

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE HOLY SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, September 26, 2021, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

MUSICIAN

J. Hanson

INTRODUCTION

One theme seems to thread its way through all of the Scripture readings – God’s surprising and unexpected work through unexpected people in unexpected ways. Keeping ourselves from sin, God’s rescue of those in trouble, and healings, these all appear but in unexpected ways. May our hearts be opened to unexpected grace, surprising opportunities, and the serendipitous move of God’s Spirit.

THEME AND VERSE

We are called to be salt of the earth and light of the world. At times our witness is bland and gloomy. When we condone or do what is wrong, we fail to be an influence for good. May we flavor the earth with righteousness and reflect the light of your love in a dark world through Jesus, the Light of the world.
Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another. Mark 9:50b

HYMN

“Bring Forth the Kingdom”

You are salt of the earth, O people, salt for the kingdom of God.
Share the flavor of life, O people, life in the kingdom of God.

***Bring forth the kingdom of mercy, bring forth the kingdom of peace,
Bring forth the kingdom of justice, bring forth the city of God.***

You are light on a hill, oh people, light for the City of God.
Shine so holy and bright, oh people, shine for the City of God.

We are a blessed and a pilgrim people, bound for the kingdom of God.
Love our journey and love our homeland, love is the kingdom of God.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

GOSPEL: Mark 9:38-40, 49-50

Jesus teaches about ministry that involves service and sacrifice. His disciples are slow to realize that these words apply to them as well as to others. Jesus notes that anyone who does a simple kind act will be rewarded, but those who cause little ones to stumble will be punished. The things that cause us to sin must be discarded in order that we not lose “our salt” and that we remain at peace with each other.

³⁸John said to [Jesus,] "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a

cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

⁴⁹"For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us put grumbling aside and confess our sins to one another, even pray for each other.

Lord God, you see all that we do and you know all that we fail to do. We do not pray when we suffer because we do not trust your timing. We do not sing praises when we are cheerful because we want more. We do not confess our sin to one another because we do not trust each other - and maybe for good reason. We wander from the truth and do not hold each other accountable except to make ourselves look good. It is hard for us to confess, forgive us, Lord. The consequences of our sin are severe... Save us, Lord!

Though we kindle the Lord's anger, strong is our God's faithfulness. Our sins are forgiven for the sake of our Lord and Savior: Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is poured out upon us, and we are invited to live all our days, well-seasoned in the grace of God, and in peace with one another.

Then all might see the glory of God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON "Salt and Light"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Christ Jesus, we come into your presence from different places. Some come with songs of joy and shouts of gratitude. Some come carrying heavy burdens and sighs of suffering. As you welcome us, lift our burdens and receive our praise. Salt us with your grace and flavor us with your mercy. Bind us together that we may be at peace with one another and be strengthened to go out in service to the world. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

READING: James 5:13-20

Those who suffer are to pray, and those who are sick are to call on the elders of the church to pray for them and anoint them with oil, because the prayers of righteous people are effective. We are also challenged to turn one another back whenever we stray.

¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should

sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the

church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it

might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth yielded its harvest. ¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

HYMN

"Jesus Loves Me!"

Burgundy # 249

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong, they are weak, but he is strong.

***Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.***

Jesus loves me! He who died heaven's gates to open wide;
He will wash away my sin, let his little child come in.

Jesus loves me! Loves me still, though I'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high, comes to watch me where I lie.

SERMON

Come, Holy Spirit

Jim Hauschild Jr.

HYMN

"Lord of All Hopefulness"

Green # 469

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy:
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
Be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER FOR COMMUNION

Today we tasted the flavor of forgiveness in the bread and wine at the Table of the Lord. We return from this table of grace with restored hope and renewed purpose in life! May God give us the faith and love to put this into practice and the humility to empower others to join us in ministry. Amen!

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Go in peace to enjoy and also to employ your gift of faith. Fear neither outward foe nor inner temptation. Rejoice in your blessings and smile in your adversities.

Our help is in the name of God who made heaven and earth. Wherever we go, we will live as servants of God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The inexhaustible grace of Christ crucified, the tireless eternal love of God, and the live-in guest who fills household of faith with many gifts will be with you this day and for evermore.

Amen! We go in Christ's name, to love and serve!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

The Gospel and the Deuteronomy reading both have people who are performing the same miraculous work that other “certified” people are doing. In both cases someone tries to stop them (Joshua in Deuteronomy, and John in the Gospel) but in both cases the leaders say that they must not be stopped. Jesus teaches that whoever is not against him is for him, and in Moses' case, he expresses his wish that all God's people would be prophets. In James, all of God's people, especially the elders, are called on to pray and to live righteous lives, while taking the opportunities that arise to help one another stay true.

Through the readings this week we find the call to embrace the unexpected and surprising work of God. It's easy for us to become so caught up in controlling ministry that we miss God's surprising work. It's so easy to get so caught up in the purity of our religion that we miss the work of God's Spirit in those with whom we disagree. But, if we are seriously committed to God's Reign – and not our own little dominions – we will learn to celebrate the surprising, unexpected and serendipitous work of God wherever, and through whomever, we may find it.

The creativity that has come out of people of faith, and church communities, has been an amazing healing and liberating force in the world. The Arts have played very significant roles in every revival movement, every social reform movement and every liberation movement in human history. Communities which have been open to the creative move of God's Spirit, that

have invited questions and experimentation, and that have been willing to reach out to others who are different from them, have made massive positive impacts on the world. But much of this has been forgotten in the wake of exclusive, condemnatory, rigid, and stagnant faith organizations.

Followers of Christ are better known for silencing questions rather than embracing them. Churches are better known for rejecting and denouncing other faith or denominational groups, than embracing and working with them. We seem to be far more eager to ensure that those who are “for” us look like us, speak like us, think like us... and we separate from any others.

But, in the process, we may be missing some of the unexpected work of God’s Spirit that is happening around us. We may find that, instead of being liberators, healers and comforters, we have become oppressors and destroyers. What an amazingly attractive community the church could be if groups of Christians could find the openness and creativity to work alongside whomever they can to uplift, heal and celebrate their neighbors and communities. When we are willing to let go of our need for exclusiveness, we might find that we experience God in the most unexpected places.

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