ Jesus, himself human,

⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all

—this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an

apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!



The Holy Gospel: Luke 16:1-13

P Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ² So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.' ³ Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' 5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' 7 Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' 8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰ "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

P The Gospel of the Lord! C Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon "While the Getting's Good" Pastor Stephen Bond

Hymn "Let Streams of Living Justice" ELW 710

The Apostles' Creed

C 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.

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

P Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

AM O God, teach your church to act in solidarity with the poor, frustrating the efforts of those who trample on the needy and practicing justice in our own life and community. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Almighty Creator, we pray for an end to the misuse of the earth and its resources, that all people may benefit from your abundant gifts, and that our stewardship of creation would be marked by justice and sustainability. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Holy One, embolden elected leaders to pursue policies of economic justice for the benefit of all, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized.

Persuade them by your example of generosity and compassion. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Compassionate God, we pray for all facing illness, those near death, or those grieving the loss of loved ones; Tom Jennings, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O'Konski, Luke Holtz, Ron Hetherwick, Jake Cope, Virginia Dillon, Staci, Martina Benton, Amy Meagher, Dorothy Petrell, Kian Schumaker, Laura Reimer, Greg Urbanski, Matt Jurrus, Sally, Tom Druschel, Miles McGinnis, Jeff Bucher, Cindy Hartbarger, Sarah Magoun.... and all others whom we remember in silence. Come to the aid of those who are hungry or need shelter. May they find comfort and strength in your love. Prepare us to surround them with your healing care. God of grace, receive our prayer.

AM God of love, motivate our congregation to enact economic justice through tangible action, prioritizing the needs of our community and sharing resources generously through our outreach and justice ministries. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

AM Gracious God, we give thanks for the saints who now join the heavenly chorus in praising your name. Lift us up from the dust of grief and remind us of your promise of new life. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

P We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it.

Sharing of the Peace

P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C** And also with you! Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

Our Tithes and Offering Bring your gifts to the Altar or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.

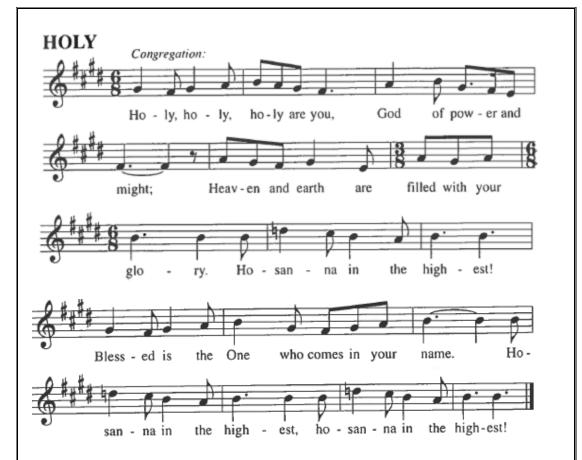
Offering Prayer

AM Lord of the harvest, we return to you a portion of what you have given to us. Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches, but on you, who richly provides for us. Multiply what we have gathered to bless all who are suffering and in need, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



**Eucharistic Prayer Continues



The Words of Institution

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. Jesus said, 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. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

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



Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

AM O God, through this meal you have strengthened us and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

P The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

"Rise Up, O Saints of God"

ELW 669

Dismissal

AM Go in peace. Do not lose heart. Thanks be to God.

AM And next week, C Bring a friend!

Postlude

Making Jesus Known"

This is the Day the Lord has made! We will rejoice in it! We are glad that you have joined us for worship this weekend! May the Lord bless His Word and Sacrament and draw us near to Him! Welcome to Community of Christ!

We WELCOME YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you, and as always, BRING A FRIEND!!!!

New for Fall Adult Forum: Who Is My Neighbor?

Our Adult Forum starts the fall season off with a new series we are calling, "Who Is My Neighbor?", which is inspired, as you can imagine, from the question in the gospel that prompts the story we call the Good Samaritan, where Jesus shows us that anyone God sends across our path is a neighbor, and therefore someone for us to love and be loved by. During the weeks of this series, during the 9:00 a.m. hour (between services) we will get the chance to hear from voices who can speak to the experience of neighbors near and far whose stories and needs might be quite similar to our own, or very different. We'll get to hear from folks like Pastor Mike Hanck about the community being built by the "Norf-End Neighbors" in the Vistula neighborhood of Toledo, Synod Staff member Calla Gilson, who has spent time doing Young Adult Global Mission work in Israel and Palestine, and others who can share about different communities of neighbors around us in the world that God loves. Join us for these conversations throughout September and into October!

