

# *Walking Together in the Word*

Devotions on the Weekly Scripture Readings for August, 2023

The purpose of the Chapel Devotion Project is to encourage individuals and families to make prayer and devotional time in God's Word a regular part of their daily lives. We believe many good things will come from your intentional study and reflection of God's Word:

- Your relationship with God and with others will grow and be strengthened.
- Study of the Scripture and hymns for the upcoming weekend will enhance your worship.
- You will come to the Lord daily in prayer, bringing your praise, thanks, and requests to Him.

## *How to Use These Devotions*

Each week contains five pages of devotional material. How you choose to use the material is up to you. You could study one reading or one page a day. You might read several portions every other day. You may use the short order of worship provided below. Use the material in the way that best fits you and your family.

### **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
All: Amen.

#### **SCRIPTURE READING**

#### **DEVOTION and REFLECTION**

#### **PRAYERS and THE LORD'S PRAYER**

#### **LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.  
Amen.

or

#### **LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Leader: The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless us  
and keep us.  
All: Amen.

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Devotions and supporting material written by Pastor Ted Laesch and Mary Laesch.



# Walking Together in the Word

July 31–August 5, 2023

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 6.*

## Proper 13

### The Gospel: Matthew 14:13–21

13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

16 Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

17 “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

18 “Bring them here to me,” he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

### Devotion on the Gospel

He does it again. Jesus takes charge of a bad situation and makes everything good. Thousands of people not just hungry for the Word, but just plain hungry. It was too far to go into town to get food. Even if they could find food, there was not enough money to buy it. The little food they did have could not even feed a few people (or so they thought). But Jesus was about to take charge of a bad situation and make everything good.

He takes the five small loaves of bread and two little fish and with that little, ordinary lunch, Jesus does something incredible, amazing, remarkable. He gives thanks to His Father, He breaks the loaves, and then the miraculous happens. Where once there was not enough, there is now an abundance—so much abundance that 5000 men plus women and children had their fill, and still there were 12 baskets of leftovers!

Jesus takes charge of a bad situation and makes everything good. He does that with our hunger too, doesn’t He? Not the hunger for food, but the deeper, spiritual hunger every sinner has. Because of sin, we are never truly satisfied with anything—until Jesus takes charge of that bad situation and makes everything good.

Jesus shed His blood on Calvary to satisfy the wrath of God against your sin and mine. His death and resurrection and forgiveness and grace give complete satisfaction, eternal satisfaction, perfect satisfaction. He gathers us by His love and feeds us, fills us, satisfies our spiritual hunger. And He makes everything good.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Jesus was always teaching His disciples. What lesson did the disciples learn from this miracle?*

*We have so many needs: food, shelter, work, physical, emotional, spiritual . . . the list goes on. Do we ever doubt that Jesus can fulfill all our needs? What does this account tell us about Jesus’ ability to supply all that we need and more?*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Verse to Remember:*  
Isaiah 55:1

### The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 55:1-5

“Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without cost.

2 Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labor on what does not satisfy?

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,  
and you will delight in the richest of fare.

3 Give ear and come to me;  
listen, that you may live.

I will make an everlasting covenant with you,  
my faithful love promised to David.

4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples,  
a ruler and commander of the peoples.

5 Surely you will summon nations you know not,  
and nations you do not know will come running to you,  
because of the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has endowed you with splendor.”

### The Epistle: Romans 9:1-5

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

*What is it that Paul,  
the writer of Romans,  
wished for the people  
of Israel?*

“Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters”

## The Psalm: Psalm 136:1-9

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.  
His love endures forever.  
2 Give thanks to the God of gods.  
His love endures forever.  
3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:  
His love endures forever.  
4 to him who alone does great wonders,  
His love endures forever.  
5 who by his understanding made the heavens,  
His love endures forever.  
6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,  
His love endures forever.  
7 who made the great lights—  
His love endures forever.  
8 the sun to govern the day,  
His love endures forever.  
9 the moon and stars to govern the night;  
His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord,  
for he is good.  
His love endures  
forever.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*This psalm may have been used in the temple as one person spoke of God's works while others responded with the refrain. In which parts of our liturgy do we do something similar?*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life." What did He mean by this? See John 6:25-59.*

The Hymn: O Living Bread from Heaven *LSB 642*

O Living Bread from heaven,  
How well You feed Your guest!  
The gifts that You have given  
Have filled my heart with rest.  
Oh, wondrous food of blessing,  
Oh, cup that heals our woes!  
My heart, this gift possessing,  
With praises overflows.

