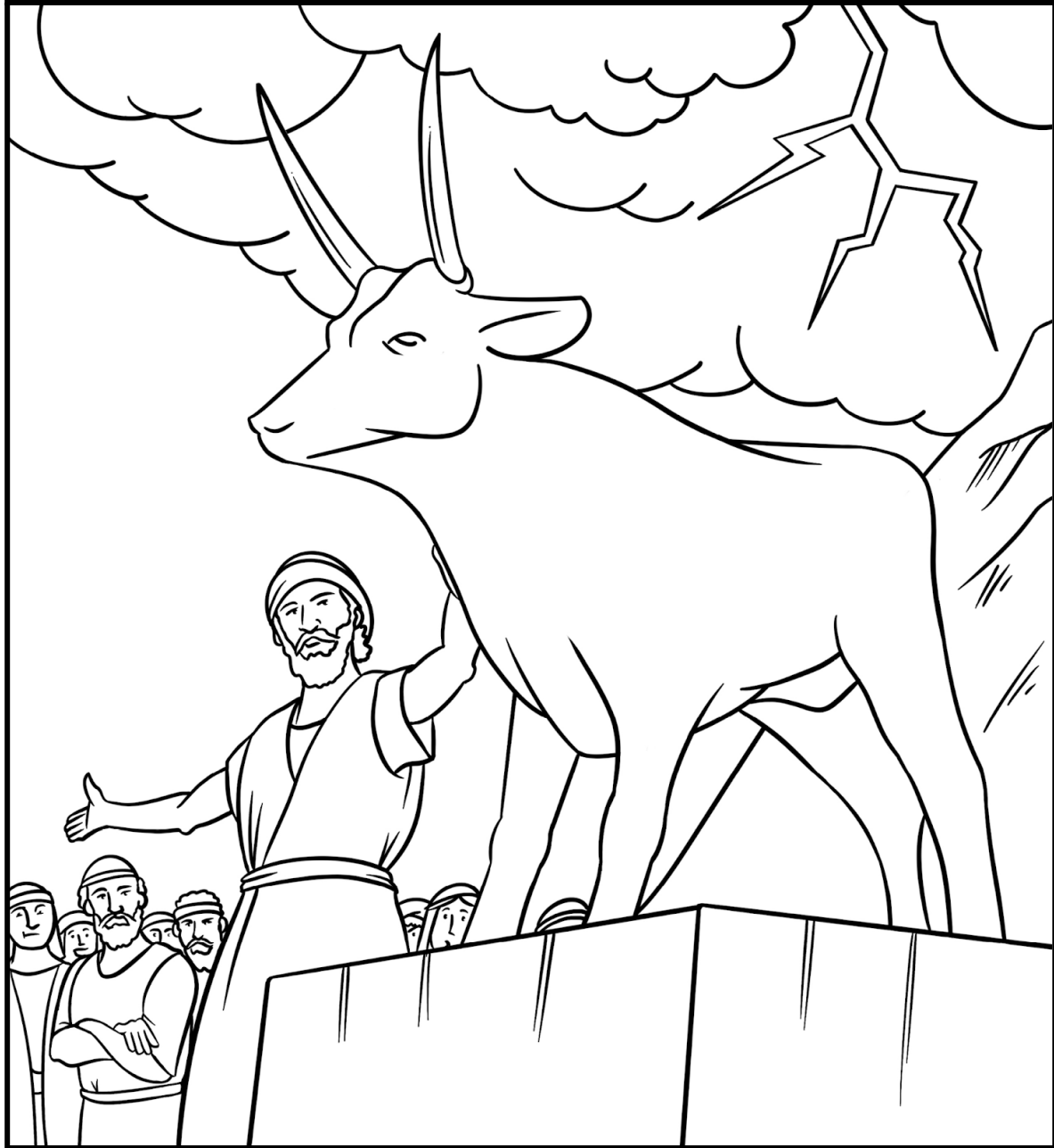




TREE OF LIFE

Christian Fellowship

“for Healing, Obedience, & Peace on Earth” (H.O.P.E.)



