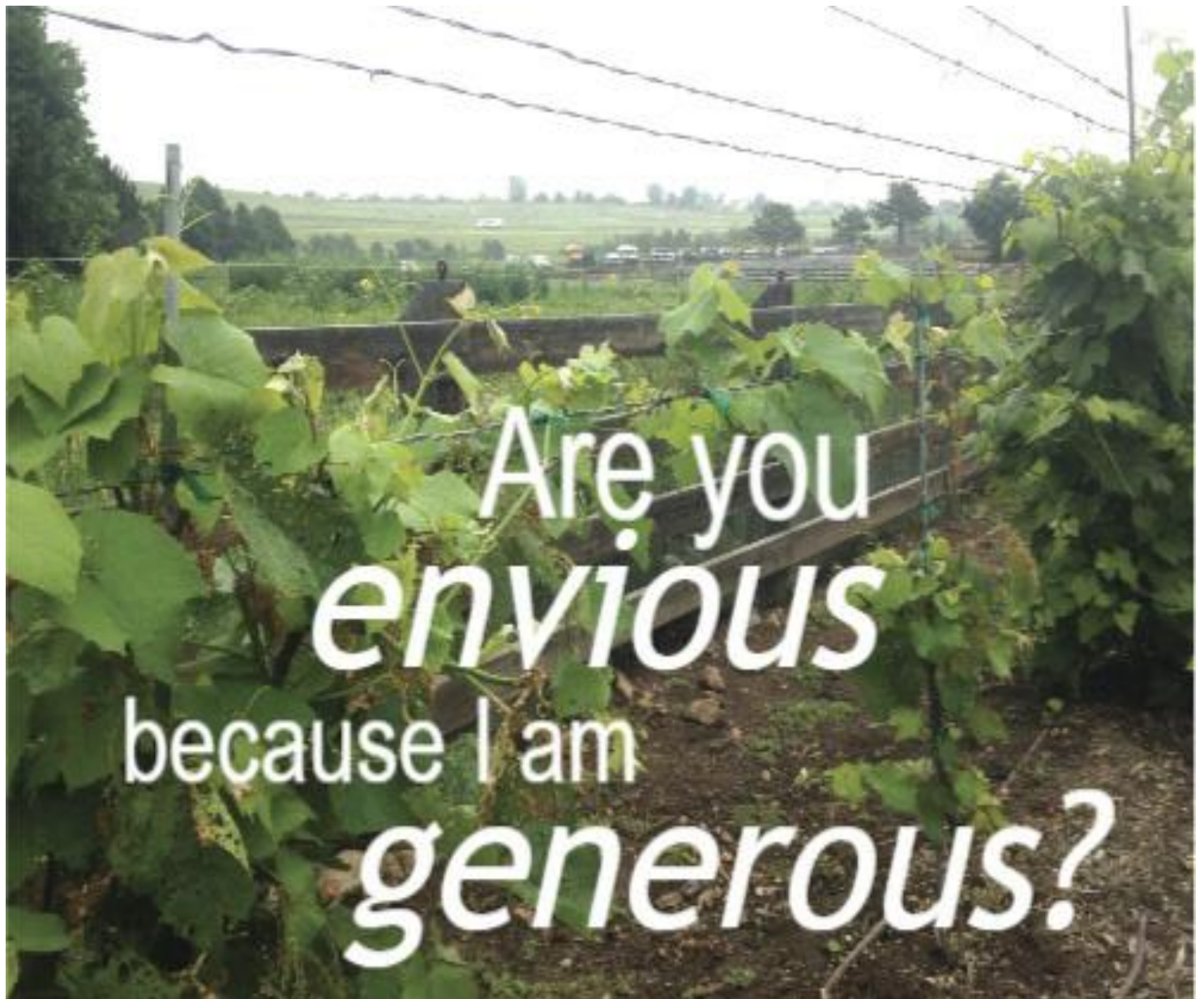




St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
September 20, 2026

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
106 Scheid Road, Sandusky, OH 44870
(419) 625-2192 www.stjohnlcsandusky.com
Sanctuary Worship 9:30 a.m. Live streamed to Facebook