My Lord, You here have led me  
To this most holy place  
And with Yourself have fed me  
The treasures of Your grace;  
For You have freely given  
What earth could never buy,  
The bread of life from heaven,  
That now I shall not die.

You gave me all I wanted;  
This food can death destroy.  
And You have freely granted  
The cup of endless joy.  
My Lord, I do not merit  
The favor You have shown,  
And all my soul and spirit  
Bow down before Your throne.

Lord, grant me then, thus  
strengthened  
With heav'nly food, while here  
My course on earth is lengthened,  
To serve with holy fear.  
And when You call my spirit  
To leave this world below,  
I enter, through Your merit,  
Where joys unmingled flow.

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O  
Living  
Bread  
from  
heaven

# Faith + Life Connections

Pack a picnic meal and read this account as you're enjoying your food. Think about all you have: food, a home, clothes, "toys," family, and more. Where do all these things come from? Take turns thanking God for giving you all you need and more!

*Matthew 14:13-21*

What would it be like to "buy" things without paying for them? We don't need to "buy" God's love—there's no way we could! God invites us to come and freely receive all His gifts: love, forgiveness, salvation, eternal life.

*Isaiah 55:1-5*

Say Psalm 136:1-9 together as a call and response. One person can say a verse, and the others can respond with "His love endures forever." Talk about all the reasons these psalm verses give to "Give thanks to the Lord."

*Psalm 136:1-9*

**Memorize:**

Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Isaiah 55:1



Coloring pages from [visualfaithmin.org](http://visualfaithmin.org)

Devote Yourself to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*  
Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.





# Walking Together in the Word

August 7–August 12, 2023

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 13.*

## Proper 14

### The Gospel: Matthew 14:22–33

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” 29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

### Devotion on the Gospel

The disciples in that boat were afraid. Terrified! It was dark. The wind was blowing. And then they saw something. Something was on the water. Something that certainly shouldn’t have been there in the middle of the night, was coming closer and closer to them, walking over the wave-churned waters of the lake. What else could it be but . . . a ghost! And so they were afraid.

It’s interesting what happens when fear takes hold of us. Things that aren’t really there, we begin to see. And what is real is more difficult to see. It was Jesus walking on the water, coming to His disciples! But because of fear, they didn’t see Jesus. They saw what wasn’t there at all—they saw a ghost!

But Jesus wanted to transform His disciples from fear to faith. And so when they cry out in fear, Jesus immediately says to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid!”

Isn’t it true that we, like the disciples, sometimes are stuck in fear? Jesus comes to us also and wants to transform us from fear to faith. He shouts out to us: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid!” He says to us: Let me show you—in my Word. Let me show you—in the Sacrament. Let me show you—day in and day out. Take courage! Don’t be afraid!

And when we feel, like Peter, that we’re sinking and drowning and dying, Jesus reaches down and grabs us. He saves us. He holds us in His hands. And because of His presence, His love, His rescue, our fear is turned to faith and we confess with the disciples: “Truly You are the Son of God!”

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*As long as Peter kept His eyes on Jesus, he walked on the water. As soon as he looked away, he began to sink. What can we learn from this?*

*Are you stuck in fear? Jesus calls out to you, “Take courage! Don’t be afraid.” He reaches out to you through His Word with His love. He will transform your fear to faith.*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*God answers Job's many questions with His own questions for Job. What is God teaching Job about His knowledge, power, and presence?*

### The Old Testament Reading: Job 38:4-18

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— 7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? 8 "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, 9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, 10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, 11 when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'? 12 "Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place, 13 that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it? 14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment. 15 The wicked are denied their light, and their upraised arm is broken. 16 "Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? 17 Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? 18 Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this.

### The Epistle: Romans 10:5-17

5 Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." 6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" 16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

*Verse to Remember:*  
Romans 10:9

## The Psalm: Psalm 18:1-6

I love you, Lord, my strength.