New Bible Study Series, Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in September: "Faithful Rebels—Case Studies in Devout Defiance" This month, our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study begins a new series we're calling "Faithful Rebels" that will look at stories of holy troublemakers who went against the flow, spoke up against the powers of the day, or witnesses in countercultural ways in their own times and places. From the Hebrew midwives in Pharaoh's Egypt who saved the babies that the king ordered to be killed to prophets like Elijah challenging their own leaders, to the men in the fiery furnace refusing to bow down to a golden statue of an arrogant king, the Bible is full of stories in which God worked through people who bravely stood up against the expectations (or official decrees!) of the day as part of their way of living out their faith, caring for those in danger, or pointing to the presence of God in the world. If you have been looking for a good jumping-on point to join a Bible study, this is a great chance to join us! We'll gather around the table in the Bible study/council room on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m., and we'll be sharing video summaries each week on the

church Facebook page and on YouTube in case you can't be with us in person. Join us this fall to explore stories of devout defiance from faithful rebels!



Support Salem Lutheran's Meal Ministry and Tree Planting This Fall! As part of our partnership with Salem Lutheran in the Vistula neighborhood of Toledo, we have two projects this fall for which we invite your support! Back in August, we created these stickers with the theme (drawn from Jesus in the

Gospels) that says, "Abundance is meant to be shared", and we'd invite any who want a sticker to give a 5.00 donation for one, and all those proceeds will go to help the weekly meal ministry at Salem, which gives away between 250-300 meals every Tuesday at a time when many of their other sources of funding have been slashed. You can also help us with a long-term project of neighborhood improvement at Salem by helping us raise money for planting additional fruit trees in the growing arboretum Pastor Mike is creating adjacent to the church. Social Action Committee has taken the same "Abundance is meant to be shared" logo and made it into a canvas tote bag--great for wrapping gifts instead of using paper, grocery bags, or carrying your personal items through the day. For a \$5.00 donation for each bag, you can also help us partner with Salem to get these additional trees, which we'll help to plant later this fall. Our goal is to raise \$1,000.00 for trees if possible, and we'd love your help to make it happen--because, as Jesus says, "To whom much is given, much is required," or in other words, *abundance is meant to be shared!*

Confirmation Class Kicks Off for the Fall! Our new year of Confirmation Classes will kick off TODAY, Sunday, September 21, and once again, we are looking ahead to a great year in renewed partnership with neighbors at Zion Lutheran in Waterville! This year, our confirmation students will be exploring the sweep of the whole Bible and how we find our place in the wider story of God's "unfolding promise to mend the entire universe," as author Daniel Erlander puts it. This year will be a great experience for our young people to grow in faith and deepen their relationship with Christ, while learning to think theologically and live as witnesses! Our confirmation class will be held at Zion Lutheran in Waterville today, with the rest of the year's classes rotating location between Zion and Community of Christ. Stay tuned for more news and moments from our year in faith together!

The Ladies' lunch will be held on Friday, September 26, at 11:30 a.m. at MaMa Theresa's Italian Restaurant, located at 24099 Front Street in Grand Rapids. They

offer wood-fired pizzas along with traditional Italian dishes. Please register at the kiosk and let us know if you need a ride. For questions, call Becky at 419-349-7319.

The Material Girls Quilt Ministry would like to thank all our volunteers either in cutting squares, organizing fabric, assembling squares, ironing lots of fabric, sewing tops, cutting batting, quilting, and binding, and your friendship. We are blessed to have a lot of quilt tops that need sewn together. If you are unable to attend our gatherings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the gathering space, and you're able to sew together some tops or bind quilts back from our quilters, we need your help! Please contact Rose Ackerman at 419-308-6808 or Joan Bierley at 419-575-3419 and leave a voice message. Also, if you're donating fabric to be used in our quilts, please leave it in the bin marked "donations" in the Sunday school room near our shelves. Thank you again!

Lutheran World Relief School Kits Thank you to everyone who has donated school supplies to help fill the backpacks! We have received more than 70 items for every category! Your support is greatly appreciated!

Offering Our Time, Talent, and Treasure for 2026 If you're given a gift—say, for your birthday or at Christmas—it's a terrible thing to leave it wrapped in the paper. It's a shame if someone has gone to the trouble of choosing something for you that they hope you will enjoy, and you leave it in the packaging forever unopened. On the flip side, when you receive a thoughtful gift and use it, everyone's lives are enriched. Your relationship with the giver is deepened, your joy is increased, and the same is probably true of the people around you whose lives are made better because you are using your gift well. It's the same, really, in our relationships with God and with one another: when we use the gifts God has given us, our relationship with God is deepened, our joy is increased, and we make the world a better place for the people around us, too! That's why this fall, we are inviting everyone at Community of Christ to prayerfully consider how YOU will use your time, talent, and treasure—all gifts from God—in the year ahead, with our Time and Talent forms, and our invitations to Financial Commitment for the year 2026! You've already been given incredible gifts by God: the hours in each day, the abilities and interests that make us unique, and the resources we live on. Those are already in your hands, like a present waiting to be unwrapped and taken out of the box. This September, when you and your household receive the Time and Talent forms and Invitation to Financial Commitment forms for our church family, you have the opportunity to use those gifts with joy and gratitude! We're asking for you to complete those and return them to the church by October 12, so that we can get new volunteers connected with the ways

they are being led to serve, and so that we can make our proposed 2026 budget grounded in realistic expectations of our planned giving.