Pentecost XII | 24 Aug 2025

“Avoid These Practices”

Acts 15:1-40

✠ The Way of Jesus Liturgy ✠

Invocation

Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, ♦ **you created us to serve and protect your creation.** ♦ But we selfishly destroyed the balance of your creation ♦ **by choosing our own “good” and making Civilization.** ♦ So you sent your Son Jesus to embody the Way of the Lamb, ♦ **so we will die to Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence.** ♦ And now we are being reborn through your Holy Spirit ♦ **to care for all of your creation by following Jesus’s Way of faith, hope, and love.**

Processional Song — GC2 515 “We Are the Light of the World”

- ♫ *Blessed are they who are poor and empty, theirs is the kingdom of God. Bless us, O Lord, make us poor and empty; bless us, O Lord, our God.* ♫ (REFRAIN)
- REFRAIN: ♫ *We are the light of the world, may our light shine before all, that they may see the good that we do, and give glory to God.* ♫
- ♫ *Blessed are they who are meek and humble, they will inherit the earth. Bless us, O Lord, make us meek and humble; bless us O Lord our God.* ♫ (REFRAIN)
- ♫ *Blessed are they who thirst for your justice, they will be satisfied. Bless us, O Lord, hear our cry for justice; bless us, O Lord, our God.* ♫ (REFRAIN)
- ♫ *Blessed are they who show others mercy, they will know mercy, too. Bless us, O Lord, may we show your mercy; bless us, O Lord, our God.* ♫ (REFRAIN)
- ♫ *Blessed are they who live your way of peace, they are the children of God. Bless us, O Lord, make us peaceful people; bless us, O Lord, our God.* ♫ (REFRAIN)

Pentecost Litany

Jesus has ascended to the Father, ♦ **but he has not left us as orphans.**
He has begun to return as he promised, ♦ **by pouring out his Spirit upon us.**
He dwells among us and all creation ♦ **and he has made us the Body of Christ.**

Prayer of the Day

Jesus says, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them.”
(the Christ candle is lit to remind us that Jesus is coming among us)

♫ *We are filled with the Spirit, and we follow the Lord, We are filled with the Spirit, and we follow the Lord, And we pray that all creation may one day be restored. And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love, Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.* ♫ (GC2 728)

The Lord Jesus be with you. ♦ **And also with you.** ♦ Let us pray. Heavenly Father, help us to avoid the practices of Civilization that will pollute our hearts and minds. In the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. † **Amen.**

† Baptism — The Way of Faith †

Surrendering to the Creator

Jesus says, “If you hold onto your life, ♦ **you will destroy it.** ♦ But if you let go of your life, ♦ **you will save it.** ♦ You must be born again through water and the Spirit ♦ **to enter the Creator’s Kingdom.”** ♦ Father, Son, & Holy Spirit ♦ **I surrender to you**

all of my † mind, all of my † heart, and all of my † body and † soul.

(we make the sign of the cross—touching forehead, heart, and shoulders)

Father, into your hands ♦ **I commit my spirit.** ♦ Father, not my will, ♦ **but your will be done.** ♪ *Take my life and all my heart, take my whole soul ev'ry part. Take my mouth and let it be, filled with your truth and mercy. ♪ Take my hands and let them love, with compassion from above. Take my feet and let them go, on the Way that Jesus showed. ♪ Take my money and fam'ly, give me faith and set me free. Take my life and teach me how to love all creation now. ♪ (LSB 783)*

Listening to the Creator

Jesus says, “Come to me, all of you who are tired and burdened. Learn from me and practice my teachings and you will find rest for your souls. Those who listen will live.”

♪ *Listen to what Jesus teaches, listen to him every day. Listen as you walk and follow, listen also as you pray. Listen to him every moment, listen with an open mind. Listen to find peace and patience, listen so you will be kind. ♪ (LSB 770)*

Remembering the Saints & Martyrs — James the Apostle

Father, we give you thanks for the great cloud of saints and witnesses who have gone before us and have embodied the Way of Jesus. Today we remember James who was one of the Twelve Apostles that faithfully spread and lived the message of Jesus. He was the first of the Twelve to follow in the path of Jesus, being beheaded in 44 AD. Help us learn from his faith and example, † **Amen.**

Chanted Psalm — *Psalm 137*



♪ *By the waters of Babylon we sat | down and wept,
* as we remembered | our home land.
We were now slaves in a | foreign land,
* trying to remember our time | with the Lord.
But Babylon is doomed to | be destroyed,
* and we eagerly wait on the Lord | to do it.
Babylon will be repaid | by the Lord
* for what it has | done to us! ♪*