2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,  
and I have been saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death entangled me;  
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

5 The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
the snares of death confronted me.

6 In my distress I called to the Lord;  
I cried to my God for help.  
From his temple he heard my voice;  
my cry came before him, into his ears.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*This is a psalm of David, written to thank and praise God for saving him from Saul and from all his enemies. From what enemies has God delivered you?*

*I love you, Lord, my strength.  
The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my  
deliverer;  
my God is my rock, in whom I take  
refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my salvation,  
my stronghold.  
I called to the Lord, who is worthy of  
praise,  
and I have been saved from my  
enemies.*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*This hymn was written in 1870 by Edward Hopper, a pastor who served sea-faring men from around the world at The Church of the Sea and the Land in New York City. The hymn is a reminder of our constant need for Jesus on the stormy seas of life.*

The Hymn: Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me *LSB 715*

Jesus, Saviour, pilot me  
Over life's tempestuous sea;  
Unknown waves before me roll,  
Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal.  
Chart and compass come from Thee.  
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

As a mother stills her child,  
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;  
Boist'rous waves obey Thy will  
When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!"  
Wondrous Sovereign of the sea,  
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore  
And the fearful breakers roar  
Twixt me and the peaceful rest,  
Then, while leaning on Thy breast,  
May I hear Thee say to me,  
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."

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*Take courage!  
It is I.  
Do not be afraid.*

Matthew 14:27



# Faith + Life Connections

Have you heard of the “Jesus Christ Lizard”? Its feet are large and equipped with flaps of skin along the toes that allow it to catch on tiny air bubbles, allowing it to “walk on water” (look it up!) But it can’t really walk on water—only God can do that! He’s all-powerful!

*Matthew 14:22-33*

Do you think your feet are beautiful? Paul says that they are beautiful when you use them to go and share the Good News of Jesus with those who need to hear it. Trace around your foot and write Romans 10:15 on it as a reminder to go and tell.

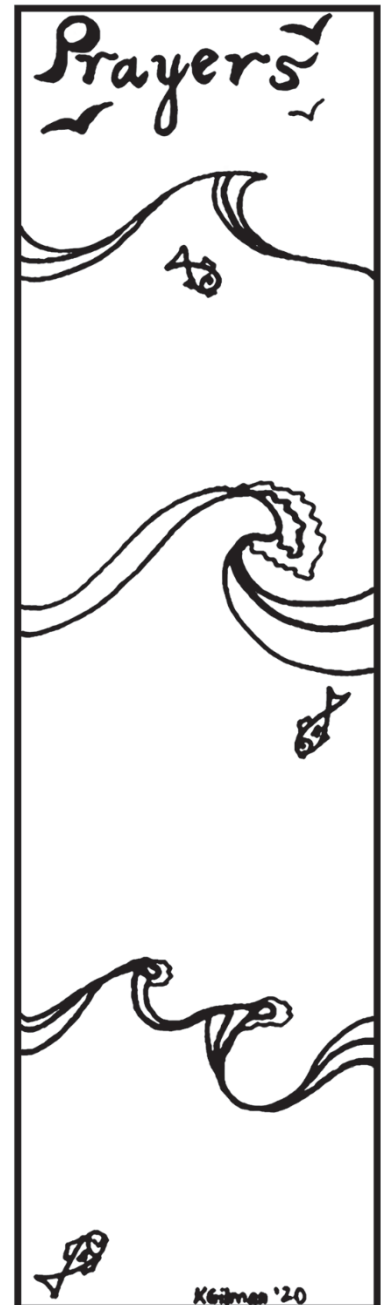
*Romans 10:5-17*

Go rock hunting. Bring a rock home, wash and dry it, and write “The Lord is my Rock” on it. Talk about how God is stronger than a stone fortress. We can take refuge in Him.

*Psalms 18:1-6*

**Memorize:**

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.  
Romans 10:9



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Devote Yourselves to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*  
Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.



# Walking Together in the Word

August 14–August 19, 2023

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 20.*

## Proper 15

### The Gospel: Matthew 15:21–28

21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

25 The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

26 He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

27 “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

28 Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

### Devotion on the Gospel

Would you still be standing there if you were her? The Canaanite woman came to Jesus distraught, begging that He would heal her daughter who was possessed by a demon. I would expect Jesus to show comfort, love, peace, grace, and healing. Wouldn’t you? But that’s not what Jesus does (at first).

Jesus ignores her (“Jesus did not answer a word.”)

Jesus excludes her (“I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”)

Jesus even embarrasses her (“It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.”)

Would you still be standing there? I don’t think I would be. But this woman is not outdone. “Lord, even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master’s table.”

And finally Jesus praises her faith and heals her daughter. A great faith—a great faith that caused her not to give up—a great faith that teaches that God works in His own time and in His own way for our good. Sometimes He tells us to wait. Sometimes He puts us to the test. But God does help. He has made promises to us—and He remains faithful. He will keep His promises. He has promised that He will take care of you. He has promised to be with you every step that you take. He has promised to help you in time of need. He has promised to give you strength so you can be persistent in your faith.

