

# Service of the Word September 2020



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Music and locale provided by staff and members of:  
Lutheran Church of the Master, Troy, MI  
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## Gathering

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

## Prelude

*“Tambourin” by Franz Joseph Gossec  
Carol Beth Litkouhi, Jill Steiner, flutists*

## Invocation

Gracious and merciful God – who birthed us and who birthed Shiphrah and Puah, who birthed Moses’ sister and mother, who birthed the Pharaoh’s daughter – God who is creator and parent to us all, thank you for these examples of moral authority, who you called to defy the powers and principalities so that your people could be led to liberation.

May the Holy Spirit move through us today as we open our ears to hear you call each of us by name, directing us to lead and serve in unexpected spaces, transforming our limitations into possibilities.

In the name of Jesus we pray, **Amen.**

## Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God,

**have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves.**

**We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.**

**We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.**

**Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need,  
and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own.

Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

**Amen.**

## Greeting and Prayer of the Day

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.**

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants.

Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## Hymn

*“Lead Me, Guide Me” ELW #768*

## Word

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

### Reading

Exodus 1:15-21

<sup>15</sup>The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, <sup>16</sup>When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live. <sup>17</sup>But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. <sup>18</sup>So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" <sup>19</sup>The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." <sup>20</sup>So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. <sup>21</sup>And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

Word of God, Word of Life

**Thanks be to God**

### Gospel

Matthew 20: 1-16

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. <sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup>They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' <sup>8</sup>When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' <sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' <sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no

wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

### Prayers of Intercession

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

Generous God, you make the last first, and the first last. Where this gospel challenges the church, equip it for its works of service. Strengthen those who suffer for Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sun and wind, bushes and worms, cattle and great cities—nothing in creation is outside your concern, mighty God. In your mercy, tend to it all. Give us a spirit of generosity toward all you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Where we find envy and create enemies, you provide enough for all. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence (*especially*). Inspire leaders with creativity and wisdom. Bless the work of negotiators, peacekeepers, and development workers. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Reveal yourself to all in need as you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, ready to relent from punishing. Accompany judges and lawyers, victims of crime and those serving sentences. Give fruitful labor and a livelihood to those seeking work. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. Grant life, health, and courage to all who are in need (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We praise you for the generations that have declared your power to us. Give us faithfulness to follow them, living for Christ, until you call us to join them in the joyful song around his throne. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Thanksgiving for the Word

Let us pray. Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

Solo:

*“Shelter Me” by Father Michael Joncas  
Rachel Kowalski, vocalist & Steve Schlesing, pianist*

## Sending

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

### Blessing

Go out from here as workers in God's upside-down kingdom,  
where the last are first and the first are last,  
where needs are met in miraculous ways, and there is grace enough for all!

And may the blessing of God, the love of Jesus Christ,  
and the presence of the Holy Spirit surround you and sustain you in the coming days.  
**Amen.**

### Dismissal

Go in Peace, serve the Lord!  
**Thanks be to God!**

### Postlude

*"God Be With You Till We Meet Again" W.G. Tomer*  
*Steve Schlesing, Organist*

*Musician: Steve Schlesing*  
*Preacher: Rev. Beth Birkolz*  
*Worship leader: Robin McCants, LLM*

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Benediction:

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/09/benediction-upside-down-kingdom.html>

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