Law & Prophets — Isaiah 44:6-8

The Prophets reading comes from Isaiah 44. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

Epistle — Romans 7:1-12

The Epistle reading comes from Romans 7. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

† Holy Gospel † — Acts 15:12-21

We stand for the word of Jesus. ♪ *We praise our Lord Jesus who comes with healing in his hand. He frees us who are slaves of death, he raises us to stand. He fills us with his love and truth, he gives us all we need. We come to listen now and on his living*

word to feed. ♪ (tune: LSB 444)

The holy Gospel comes from Acts 15. ♦ **Blessed are those who listen to Jesus.**

If you have ears to hear, then listen! ♦ **Lord Jesus, help us to practice your Word.**

Message

† Repentance — The Way of Hope †

Confronting Our Past

Jesus says, “I know everything you do. Pay attention and remove the log from your own eye. I have called you out of Civilization. Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”

(silence for reflection)

For prostituting ourselves with the false lovers of self, family, and nation,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to love you with every thought, word, and deed.**

For trusting the technology and works of human hands, especially money,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to trust in your power alone.**

For being double-minded hypocrites who misrepresent your name,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to obediently live as your children.**

For overworking and oppressing land, animals, and each other,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to live in restful peace with all creation.**

For not respecting those you send to guide us and teach us,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to listen to our fathers and mothers in Christ.**

For being violent to our bodies and your creation,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to love all creation, including our enemies.**

For degrading ourselves and others with our sexuality,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to keep our sexuality within marriage.**

For trying to possess and control your creation,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to share everything we have.**

For not being vulnerable and honest with others,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to be truthful in all situations.**

For competing with others and desiring more than we need,

♦ **Father, forgive us and help us to be content in all circumstances.**

Father, turn us back to walking in your Spirit. ♪ ***Lord Father we have wandered and hidden from your face. Rescue your whole creation with your almighty grace. From trust in wealth and weapons and blindness to your Way, save us and all creation with your own hands, we pray.*** ♪ (LSB 449)

Jesus says, “I discipline those I love. If you love your self, family, or nation more than me, you cannot be my disciple. Come out of Civilization, my people, so you will not share in its sicknesses. Not one stone will be left standing, it will all be torn down.” Will you turn away from Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence and reaffirm your Baptism into Jesus’s Way of faith, hope, and love? ♦ **Yes, I renounce Civilization’s Way and pledge to follow Jesus.** ♦ Jesus says, “Put your sword away. If you live by the sword, you will die by the sword. But if you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you.” Will you release all debts and grudges that you hold against anyone—including every member of this church? ♦ **Yes, I forgive all those who have hurt me, frustrated me, or owe me anything.** ♦

Jesus says, “Your sins are forgiven. Get up and walk. Go and sin no more.” † Amen.

Song of the Day — “A Council Gathered One Fine Day” (tune: LSB 744)

- ♫ *A Council gathered one fine day so they could make the call: Were all who followed Jesus’ Way still subject to the Law? ♪*
- ♫ *Must Gentile converts first be Jews before they could be saved? Should they observe the many rules—or could those rules be waived? ♪*
- ♫ *What great debate they must have had! “What matters — law or grace?” The very future of the church Was pondered in that place. ♪*
- ♫ *Paul spoke about outsiders then: “God loves them — there’s no doubt! And if God’s Spirit works in them, how can we keep them out?” ♪*
- ♫ *The council, speaking with respect, said unity should win — and we, the church, should not reject those God has welcomed in. ♪*
- ♫ *All people must stop the world’s ways: idolatry and blood. What binds the church is Jesus’ Way: humble faith, hope, and love. ♪*

Waiting on the Creator

- ♫ *Our Father, bring your Rule and will to earth. Give what we need for worry-free rebirth. Bring peace among us and forgive us too, as we forgive and love in all we do.*
- ♫ *Protect us from all things that will mislead. Keep us from selfishness, violence, and greed. We place our lives into your hands this day. Teach us to listen and to walk your Way. Amen. ♪ (LSB 637)*

(incense is lit to symbolize our prayers ascending to God and as its smell fills this space we are reminded of his presence among us)

Jesus says, “Learn from the birds. They do not store up for tomorrow and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Do not fear or worry about tomorrow. Seek only your Father’s Kingdom and he will give you everything you need.”