Stacy Lauer-Scovanner, Pastor

September 20, 2026 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Welcome to Worship! Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

As Lutheran Christians, we believe and teach that Christ is truly present in the celebration of Holy Communion as he is God with us. Christians of all denominations are encouraged to come to the Lord's table. We commune children of any age who have received communion instruction at St. John or another Christian church. Children who have not yet received communion instruction will receive a blessing. Both red wine and white grape juice are offered to accommodate various traditions. Gluten free wafers are provided for those with dietary restrictions. Please make the pastor aware of your need.

We thank Walt Baughman for sharing his music this morning and leading us in song. If you are visiting today, please sign the guest register after worship. Plan to worship with us again soon.

Bell

Welcome and announcements

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Please stand if you are able

Confession And Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading”

ELW 401

English and Swahili text and music © Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, Tanzania, admin.
Augsburg Fortress

1 Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading,
fashion us all anew.
It's your leading that we're needing,
help us to follow you.

Refrain
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.

4 Not mere knowledge, but discernment,
nor rootless liberty;
turn disquiet to contentment,
doubt into certainty. Refrain

2 Come to teach us, come to nourish
those who believe in Christ.
Bless the faithful, may they flourish,
strengthened by grace unpriced. Refrain

3 Guide our thinking and our speaking
done in your holy name.
Motivate all in their seeking,
freeing from guilt and shame. Refrain

5 Keep us fervent in our witness;
unswayed by earth's allure.
Ever grant us zealous fitness,
which you alone assure. Refrain

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.

Hymn of Praise

♩ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. [I] Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was
slain, whose blood set us free to be peo-ple of God.
♩ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. [II] Pow-er, rich-es, wis-dom, and
strength, and hon-or, bless-ing, and glo-ry are his.
♩ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. [I] Sing with all the peo-ple of God, and

join in the hymn of all cre-a - tion: Bless-ing, hon-or, glo-ry, and
might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A - men.
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu - ia,
al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. For the Lamb who was
slain has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu - ia.
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.
Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia.

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord God, you call us to work in your vineyard and leave no one standing idle. Set us to our tasks in the work of your kingdom, and help us to order our lives by your wisdom; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Please be seated

First Reading: Jonah 3:10-4:11

A reading from Jonah.

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

¹⁰ When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶ The LORD God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 145:1-8 (Read responsively)

¹ I will exalt you, O God my King,
and bless your name forever and ever.

² **Every day will I bless you**

and praise your name forever and ever.

³ Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;
there is no end to his greatness.

⁴ **One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.**

⁵ I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.

⁶ **They shall speak of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will tell of your greatness.**

⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing of your righteous deeds.

⁸ **The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and of great kindness.**

Second Reading: Philippians 1:21-30

A reading from Philippians.

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

Youth Time

Sermon

Please stand if you are able

Hymn of the Day

“My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”

ELW 597

Text: Edward Mote, 1797-1874, alt. Music: John B. Dykes, 1823-1876 Public Domain

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
no merit of my own I claim,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.</p> <p><i>Refrain</i>
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.</p> <p>4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,
oh, may I then in him be found,
clothed in his righteousness alone,
redeemed to stand before the throne! <i>Refrain</i></p> | <p>2 When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale
my anchor holds within the veil. <i>Refrain</i></p> <p>3 His oath, his covenant, his blood
sustain me in the raging flood;
when all supports are washed away,
he then is all my hope and stay. <i>Refrain</i></p> |
|--|---|

Prayers of the people:

Response: Hear us, O God, **Your mercy is great.**

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please be seated

Offering

Please stand if you are able

Offering

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 the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray.

