

**Welcome to Lord of Life
Lutheran Church
September 27, 2026
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**



Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world

Welcome: Lord of Life Lutheran Church's long-standing credo is "We share God's Love".

LoL provides a welcoming and safe place for worship, comfort, solace, and reflection. We are called by Jesus to love God and one another: to practice radical hospitality, and to serve all without reservation, stipulations or regard to your race, ethnic background, age, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation, physical and mental abilities, socioeconomic position, family status, or where you are in your faith journey. You are a unique and beloved child of God. We welcome you to join us in worship and communion and be part of our commitment to anti-racism, social and economic justice and environmental care.

Worship: *Communion:* All are welcome to share in Holy Communion. Individual packets available near the entrance to the worship center.

Passing of the Peace: It is ok to greet those sitting near you. Please remember people have different levels of personal space which may vary from day to day and situation to situation. You can be respectful by asking, "May I hug you?" or "Would you like a handshake."

Physical Distancing: It is still important to be aware of distancing. Pews along the sides of the church near the stained-glass windows are for people who want space; please space yourselves accordingly.

Children Welcome: Kids of all ages are welcome in service, and we celebrate their joyful wiggles and giggles! There are kid's bags in the back of the sanctuary.

*Information, service & liturgy instructions are shown in italic or **bold italic** type on the following pages.*

Portions of the liturgy spoken by the leaders are shown in plain type.

*Portions of the liturgy spoken by the assembly are shown in **bold type**.*

PRELUDE

Gathering

Land Acknowledgement

We, the congregation of Lord of Life Lutheran Church acknowledge and honor the Peoria, Bodwéwadmí (Potawatomi), Myaamia, Očhéthi Šakówin, Kaskaskia, and Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo) peoples, upon whose ancestral homelands we gather for worship this morning, as well as all of our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place - this land - and call it their home.

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Compassionate God,
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

**Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

God is Here

ELW 526

- 1 God is here! As we your people
meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure
what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit
into open minds and hearts.
- 2 Here are symbols to remind us
of our lifelong need of grace;
here are table, font, and pulpit;
here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching,
here in silence, as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal,
God the Spirit comes to each.
- 3 Here our children find a welcome
in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here as bread and wine are taken,

Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant
seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living
to believe and to adore.

- 4 Lord of all, of church and kingdom,
in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel;
help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
all we have to give, receive;
we, who cannot live without you,
we adore you! We believe!

GREETING

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

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us
your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us,
and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior
and Lord.

Amen.

All are seated

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³ As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

²⁵ Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-9

- ¹ To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.
- ² **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**
- ³ Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.
- ⁴ **Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.**
- ⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the
day long.
- ⁶ **Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.**
- ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake
of your goodness, O LORD.
- ⁸ **You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.**
- ⁹ You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

- ¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love,

any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,
⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

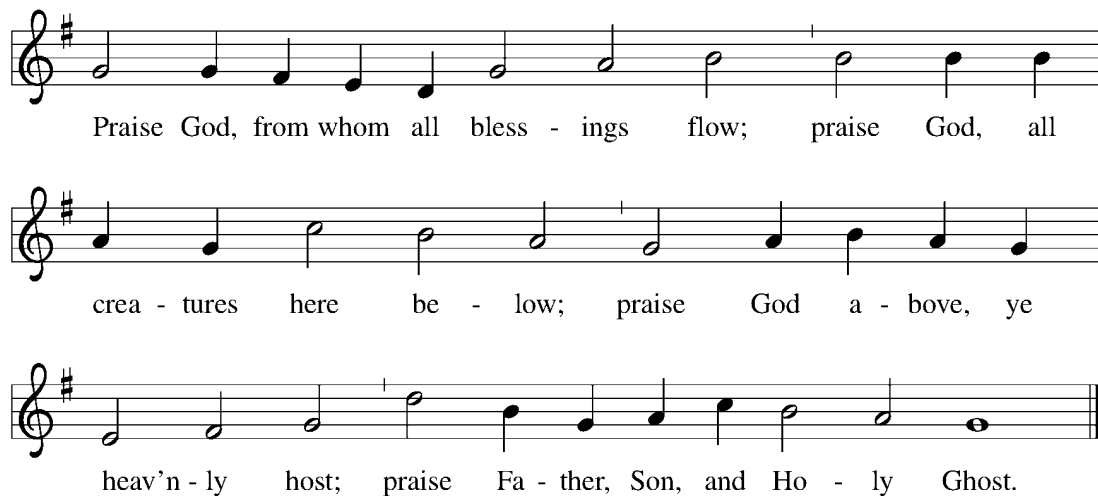
⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,
¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure..