*In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, set us apart from Civilization in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Take charge of our lives and all those in authority. Use everything that happens to bring your good judgment and healing upon all creation. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, provide for us, protect us, and heal our brokenness. Especially this day we remember Charlene Sargent, John Espino, Bill Mellott, Cebra Sims, Celise Sims, and those we name in our hearts... Father, give us exactly what we need this day and teach us to be content with that. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, forgive us and free us from all that enslaves us. Help us to walk away from our anxieties, traumas, and addictions to Civilization’s Way, so we may walk in Jesus’s Way. Empower us to love and forgive everyone, even our enemies, in the way you have loved and forgiven us. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, humble us and remind us that we have no strength apart from you. Stay with us in difficult times and save us from our selfishness. Comfort us in the certain hope that all your creation and children will be renewed and raised from the dead. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♫ **Lord have mercy.** ♫* Father, help us to let go and surrender everything into your loving hands, trusting that you work all things for the good of those who love you. ♦ **Our Father in Heaven, may your name be holy, may your Kingdom come, and may your will be done—on Earth as in Heaven. Give us this**

day what we need for today. Forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. Do not abandon us when we are tempted, but pull us away from what is evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours—now and forever. † Amen.

† Communion — The Way of Love †

Sharing the Lord's Peace

Jesus says, “Make peace with each other ♦ **before you come to the Lord's altar.**
By this all people will know that you are my disciples: ♦ **if you love each other.**”

Offering & Musical Offering

Jesus says, “Do not store up things on earth. To be my disciple you must give up everything you own. Sell your possessions and give to the poor.” We offer all we have to the Lord, while also offering gifts to support this communion.

Pledge of Allegiance

♫ *We come before you, Lord, to bow. We lay our lives at your feet now. All things are yours, we own nothing! Our lives are in your hands this day. Give what we need, O Lord, we pray. Please protect us, provide for us! Watch over us, ever with us, always love us!* ♫ (LSB 816) Jesus says, “If you pledge your allegiance to me before others, then I will pledge my allegiance to you before my heavenly Father.”

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one God, the all-powerful Father, who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is God's only Son. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He loved and he suffered. Under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, died, and was buried. On the third day he was raised from the dead. He ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is coming to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will not end.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the baptism for forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life in the age to come. † Amen.**

Thanksgiving — Εὐχαριστία

Let us give thanks to our Creator! ♦ **It is right to give him thanks and praise!**

Father, we praise and thank you, ♦ **for you provide, protect, love, and renew us and all creation!** ♦ We are grateful for all that you give, especially for the birthdays of David Sasnett & Ralph Heiden... Father, we thank you for marrying yourself to us and uniting Heaven and Earth, Spirit and Flesh, and Christ and the Church through your Son Jesus! ♫ *Joyful, joyful we adore you, Creator of all that lives! Earth and heaven praise and thank you, for your love and all you give! Fields and forests, fruit trees and birds, thunderstorms and starry skies, seas and mountains, and grazing herds, praising you who never dies!* ♫ (LSB 803)

† Words of Our Lord Jesus †

On the night before our Lord Jesus was crucified, he revealed his Way of rescuing all creation from the Way of Civilization. Before supper, Jesus humbly washed the feet of

his students and enemies. Jesus said, ♦ **“Follow my example. Love each other, even your enemies, in the same way I have loved you.”** ♦ During supper, Jesus then took the bread and broke it. He gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is being given for you. Do the same for each other in my memory.” After supper, Jesus then took the cup and gave thanks. He said, “This is my blood which is being shed for you, for the forgiveness of all of your sin. Do the same for each other in my memory.”