We know God’s promises. We know that He is faithful. We know He will keep His promises.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Jesus praised the faith of this non-Jewish woman. What other biblical examples can you think of that show that God gave faith to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews? (See Matthew 8, Luke 17, and John 4).*

*Do you tend to give up because you think that God isn’t listening or hasn’t answered your prayer? God works in His own way, and in His own time, for the good of His people. Jesus told us to always pray and not lose heart. See Luke 18:1–8.*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*When King Solomon dedicated the temple, he prayed for the foreigners who would come to the temple, that God would hear them so that "all the people of the earth may know Your name and fear You." (See 1 Kings 8:43.)*

*How do we pray for those who are foreign to the Christian faith?*

*What does Paul say here about whom God desires to be saved?*

*Jew or Gentile, how is a person saved?*

## The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

This is what the Lord says:

"Maintain justice  
and do what is right,  
for my salvation is close at hand  
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.  
6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord  
to minister to him,  
to love the name of the Lord,  
and to be his servants,  
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it  
and who hold fast to my covenant—  
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain  
and give them joy in my house of prayer.  
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices  
will be accepted on my altar;  
for my house will be called  
a house of prayer for all nations."  
8 The Sovereign Lord declares—  
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:  
"I will gather still others to them  
besides those already gathered."

## The Epistle: Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: 13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. 30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

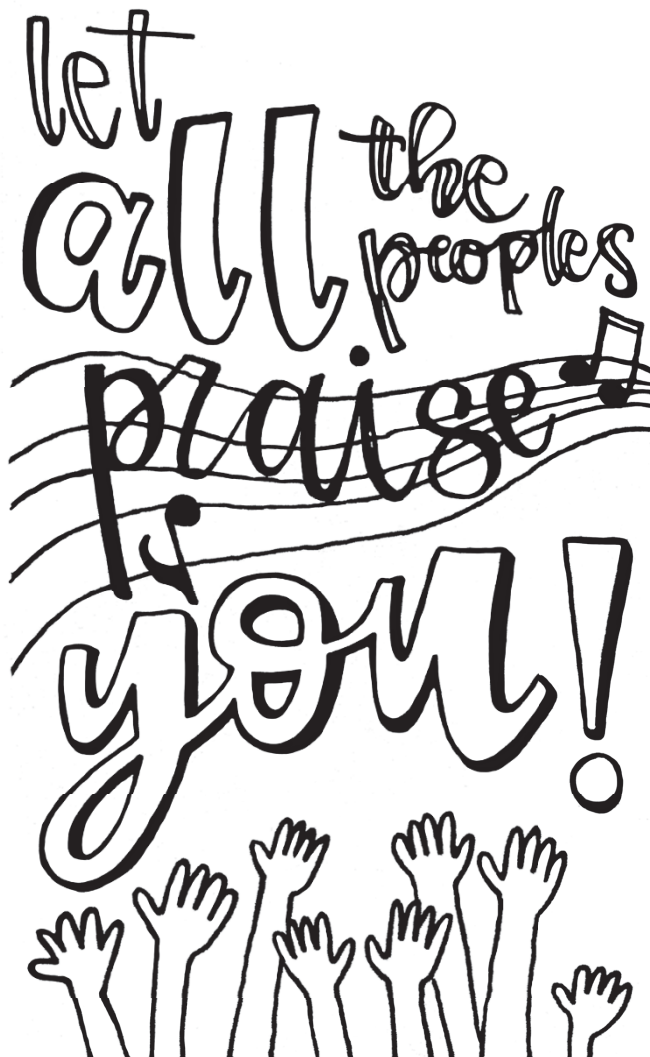


## The Psalm: Psalm 67

- 1 May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face shine on us—
- 2 so that your ways may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.
- 3 May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.
- 4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations of the earth.
- 5 May the peoples praise you, God;  
may all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The land yields its harvest;  
God, our God, blesses us.
- 7 May God bless us still,  
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Verse to Remember:*  
Psalm 67:3



Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*Friends in this world  
come and go, but  
there is one Friend  
who will never leave  
you or forsake you.  
Listen to or sing this  
song as a thank-  
offering to Jesus for  
His unconditional,  
constant love for you.*

The Hymn: What a Friend We Have in Jesus *LSB 770*

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;  
Oh, what needless pain we bear—  
All because we do not carry  
Ev'rything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee;  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

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What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!

# Faith + Life Connections

When you want something, do you ask once and then forget about it, or do you keep asking until you get an answer? Jesus wants us to keep praying to Him. Trust that He hears your prayer, and He will do what is best for you at the right time.