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands as they are comfortable



Alleluia. My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord; **I know them and they follow me.** *Alleluia.* (John 10:27)

THE GOSPEL READING: Matthew 21:23-32

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty first chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd,

for all regard John as a prophet.”²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went.³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go.³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and sex workers are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and sex workers believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.
All are seated.

SERMON

Pastor Joyce Gulliford

HYMN OF THE DAY

More Than Words

Extreme

Response to the Word

The assembly stands as they are comfortable.

THE APOSTLE’S CREED

With the whole Church, let us confess our faith using the words of the Apostle’s 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 power of 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**

All are seated.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers,
confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

Center your church in humility as we strive to follow in your way.
Help us listen to the cries of those who have been unfairly hurt by the
church and dare to name difficult truths. Show all your love. Merciful
God,
receive our prayer.

You call us to care for your creation. Lead us into your promise of a better world through sustainable practices and respect for your handiwork. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Inspire all in positions of authority to act honorably. Remind them of their call to use their authority for the sake of the common good. Give them the gift of humility. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Comfort those who come before you in fear and trembling. Calm troubled hearts with your forgiveness. Help all those in need especially Beverly, Margie, Nancy, Linda, Lee Ann, Jenna, Art, Vernetta, Roberta, Judy, Linda, Paul, Toni, Kerry, Jim, Caryl, and Gale. Grant us your salvation. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Change this congregation's heart when we say no to your call. Open us to courageous learning and service in our community, especially in new or challenging places. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Your steadfast love holds all the saints who have finished their work and are at rest. As we grieve, remind us of your mercy so we may also give thanks. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

*The assembly greets one another in the name of the Lord with phrases like “**Peace be with you.**” If you have your phone available, text a word of peace to someone who is worshiping alones*

OFFERING AND PRAYER

The offering plate is brought forward as a sign of the good gifts, ourselves included, God has given us.

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

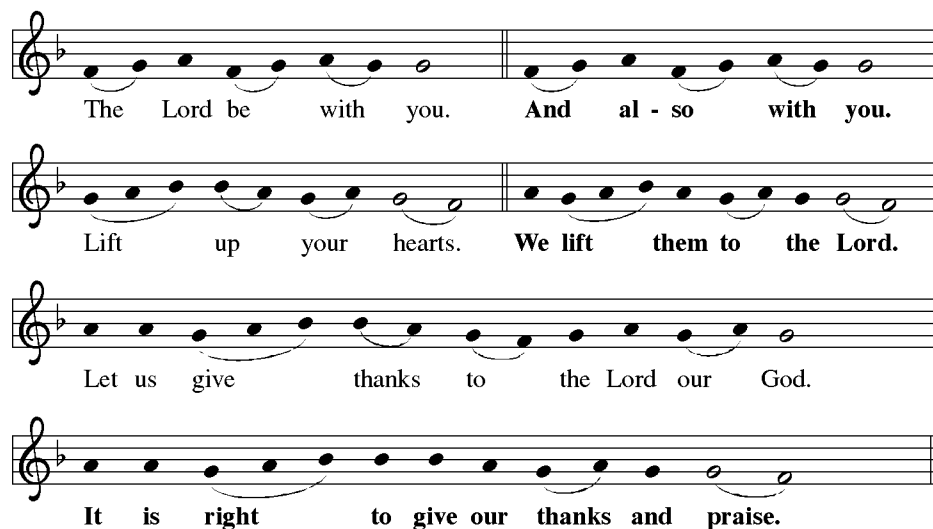
God of creation,
you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
in service to you and in love to our neighbors,

today and always.

Amen.

Meal

The assembly stands as they are comfortable.