Blessed are you,

O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also 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.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

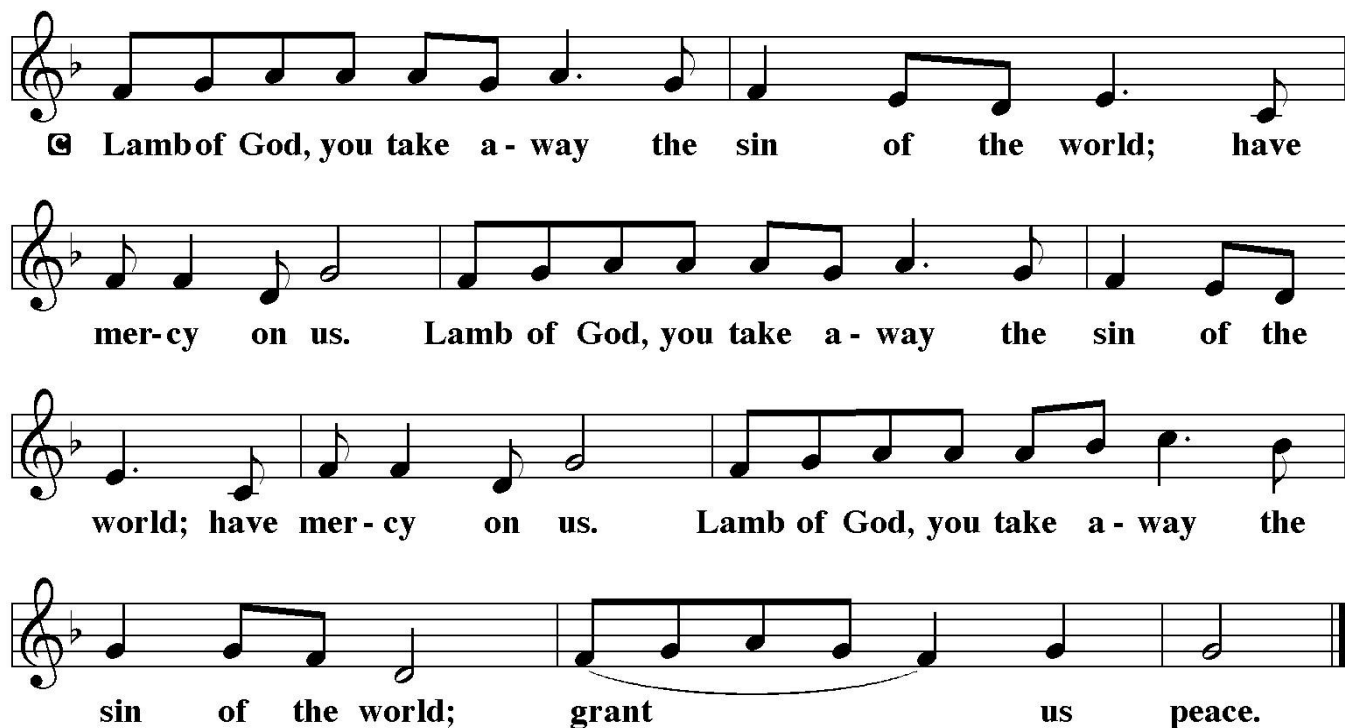
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and
forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us
not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

Invitation to Communion

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Please be seated

Communion Song



1 Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

Distribution Hymn

"Take My Life, That I May Be"

ELW 583

Music © 1999 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Refrain

Take my life, that I may be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

1 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee. Refrain

4 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne. Refrain

2 Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose. Refrain

3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee. Refrain

Distribution Hymn

"Blessed Assurance"

ELW 638

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915 Music: Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830-1908 Public Domain

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. Refrain

Refrain

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

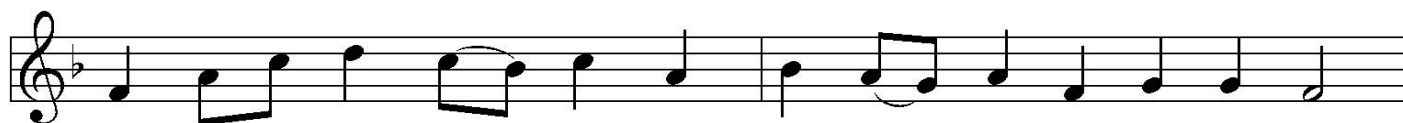
3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. Refrain

Please stand if you are able

Post Communion Canticle



☩ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re - calls his prom - is - es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Post Communion Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His care.