*Matthew 15:21-28*

In heaven, there will be people from every nation, tribe, and language (see Revelation 7:9). Draw a simple outline of a church; cut out pictures of people of different skin colors, races, and nations, and make a collage of them in the church shape. God's house is a house of prayer for all nations.

*Isaiah 56:1, 6-8*

Psalms 67 talks about the nations of the earth praising God. Look online for "Jesus loves me in different languages." Read or listen to this phrase in other languages, then try to learn one!

*Psalms 67*

Memorize:

May the peoples praise You,  
God; may all the peoples  
praise You.

*Psalms 67:3*



Coloring pages from [visualfaithmin.org](http://visualfaithmin.org)

Devote Yourselves to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.



# Walking Together in the Word

August 21–August 26, 2023

*This devotional material is based on Bible readings for Sunday, August 27.*

## Proper 16

### The Gospel: Matthew 16:13–20

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

### Devotion on the Gospel

What a powerful confession! When Jesus asks that all-important question: “Who do you say I am?” Peter, speaking on behalf of all of the disciples, responds with power, conviction, and incredible faith: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” We know who You are. You are the Messiah. You are the Savior. It’s why we love You. It’s why we trust You. It’s why we follow You. You are the Christ!

Peter had many great moments in his life with Jesus, but this had to be one of his greatest. Oh, some days and times would come when Peter would fail, and even deny, the Savior. But this confession of faith produced in him by the Holy Spirit is beautiful and clear and saving.

It’s a beautiful and clear and saving confession that we share with Peter. Jesus is not just Peter’s Christ, He is ours. Jesus is not just Peter’s Savior, He is ours. And so we too confess with power, conviction, and faith: You, Jesus, are the Christ. You, Jesus, and the Son of God. You, Jesus are my Savior!

And Jesus says to Peter (and to you and me): Blessed are you! For on this rock of truth—that Jesus is the Christ—I will build my church. And absolutely nothing—not even hell itself—will destroy it. Blessed are you! You have His promise.

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Jesus gave to His disciples, and to the Church, the Keys of the kingdom—the power to forgive and retain sins. See also John 20:19–23 and “The Office of the Keys” section under “Confession” in Luther’s Small Catechism.*

*One of the blessings of corporate worship is the opportunity to confess our faith together in the words of the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed. Look up one of these creeds and read it. What do we confess in the creeds?*

## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*How much does God love us? So much that He calls out again and again for His people to listen to His Word and believe.*

*Though the heavens and earth will pass away, what hope does God give us?*

*Verse to Remember:  
Romans 11:33*

### The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 51:1-6

“Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; 2 look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many. 3 The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing. 4 “Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. 5 My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

### The Epistle: Romans 11:33-12:8

33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable his judgments,  
and his paths beyond tracing out!

34 “Who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been his counselor?”

35 “Who has ever given to God,  
that God should repay them?”

36 For from him and through him and for him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

### Humble Service in the Body of Christ

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

## The Psalm: Psalm 138

- 1 I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;  
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.
- 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple  
and will praise your name  
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,  
for you have so exalted your solemn decree  
that it surpasses your fame.
- 3 When I called, you answered me;  
you greatly emboldened me.
- 4 May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord,  
when they hear what you have decreed.
- 5 May they sing of the ways of the Lord,  
for the glory of the Lord is great.
- 6 Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;  
though lofty, he sees them from afar.
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you preserve my life.  
You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes;  
with your right hand you save me.
- 8 The Lord will vindicate me;  
your love, Lord, endures forever—  
do not abandon the works of your hands.



## Notes, Thoughts, Questions

*Our God is so much greater than we are, and yet what does He do for His people?*

Notes,  
Thoughts,  
Questions

*What is the Rock on  
which the Church  
stands?*

The Hymn: Built on the Rock *LSB 645*

Built on the Rock the Church shall stand  
Even when steeples are falling.  
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;  
Bells still are chiming and calling,  
Calling the young and old to rest,  
But above all the soul distressed,  
Longing for rest everlasting.

Surely in temples made with hands  
God, the Most High, is not dwelling;  
High above earth His temple stands,  
All earthly temples excelling.  
Yet He who dwells in heav'n above  
Chooses to live with us in love,  
Making our bodies His temple.

We are God's house of living stones,  
Built for His own habitation.  
He through baptismal grace us owns  
Heirs of His wondrous salvation.  
Were we but two His name to tell,  
Yet He would deign with us to dwell  
With all His grace and His favor.

