



St. John's Lutheran Church

A congregation of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2026

10:45 a.m. Worship



TO VIEW THE SERVICE WHILE IT IS GOING ON LIVE ... go to our Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/sjlmidland/> Since this is a PUBLIC PAGE, you do not need to have a personal Facebook account in order to view the livestream.

The video of the service will be available for viewing on Facebook following the service so others can view it later.

A Faith That Says Yes

Today Jesus reminds us that faithful obedience is more than simply saying the right things, rather, it is revealed in how we live. In the parable of the two sons, we see that God's grace calls us not only to hear His Word but to respond with repentant and willing hearts. As we gather in worship today, may the Holy Spirit give us the humility to recognize our failures, the courage to turn back to God, and the faith to follow His will with our lives as well as our words.

♪ “Build My Life”

Words and Music by Brett younker, Karl Martin, Kirby Kaple, Matt Redman, and Pat Barrett
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Thankyou music | Vamos Publishing | worshiptogether.com songs | Martin, Karl Andrew | Bethel Music Publishing

- 1,4** Worthy of every song we could ever sing.
 Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring.
 Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.
 We live for You.
- 2,5** Jesus the name above every other name.
 Jesus the only one who could ever save.
 Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe.
 We live for You. We live for You.
- 3,6,8** Holy, there is no one like You, there is none besides You.
 Open up my eyes in wonder and show me who You are and fill me
 With Your heart and lead me in Your love to those around me.
- 7,9** I will build my life upon Your love; it is a firm foundation.
 I will put my trust in You alone, and I will not be shaken.

Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

- P** Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.
- C** **Merciful Father, we confess that our words and actions do not always reflect the faith we profess. We have made promises we have not kept, resisted Your will, and allowed our own desires to take priority over obedience to Your Word. We have been slow to repent and quick to excuse our shortcomings. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ, who was perfectly obedient for us and gave Himself for our salvation. Turn our hearts back to You, renew our faith, and lead us to live with humble and willing hearts.**

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon you and has given His Son, Jesus Christ, to be perfectly obedient in your place and to bear the punishment for your sins. For His sake, He forgives you all your sins. Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Introit

Ps. 147:1-5; antiphon: Ps. 147 :6

The LORD lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground.

Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

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.

The LORD lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground.

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray:

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the LORD came to me: “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die...

“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and

turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

Philippians 2:1-18

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Matthew 21:23-32

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From man,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.**

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life T everlasting. Amen.**

Children's Message

Anna Kruger

♪ “More Like Jesus”

Words and Music by Brooke Ligertwood, Scott Ligertwood, Kristian Stanfill and Brett Younker
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You came to the world You created,
Trading Your crown for a cross.
You willingly died, Your innocent life paid the cost.

Counting Your status as nothing,
The King of all kings came to serve,
Washing my feet, covering me with Your love.

Chorus: If more of You means less of me, take everything.
Yes, all of You is all I need. Take everything.

You are my life and my treasure,
The One that I can't live without.
Here at Your feet, my desires and dreams, I lay down.
Here at Your feet, my desires and dreams I lay down. (*Chorus 2x*)

Bridge (2x): Oh Lord, change me like only You can.
Here with my heart in Your hands.
Father, I pray: make me more like Jesus.
This world is dying to know who You are.
You've shown us the way to Your heart.
So, Father, I pray: make me more like Jesus.
(more like Jesus, more like Jesus, Lord.)

Oh Lord, oh Lord, Father, I pray,
Father, I pray: make me more like Jesus.

Chorus (2x): If more of You means less of me, take everything.
Yes, all of You is all I need. Take everything.

Sermon

Offering

Prayer of the Church

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Benediction

P The Lord bless thee and keep thee.
The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious to thee.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and T give thee peace.
C Amen.

♪ “Gone”

Words and Music by Paul Duncan, Kip Fox, Adam Lamb, Nyssa Lytikainen, Arr. Alex Navarro
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Why are you looking among the dead
For something to build your life on?
The tears are still falling, the linen's still red,
But the Savior who wore them is gone.

His friends all around Him somehow didn't get
The story He'd told all along.
We've all seen it written, we've all heard it said,
You don't know what you got till it's gone.