Amen

Prayer After Communion

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

Sending Hymn

“Lord of All Hopefulness”

ELW 765

Text © Oxford University Press 1931

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.

4 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.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is:
“A Family of Disciples, Faithfully Making Christ Known”
And a congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S, MINISTERS

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Usher: Chuck Thompson	Lay Reader: Melinda Zorn
Audio/Visual Tech.: Richard & Kathy Schlessman	Communion Assistant: Melinda Zorn
Website: www.stjohnlcsandusky.com	Jt. Rally Day Attendance: Sept. 13 - 75
Like us on Facebook: St. John's Lutheran Church, Sandusky	

2026 The Year of the Way of Love. “We love because he first loved us.”

Bible Verse for September: *1 John 4:7*

“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God”.

The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Rollie Schlessman by his family.

Council asks the congregation to pray that we all strive to see one another, and the world, through God's eyes.

Communion Clean-up today: Sue & Lynn Schlessman

Sept. 27 – Set-up – Paula Hoffman Laws Clean-up – Paula

Thank you for your willingness to help with this important ministry. If you would like to help, please see Elizabeth Libben or Sandy Thompson.

Attention Members Special Congregational Meeting: Immediately following worship **TODAY**, a special congregational meeting will be held to discuss the future of the parsonage.

Sunday School Classes are back in session in our fellowship hall. We need your help, so the classes are not disrupted. Please refrain from going through the fellowship hall and kitchen while classes are in session. If you need to use the restroom, please use the Upper Room restroom. Thank you for your support in helping our teachers and students. Signs are posted as a reminder.

St. John's Pet Blessing: Please bring in a picture of your pet on **Sunday, October 4th** and we will do a blessing during youth time.

Getting to Know Our Neighbors: This year, a focus at St John's is getting to know our neighbors. How can we love who we don't know? Our next field trip is scheduled for October 22, when we will go with Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries for a public immersive experience in Cleveland. The experience is 9-12, plus drive time. Space is very limited and open to the entire public, so please let Pastor Stacy know if you can join **ASAP**. Thank you to Lynn and Sue for helping organize this!

Youth Event:

Trip to the apple orchard: All kids and their families are invited to join us September 27th (rain date October 4th) with a trip to Burnham Apple Orchard from 4-6 PM. St John's will sponsor games for the group, and hopefully a hayride! Please text Pastor Stacy (419) 680-0358 if you are able to go.

Endowment Grant Applications are being accepted: please contact a member of the endowment team and they will be glad to mail you an application. The requests need to be presented to the Endowment committee no later than October 4, 2026. You can mail the application back to the church, put your request in the endowment mailbox in the basement or present it to any member of the committee. The committee members are John Miller, Ted Call, Jeff Justi, Bob Stacy, Kathy Schlessman, Ron Zorn, Pastor Stacy. If you have any questions, please see a member of the endowment committee.

The Endowment Team will hold its quarterly meeting in mid to late October, at which time all grant applications that have been presented will be reviewed and voted on. Those that are approved will be sent to the Finance Team for additional review and approval.

Happy Birthday to Hunter Cantu and Chuck Ruggles.

Happy Anniversary to Jim and Bonnie Semon.

ST. JOHN'S CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER 20TH THRU OCTOBER 4TH

Sunday, September 20	9:15 am 9:15 am 10:30 am 11:30 am	Adult Sunday Class begins 1 Corinthians Sunday School for all ages Worship Special congregational meeting
Wednesday, September 23	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
Sunday, September 27	9:00 am 9:15 am 10:30 am 4:00 pm	Catechism Class Sunday School all ages/Lynn's Study Worship Youth Apple Orchard Event
Wednesday, September 30	5:30 pm	Choir Practice
Sunday, October 4	9:00 am 9:15 am 10:30 am	Catechism Class Sunday School for all ages/Lynn's Study Worship