



Sunday, September 13, 2026
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Entering God's Presence

Welcome and Gathering Prayer

Rev. Mark W. van Stee

Psalm of the Day – Psalm 51:10-17

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

Prelude

“Hommage à J. S. Bach”
Music by Béla Kovács

Yasmine Urquhart, Clarinet

*Call to Worship – Psalm 136:1-4

Peter Chen

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

People: His love endures forever.

Leader: Give thanks to the God of gods.

People: His love endures forever.

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

People: His love endures forever.

Leader: To him who alone does great wonders,

People: His love endures forever.

*Hymn of Praise – #138 “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”

Prayer of Confession

Rev. Mark W. van Stee

Leader: Gracious God,

Forgive us for seeking to be rich in self, rather than poor in spirit.

People: Through your Holy Spirit, enable us to live lives of humble dependence on you.

In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon – Ephesians 2:8-9

Leader: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing;

People: It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

God's Gracious Will for Our Lives –Matthew 18:1-4

Leader: At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

People: Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

***Gloria Patri #579 "Glory Be to the Father"**

Receiving the Word of God

Song

"Give Me a BE-attitude"

Naomi King Walker

Children's Choir

Christine Weeks, Director; Gordon Schultz, Piano

Children's Message

Rev. Mark W. van Stee

Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 57:14-16 (p. 745)

Peter Chen

New Testament Reading – Matthew 5:1-12 (pp. 968-969)

Sermon

"Kingdom Flourishing: Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit"

Rev. Mark W. van Stee

Responding to God's Word

***Hymn of Response – #275 "God of Our Life"**

Prayer of Dedication of Tithes & Offerings

Suresh Theodore, Elder for
Outreach & Missions

Offertory

“Simple Gifts”

Trad. Shaker tune; arr. & extra lyrics by Mark Hayes

Randal Turner, Baritone
Yasmine Urquhart, Clarinet
Gordon Schultz, Piano

***Doxology #592** “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

Prayers of the People

Suresh Theodore

The Lord’s Prayer (*in unison in English or the language of your choice*)

Going with God’s Mission and Blessing

Welcoming of Visitors

Suresh Theodore

Announcements

***Hymn of Dedication – #361** “How Firm a Foundation”

*Sending and Pastoral Benediction

Rev. Mark W. van Stee

Postlude

“Sholem-Alekhem, Rov Feidman!”

(“Peace Be Upon You!”)

Music: Trad. Hebrew; arr. Béla Kovács

Yasmine Urquhart, Clarinet
Gordon Schultz, Piano

Please remain seated during the postlude. If you need to leave, please do so quietly.

****Please stand if you are able.***

Today’s bulletin cover features German artist Lucas Cranach the Elder’s “The Publican and the Pharisee” (1520). The work is part of the collection of Museo Lázaro Galdiano in Madrid. A description of the work from the Cranach Digital Archive states:

The painting illustrates the Parable of the haughty Pharisee and the pious Publican recounted by Jesus in Luke 18. The proud Pharisee stands directly in front of the altarpiece dressed in a magnificent, ceremonial gown. Several columns support the vaulted ceiling of temple interior that is shown in one point perspective. A plaque is attached to the column at the left in the middle ground, bearing the words of the Pharisee in Latin. In translation they read as follows: “I thank you Lord that I am not like the others”. Between the columns and the altarpiece three men are conversing, while in the background a group of traders go about their business. The Publican enters from the right; he has removed his hat and bows his head, while placing his hand ruefully on his chest. A column next to the entrance displays a plaque with his words, which translated read: “Lord, please have mercy on this sinner.”