Chorus: And the women came running out,
Changed forever by what they'd found,
Love's beating heart had burst through the dark
And left with the dawn.
And the angels could finally sing,
“All praise to our Risen King!”
Hope has arrived! He is alive!
Jesus is ____ gone ____ (gone).

We are forgiven, and we have been saved,
No longer condemned by our wrongs;
Because of the One who was not in that grave
The last time He'd ever be gone. (*Chorus*)

Bridge: (My shame is all)____ Gone.
(My sins are all)____ Gone.
(All the shadows are)____ Gone.
(My shame is all)____ Gone.
(My sins are all)____ Gone.
(All the shadows are)____ Gone.
Jesus is Gone!

Chorus

Why are you looking among the dead
For something to build your life on?
Look to the One who was not in that grave
The last time He'd ever be gone.

Announcements

Blessing and Dismissal

P May the Holy Spirit strengthen you to live what you confess, follow Christ with willing hearts, and walk faithfully in the grace and forgiveness He has given you.

C **Amen.**

P Go in peace, serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

As we conclude, please feel free to stay for a few minutes if you would like to connect or chat with people Jesus has brought together today. Remember that we are all in this together!

Announcements

Harvest Dinner Tickets are being sold after each service (Saturday & 10:45 in the church office, 8am in the lounge). Please make checks payable to **Women of St. John's**. Sign up on the tables in the Lounge or on Sign Up Genius: <https://tinyurl.com/5dchbc99>. If you have any questions contact Joyce Battjes (989.430.7166), Cynthia Benner (989.600.9463), or Joy Miller (989.600.5437).

Join missionaries Tim & Diane Esala at a special presentation: *Stronghold Cambodia - Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*. They will share how God is transforming lives through Stronghold Cambodia. Stronghold provides far more than education. In a country with limited public resources, Stronghold offers whole-family support, daily meals for students, English and computer training, academic advancement, and most importantly, opportunities for students to grow in their faith in Jesus. Tim & Diane will share stories of growth, impact and the bold vision ahead. Come be encouraged by what God is doing and discover how you can pray, support, and go.

- Short Presentation - Saturday 10/10 5pm Service @ St. John's Lutheran Midland
- Full Presentation - Sunday 10/11 10:15am @ Zion Lutheran of Auburn *SJL members are welcome to attend Sunday service at Zion 9am prior to the presentation.*

LYDIA GUILD is kicking off another great program year with our first meeting on **Monday, September 28th** beginning at 6:30 pm in the lounge! Please join us for a dessert buffet and our September program titled "Go to the Head of the Bible Class". Mrs. Jan Sleight will share 5 building blocks to use as you read and study the Bible to help grow and strengthen your faith.

4th - 6th Grade Autumn Party Join us on October 11th from 3:00-4:30pm for a 4th - 6th Autumn Party in the St. John's gym! Come for a time of games, cider, and donuts. These evenings are open to students in 4th through 6th grade for the 2026-2027 school year. Come enjoy a night of games, fun, and fellowship. Scan the QR code to register.



Birthday Card Shower! Bob Hartlein will be celebrating his 90th birthday on October 7th! To help make his milestone birthday extra special, his family is aiming to shower him with as many birthday cards as possible. Please consider sending a card to:
Bob Hartlein, 5600 Waldo Rd. Villa 22, Midland, MI 48642

Acknowledgments

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St. John's Lutheran Church & School
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Church Secretary:

Kate, Carissa, & Kathy (ext. 1203)

Senior Pastor:

Daniel Kempin (ext. 1201)

Associate Pastor:

Joshua Parsons (ext. 1202)

Dir. of Family Life Ministry:

Anna Kruger (ext. 1204)

Dir. of Young Families Ministry:

Stephanie Davis (ext. 1204)

School Secretary:

Sarah Graham (ext. 1301)

School Principal:

Brad Massey (ext. 1300)

Business Executive:

Kris Zastrow

Facilities Manager:

Ian McDonald

Dir. of Worship Music:

Karen Kempin (ext. 1205)

Our Mission Statement

"We are here to share the good news of salvation and make disciples of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the Scriptures (Matt. 28:18-20) and with the help of the Holy Spirit. This mission begins with our St. John's family and extends to the Midland Community and the world."