

**THE CHURCH**  
*God* ~~WE~~ **WANTS**

**A CHURCH THAT TAKES UP ITS CROSSES**

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

# **BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** | York, Nebraska

*September 3, 2023*

## **SERIES THEME: THE CHURCH GOD WANTS**

"I want a church that..." How would you complete that statement? Would you focus on size—big or small? Would you think more about style—formal versus laid back? Is it certain desired church programs that come to mind? What exactly do you want in a church? In this worship series, we see that that is not the right question. Scripture says Jesus bought the Church with his blood. So, the right question then becomes: what does God want in a church? You might find a church that runs all the youth programs you want or has a vibe that you enjoy or is in your ideal location. But if that church is not doing what Christ wants it do, then it really is not a spiritually healthy place to be. So, let us think about the church God wants. What does it look like? What are its priorities? What does it all do?

## **THEME OF THE DAY: A CHURCH THAT TAKES US ITS CROSSES**

Some churches teach that if one follows God, God responds by granting prosperity and peace. Today Jesus teaches that is nonsense. The Son of God tells us that if we are his disciple, if we are part of his Church, we will have to bear crosses. Believers will suffer in this world, oftentimes for no other reason than they are believers. It is painful to struggle against the temptations and priorities of this world. It can be agonizing to face the same scorn and ridicule Jesus faced. Why bother? We carry our crosses in gratitude for Jesus carrying his cross, one too heavy for us to bear because it was weighted down with our sin. We carry our crosses because we know that in those moments of struggle, we are forced to turn to Christ and rely on his strength. The church takes up its crosses, because this is the Christian path, the one Jesus himself walked: first the cross, then the crown.

**Worship Leader**  
**Organist/Pianist**

Pastor Justin Wilkens  
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## **Acknowledgments**

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## **The Service, Setting Three (page 188 in Christian Worship 21)**

### **Hymn: 601 All People That on Earth Do Dwell**

*Stand*

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **Confession**

*CW 155*

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

**Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Almighty and merciful Father,**

**we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.**

**We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.**

**We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.**

**We have done those things that we should not have done,**

**and we have not done those things that we should have done.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord!**

**Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,**

**according to your promises in Christ Jesus.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Lord, Have Mercy**

*CW 213*

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful and answer me.

**Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

# Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



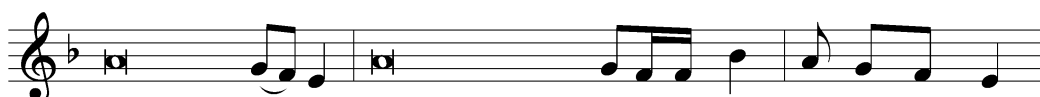
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



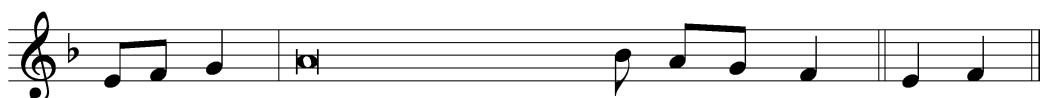
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## **THE WORD**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption. Grant us courage to take up our cross daily and follow him wherever he leads; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Be seated*

### **First Reading**

*Jeremiah 15:15–21*

*When the prophet Jeremiah grew tired of carrying his cross and complained, the Lord called on him to repent and promised salvation.*

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, you understand.

Remember me and care for me.

Take vengeance for me on those who persecute me.

You are slow to anger.

Do not take me away.

Keep in mind that for your sake I bear disgrace.

<sup>16</sup> Your words came to me, and I devoured them.

Your words became my joy,

the delight of my heart,

because I bear your name,

O Lord God of Armies.

<sup>17</sup> I did not sit with the band of partygoers,

nor did I celebrate with them.

I sat alone, because your hand was upon me.

You filled me with indignation.

<sup>18</sup> Why is my pain unending?

Why is my wound incurable, refusing to heal?

Will you be as deceptive as an intermittent stream to me,  
like a source of water that a person can't depend on?

<sup>19</sup> Therefore this is what the Lord says.

If you repent, I will take you back,

so that you may stand before me.

If what you say is worthwhile and not worthless,

you will be my spokesman.

They must turn to you,

but you must not turn to them.

<sup>20</sup> I will make you like a bronze wall to this people.

They will fight against you,

but they will not overcome you,

because I am with you to save you

and to rescue you, declares the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> I will rescue you from the hand of the wicked,

and I will deliver you from the grasp of the ruthless.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Psalm of the Day: 31: In Front of Hymnal- In You, O LORD, I Have Taken Refuge**

### **Second Reading**

*Romans 8:18–25*

*St. Paul teaches God's Church that no cross can compare with the crown of glory that is waiting.*

### **Present Suffering and Future Glory**

<sup>18</sup> For I conclude that our sufferings at the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> In fact, creation is waiting with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup> For creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in the hope <sup>21</sup> that even creation itself will be set free from slavery to corruption, in order to share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that all of creation is groaning with birth pains right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup> And not only creation, but also we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup> Indeed, it was for this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he already sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for something we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patient endurance.

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

*Stand*

**Gospel Acclamation**

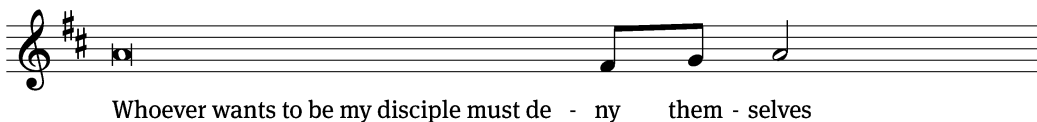
*Mark 8:34*



*Refrain*



*Tone*



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**Gospel**

*Matthew 16:21–26*

*Jesus calls his Church to walk in his path: first comes the cross, then comes the crown.*

**Jesus Predicts His Death**

<sup>21</sup> From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed, and on the third day be raised again.

<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "May you receive mercy, Lord! This will never happen to you."

<sup>23</sup> But Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a snare to me because you are not thinking the things of God, but the things of men." <sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. <sup>25</sup> In fact whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> After all, what will it benefit a person if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul? Or what can a person give in exchange for his soul?"

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*Be seated*

**Hymn of the Day: 694 Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken**

**Sermon**

*Stand*

**Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,**



**the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Be seated*

## **Prayer of the Church**

Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.

**Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.**

Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.

**Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.**

Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.

**Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.**

Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.

**Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.**

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

**Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.**

Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. [Pour out your special blessing on . . . *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.

**Lift the eyes of the distressed to your love in Christ.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

### *Silent prayer*

Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## **Offering**

**Offering Hymn: 831 Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me**

*sts. 1–3*

## **Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

## **Prayer**

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Hymn: 867 Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near**

## **NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Today:** 10:30 AM Worship

**Sunday:** 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

**CONNECTION CARDS:** Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at [www.bethelyork.com](http://www.bethelyork.com) on the member connect tab or scan this code.



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Personal assisted listening devices are available.

**Given to the Lord:** Attendance: Worship 54, Offerings: Operating: Needed 2,920.37, Given \$2,115.25. **To God be the glory!**

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