Here stands the font before our eyes,  
Telling how God has received us.  
Th'altar recalls Christ's sacrifice  
And what His Supper here gives us.  
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim  
Christ yesterday, today, the same,  
And evermore, our Redeemer.

Grant, then, O God, Your will be done,  
That, when the church bells are ringing,  
Many in saving faith may come  
Where Christ His message is bringing:  
"I know MY own; My own know Me.  
You, not the world, My face shall see.  
My peace I leave with you. Amen."

Public Domain

*We are  
God's  
house  
of  
living  
stones*



# Faith + Life Connections

If someone asked you, “What do you believe about Jesus?” what would you say? Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ, (the One promised by God to be the Savior) and the Son of God. Take turns telling what you believe about Jesus.

*Matthew 16:13-20*

Stand up and take a little walk. What parts of your body did you use? Feet, legs, eyes, and brain all worked together. The Church is sometimes called the Body of Christ. God has given each of us special gifts and abilities, and we work together to serve God and others.

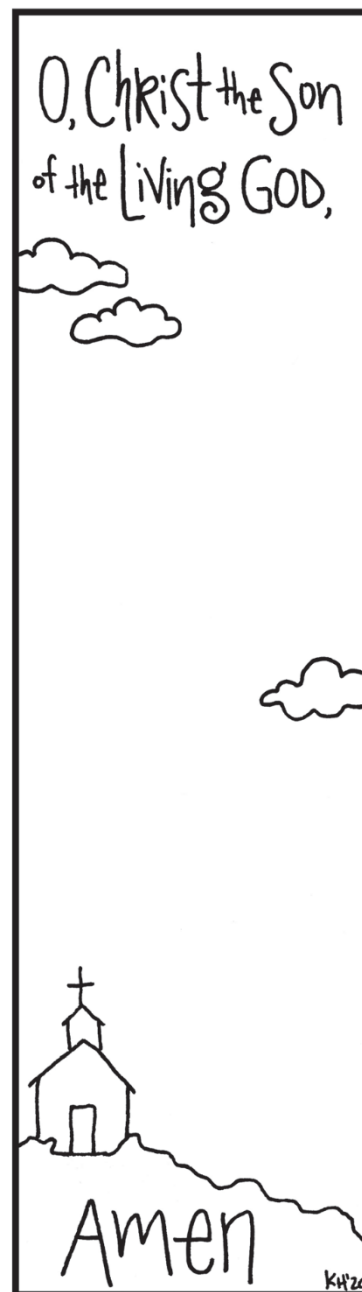
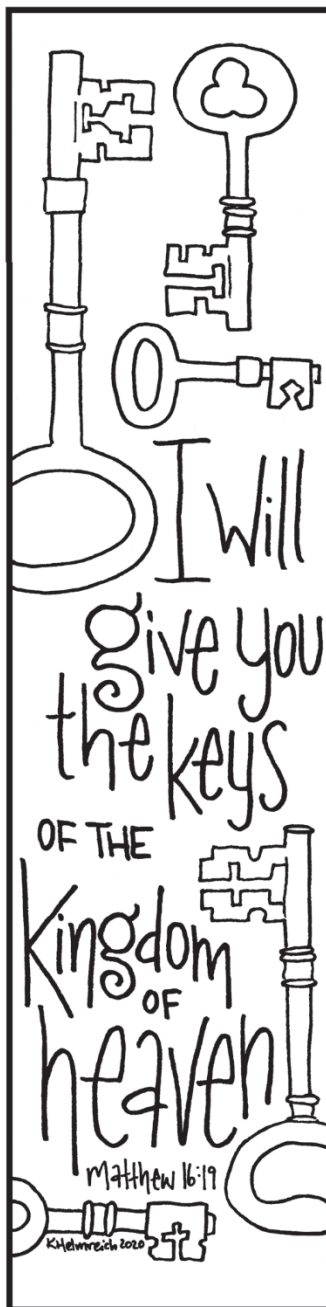
*Romans 11:33-12:8*

Christ is the Rock, and Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ is the foundation of the Church. Look at a picture of a church made of stones. How are we, the church members, “living stones”?

*The Hymn LSB 645*

Memorize:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!  
Romans 11:33



Coloring pages from [visualfaithmin.org](http://visualfaithmin.org)

Devote Yourselves to Prayer *Colossians 4:2*

Throughout the week, write prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests on slips of paper and place them in your prayer bowl. Take turns praying when you gather for devotions.