♪ *Oh come Lord Jesus come and dine and give yourself through bread and wine. Feed us so we may have new birth, and bring your rule ov'r all the earth. Come now, come now! Our Lord Jesus and bring your healing love to us!* ♪ (LSB 357)

Sharing the Bread & Wine

Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood is united with me and will be raised from the dead.” As we feed on the Bread of Heaven ♦ **we are made members of Christ’s Body.** ♦ We no longer live for ourselves ♦ **but Christ lives within us.** ♦ We invite all Baptized members of the holy universal Church, who give their undivided allegiance to Jesus and are at peace with their brothers and sisters in Christ, to join us ♦ **as the Creator’s Lamb mysteriously gives himself to us in, with, and under this bread, wine, and communion.** ♪ *We fall down now before you, Jesus you are the Lord. We lay our crowns before you, and put down all our swords. We give you all of our lives, we will hold nothing back. For you gave us everything, there is nothing we lack. You are the true Lamb of God, you gave your life for all. Teach us now to live like lambs, to trust you as we fall.* ♪ (LSB 941)

Recessional Song — “The Earth is the Lord’s” (tune: LSB 802)

- ♪ *“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” Creation reminds us, O God, of your love. By grace we are learning, as year leads to year, We’re called to be stewards, your caretakers here.* ♪
- ♪ *Too often, O God, we abuse your good earth. We fail to remember its beauty and worth. We take from creation much more than we need, We threaten your world through indifference and greed.* ♪
- ♪ *Help us now to nurture this world that we share, To stop all our violence so we might give care, To all of your creatures from greatest to least, So all might share in your kingdom’s loving feast.* ♪
- ♪ *May we be good stewards of all that you give, Protecting creation wherever we live. May we be a church that renews and restores And lovingly cares for this earth that is yours.* ♪

Agape Feast & Text Discussion

Jesus says, “Do you love me? Then feed my sheep.” We now move to our Bible study room to continue devoting ourselves ♦ **“to the Apostles’ teaching, to communion with each other, to the sharing of bread, and to prayer.”**

Sent to “Do the Same in My Memory”

Christ Jesus, you are the Lamb, who has laid down your body and blood for us, ♦ **help us to be lambs who do the same for each other in your memory.** † Amen.

Jesus says, “Go and live this truth: ♦ **The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!** ♦ Heal

the sick, raise the dead, ♦ **cleanse the unclean, and cast out evil spirits.** ♦ Freely you have received from the Creator, ♦ **now freely you must give.** ♦ I am sending you like lambs among wolves, ♦ **but do not fear, take up your cross and follow me.”**

♫ *Give us mouths to sing your glory, hearts your teachings to obey, hands that live your love that fills us, feet to walk your holy Way. Holy Spirit, light-creator, may the truth which you do send, fill our lives with loving mercy and trusting peace without end!* ♫ (LSB 578)

Blessing

Jesus says, “Blessed are you in your poverty and suffering, for you are in the Creator’s Kingdom. Blessed are you in your humility, for you will inherit the earth. Blessed are you when you are merciful and peaceful, for you will find mercy and peace.” † **Amen.**

- * **Faith & Film:** “1883” (Aug 25, Sep 1, 8) | “Doubt” (Sep 15, 22) | “Where the Crawdads Sing” (Sep 29, Oct 6) | “Legends of the Fall” (Oct 13, 20)
- * **Growing in H.O.P.E.:** Wednesdays @ DG (5:30 pm food/fellowship, 6:00 pm study)
Soup & Psalms: Aug 27, Sep 3 (potluck), 10
Questions & Conversations: Oct 15 (potluck), 22, 29, Nov 5 (potluck), 12, 19
- * **Choir Start:** Aug 28 (Thurs), 6 pm
- * **Game Night:** First Fridays @ DG (6 pm, BYOB), starting Sep 5 (Chiefs vs. Chargers)
- * **Oak Street Health Info Meeting:** Sep 9 (Tues) 5:30 pm in the Bible study room
- * **Holistic Health Fair:** Sep 13 (Sat) 10 am - 2 pm, set-up at 9 am.
- * **Holistic Health Class:** Sep 17, 24, Oct 1, 8 (Wed) 6-7 pm in our Bible study room
- * **Fall Festival:** Oct 5 (Sun) @ DG, Worship (10 am) and Lunch (11:15 am)
- * **Trunk or Treat:** Oct 30 (Thurs) 6-8 pm in the church parking lot

Weekly Calendar | August 24 - 31, 2025

Sun, Aug 24	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Acts 15:1-40
Mon, Aug 25	6:00 pm	Faith & Film
Wed, Aug 27	6:00 pm	Soup & Psalms
Sat, Aug 30	7-9 am	Breakfast & Devotion
Sun, Aug 31	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Acts 15:41—16:40

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