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE AND EUCHARISTIC PRAYER...we praise your name
and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and

might; heav - en and earth are filled with your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is the one who comes in your name. Ho -

san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

LORD’S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us “*SING*” the prayer that 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table.
All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

COMMUNION

All are seated. Please take time to prepare yourselves and your communion elements.

We prioritize people with mobility issues. We invite you to come forward in your own time and take a position at the altar that is most accessible for you.

SONG DURING COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Sustaining God,
with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.
By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.
Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.
Amen.

Sending

BLESSING

The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

The God of grace
bless you now and forever.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy,
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
Amen

SENDING HYMN O Master, Let Me Walk with You ELW 818

1 O Master, let me walk with you
in lowly paths of service true;

tell me your secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

- 2 Help me the slow of heart to move
by some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.
- 3 Teach me your patience; share with me
a closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,
- 4 In hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broad'ning way,
in peace that only you can give;
with you, O Master, let me live.

DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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Eucharistic Prayer- Nathan Nettleton, used with permission

Litanies of Welcome and Farewell-Interim Ministry Network, Baltimore, Maryland

We thank you for your ministry here today:

Presiding Minister

Assisting Minister

Lector

Pianist

Guitarist

Greeters

Ushers

Acolyte

Pastor Joyce Gulliford

Bob and Elsy Eggert

Art Kardatzke

Nick Tangorra

Christopher Vincent and Pastor Adam Dowd

Arlene Danielson

Ray Silhan III and Joy Prueter

Alex Kerfin

Announcements

9-27-2026

Wine and Candles this month are provided by **Marilynn Sells** for the **September Birthdays**.

Flowers today are provided by **Joy Prueter** in memory of **Jim Prueter**.

Ride Share Ministry The purpose of our **Ride Share Ministry** is to connect members who need transportation with members of our congregation who are willing to help provide a ride.

If you would like to transport members of our congregation please fill out the following form. <https://forms.gle/iZxKLnAJ7mRtUHPZ7>

Once we compile a list of volunteer drivers, we will share it with those looking for a ride.

Faith in Place: Environment & Spirituality Summit

Join members of Lord of Life for a watch party of Faith in Place's 2026 Annual Environment & Spirituality Summit on **Tuesday, September 29 at 5:30 p.m.** at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Naperville.

This year's theme is "Grounded Resistance," exploring how our faith can ground us in collective action and sustained care for God's creation.

The evening will feature a live keynote from renowned environmentalist and author Bill McKibben, followed by an opportunity for conversation with other people of faith from our community.

The event is free! Come connect with others, deepen your understanding of creation care, and explore how our faith can move us toward action.

Register at <https://aes-summit.org/register-2026>

After you register for the summit, you will be given the link to view Watch Party locations and RSVP to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church 815 S. Washington Street, Naperville.

Pet Blessing and Church Picnic Join us on **Sunday, October 4th at 11:30 AM** for a special outdoor worship with the **Blessing of the Animals** in honor of St. Francis. Bring your pet or a photo if they're not a fan of crowds, and stay after for a **church-wide picnic** with food, games, and fellowship. We'll also take time to **celebrate Pastor Adam's 5th anniversary** at Lord of Life. **Note that there will be no 10:00AM service that day.**

Looking for Singers Gloria Dei has asked Lord of Life to join them for their Reformation Hymn Festival on **Sunday, October 25th at 4 pm**. They are looking for people to join the choir. There will be choir rehearsals at Gloria Dei on Wednesday, October 21 from 7-9 pm and Saturday, October 24, 10 am-noon.

Last Week's Giving – \$3916.00

Electronic Donation for the month of August - \$1007.55

THIS WEEK AT LORD OF LIFE

Sunday	9/27	10:00 AM	Worship
		12:00 PM	Loving Word
Tuesday	9/29	5:00 PM	Overeaters Anonymous
		5:30 PM	Faith in Place: Environment & Spirituality Summit

Wednesday	9/30	10:00 AM	Bible Study
		7:00 PM	One Day at a Time
Friday	10/2	9:30 AM	Cards
Sunday	10/4	11:30 AM	Pet Blessing & Picnic
		12:00 PM	Loving Word