Now, maybe you're wondering, "How do my gifts and talents fit in our church family, and where do we need volunteers here at Community of Christ?" Well, good news there, too! At our October 11-12 Festival of Talents weekend, we'll have displays representing each of the areas of ministry in our congregation so you can learn more about what we do and how you can be a part of it. Think of it like a career fair or college expo, but for serving God and God's people—check out the displays for each ministry at Community of Christ and let that help guide where you might serve in the year ahead! It's all about opening up the gifts God has already given us!

Calling All Talented Saints (That's You!)—2025 Festival of Talents on Oct. 11 at 7:00 p.m. We need YOU! OR better yet, we want to celebrate and honor *your* talents and abilities together with our whole church family! We are thrilled to invite you to our second annual Festival of Talents on October 11-12! This special event will showcase the incredible talents and creativity of our church family, spanning all ages and interests. Event Highlights - Talent Showcase: Do you sing, play an instrument, or have a special talent to share? We welcome performances of all kinds! - Art and Handcrafts: Display your artwork, quilts, afghans, handcrafts, and woodworking projects in our gallery-style exhibition. - Community Engagement: Learn more about our congregational committees and ministries. Discover how you can get involved and make a difference. - Stories of Impact: Share how you used the dollar bill received last October to benefit others. Whether it was through acts of kindness, donations, or community projects, your stories inspire us all.

Schedule: - <u>Saturday, October 11</u>: Talent showcase and exhibition in the fellowship hall. - <u>Sunday, October 12</u>: Special worship service celebrating our talents and stories of impact.

Get Involved: Whether you want to perform, display your creations, or simply enjoy the festivities, there's something for everyone at the Festival of Talents. Come, celebrate with us as we recognize and cherish the gifts bestowed upon us!

Conversations and More: Please join this Tuesday, September 23, at 1:00 p.m. for our next Conversations and More! This is a wonderful opportunity to share stories, enjoy fellowship, play games, and explore thoughtful topics together in a warm, welcoming environment. If you have questions or if you need a ride, please call either Cheryl Fischer at 419-345-3033 or Cinda Pontsler at 419-356-9290.

Embark on the Journey of a Lifetime: A 9-night Greek Isles Mediterranean Cruise with Jeff and Tina Baden and Kristi McLelland!

Is a Mediterranean cruise on YOUR bucket list?? We would love for you to join us alongside renowned author and Bible scholar Kristi McLelland on an unforgettable nine-night cruise from April 24 to May 3, 2026! It's a powerful opportunity to deepen your understanding of scripture from the New Testament like never before! As a well-known speaker, teacher, and college professor with a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Dallas Theological Seminary, Kristi's insights will unlock the Bible's relevance through a historical and cultural lens. Imagine the connections you'll make as you experience the places where biblical stories unfolded!

We will be sailing through the waters of Italy, Greece, and Turkey—beginning in Rome. Destinations include Chania, Crete, and the iconic Santorini in Greece, ancient Ephesus in Turkey, and the magnificent Mykonos and Athens in Greece, then a stop in Naples before returning to Rome.

Many of us ladies have been touched by Kristi's impactful teachings during our recent Ladies' Bible studies at Community of Christ. This opportunity is sponsored and discounted by LifeWay, her publishing company. Spaces are limited, so act fast! We would love to have you join us!! Questions? Reach out to Tina at 419.345.9589.

Worship SERVICES

Join us on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. *(Facebook Live @ 10:00 a.m.)



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Confirmation Session @
Zion Waterville

Today, September 21, at 12:30 p.m.

LWR Quilt Ministry

Tuesday, September 23, 10:00 a.m.

Choir Practice

Wednesday, September 24, 7:00 p.m.

Thursday Bible Study

Thursday, September 25, 1:00 p.m.

AW Area Youth Group

Thursday, September 25, 6:30 p.m.

Bell Choir

Thursday, September 25, 7:00 p.m.

Altar Flowers given by Eunice Kronberg in memory of Jim Kronberg 🙏 🤎

Worship Bingo

You might not realize all the things that happen in worship on any given Sunday. So we're trying a new feature today, which we're calling "Worship Bingo" to help us all make connections to see all that really goes on in the course of a Sunday morning! See if you can get five in a row--horizontal, vertical, or diagonal--or try to get them all in a single service! Maybe when our eyes and ears are attuned to know what to listen for, we'll discover how much more has really been going on in worship all along! See Pastor Steve to claim a "prize" if you get a "Bingo" with your card today!

forgiveness	"given for you"	feed	rejoice	Jesus
"Bring a friend!"	peace	kingdom	cross	mercy
Lamb	Holy Spirit	GRACE (free space)	milestone	bless
love	share	salvation	bread	resurrection
sin	gift	holy	God	"the world that God loves"