

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 27, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.



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.

Pastor Christian McMullan

Daniel S. Bower, Music Director

Craig Miller, Director of Youth and Family Ministries

2440 Conestoga Road, Chester Springs, Pennsylvania

610-458-5675

www.stmatthews-church.org

WELCOME

Please stand

GREETING

P: The boundless grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

OPENING HYMN

In the Garden

Chorus:

And He walks with me
And He talks with me
And He tells me I am His own
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known

I come to the garden alone
While the dew is still on the roses
And the voice I hear falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses **Chorus**

He speaks and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing **Chorus**

I'd stay in the garden with Him
Tho' the night around me be falling
But He bids me go thro' the voice of woe
His voice to me is calling **Chorus**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

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

C: Amen.

P: Confident that God restores us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

**C: we confess that we struggle to live out your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Nature groans from our overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Apathy keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions stop us from showing genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to you and one another.

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

Amen.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

C: 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.

Please be seated

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

A: A reading from the Book of Ezekiel, the eighteenth chapter.

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.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Philippians 2:1-13

A: A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians, the second chapter.

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.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Please stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah ELW 172



GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23-32

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

C: **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 the prostitutes 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 the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated

MESSAGE

HYMN

You Are My King (Amazing Love)

I'm forgiven
Because You were forsaken.
I'm accepted,
You were condemned.
I'm alive and well.
Your Spirit is within me
Because You died
And rose again.

Amazing love,
How can it be.
That You, my King
Would die for me?

Amazing love,
I know it's true.
It's my joy to honor You.
In all I do, I honor You.

You are my King.
You are my King.
Jesus, You are my King.
Jesus, You are my King.

Amazing love,
How can it be.
That You, my King
Would die for me?
Amazing love,
I know it's true.
It's my joy to honor You.
In all I do, I honor You.

THE PRAYERS

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

A brief silence.

P: ...Hear us, O God.

C: hear our prayer.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please be seated

THE OFFERING

Please stand

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

In gratitude to God we give out of the abundance that God has given us.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: God of creation,
you send rain and the earth is abundantly fruitful.
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.
C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.
P: Lift up your hearts.
C: We lift them to the Lord.
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

P: Holy God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,
In the harmonious world of your creation the plants and animals
The seas and stars were whole and well in your praise.
When sin had scarred the world,
You sent your Son to call us to yourself,
to heal our ills, and to form us again into one.

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.
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.

Remembering, therefore, his life given for us and his rising from the grave,
We await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your Holy Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:
Strengthen us to serve all who are hungry and in need,
And by this bread and cup form us into the body of your Son.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy church,
both now and forever.

C: Amen.

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.

Please be seated

COMMUNION

This is God's table so all are welcome to join the feast.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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

C: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand

BLESSING

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

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

P: The God of grace
✠ bless you now and forever.
C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Your Grace is Enough

Great is Your faithfulness O God
You wrestle with the sinner's restless heart
You lead us by still waters into mercy
And nothing can keep us apart

(So) remember Your people
Remember Your children
Remember Your promise O God

Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough for me

Great is Your love and justice God of Jacob
You use the weak to lead the strong
You lead us in the song of Your salvation
And all Your people sing along

(So) remember Your people
Remember Your children
Remember Your promise O God

Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough for me

Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough for me

DISMISSAL

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: Thanks be to God.

St. Matthew's Staff

Pastor Christian McMullan cmcmullan71@gmail.com

Daniel Bower, Music Director worship@stmatthews-church.org

Craig Miller, Director of Youth and Family Ministries 484-320-0785

Sandy Elkins, Director St. Matthew's School 610-458-3381

Sara Richardson, Church Administrator 610-458-5675

Beth Bilinski, Faith Formation Coordinator stmattsfaithformation@gmail.com