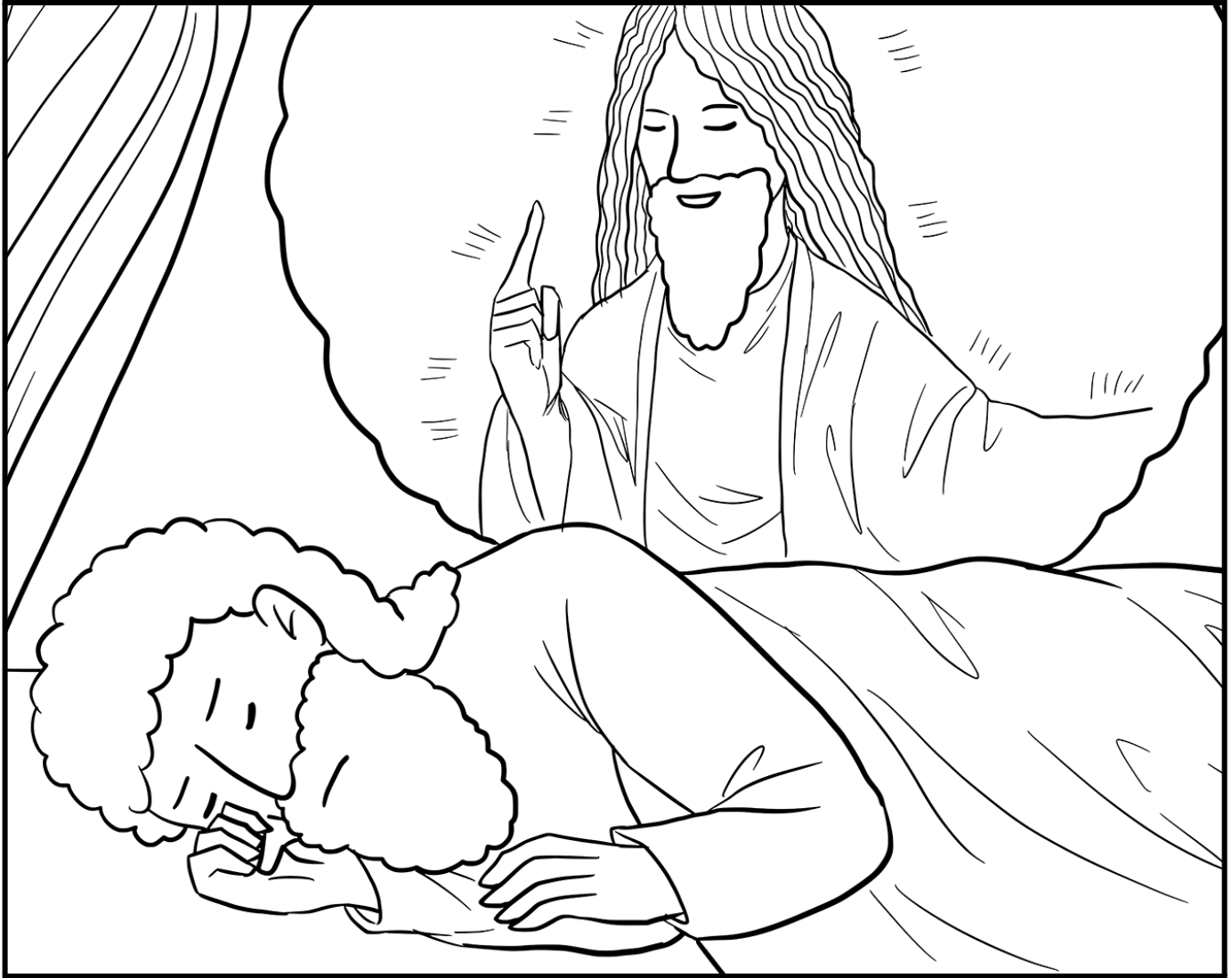




TREE OF LIFE

Christian Fellowship

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



Pentecost XV | 14 Sep 2025

“I Am With You”

Acts 18:1-22

✠ 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 see that you are always with us and we are never alone. 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 — Clare of Assisi

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 Clare (1194-1253 AD) who left her life of wealth and nobility behind to start a Christian community of women who lived with no money and followed Jesus's way of life. She said, "They say we are poor, but how can we be when we have God in our hearts?" Help us learn from her faith and example, † **Amen.**

Chanted Psalm — *Psalm 140*



♪ *Rescue me, Lord, from | all evil;
* protect me from death | and violence.
I say to the Lord, “You | are my God.”
* Hear, O Lord, my cry | for mercy.
You O Lord are my strong | rescuer,
* you protect me in times | of trouble.
I know that the Lord secures justice | for the poor.
* He upholds the cause of | the needy. ♪*

Law & Prophets — Isaiah 47:8-11

The Prophets reading comes from Isaiah 48. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

Epistle — Romans 8:18-39

The Epistle reading comes from Romans 8. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

† Holy Gospel † — Acts 18:5-11

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 18. ♦ **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 — *LSB 878 “Abide With Me”*

- ♫ *Abide with me, fast falls the eventide. The darkness deepens, Lord, with me abide. When other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.* ♪
- ♫ *I need your presence ev’ry passing hour. What but your grace can foil the tempter’s power? Who like yourself, my guide and strength can be? Through good and evil, Lord, abide with me.* ♪
- ♫ *Swift to its close now comes life’s little day. The world’s joys fade, its pleasures pass away. Death and decay in all around I see—oh Lord who never dies, abide with me.*
- ♫ *I fear no foe with you at hand to bless. Though ills have weight and tears their bitterness. Where is death’s sting? Where, grave, your victory? I rise anew if you abide with me.* ♪
- ♫ *Hold now your cross before my closing eyes. Grow me through loss and help me to arise. New life breaks through as death is forced to flee. In life, in death, oh Lord, abide with me.* ♪

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 birthday of Donna Payne... 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 — LSB 684 “Come Unto Me, Ye Weary”

- ♫ *“Come follow me you weary, and I will give you rest.” Oh blessed voice of Jesus, which comes to hearts oppressed! It tells of resurrection, of freedom, grace, and peace, of joy that has no ending, of love that will not cease.* ♫
- ♫ *“Come follow me you blind ones, and I will give you light.” Oh healing voice of Jesus, which comes to clear the night! Our hearts were filled with darkness, and we had lost our way. But you have given new eyes, so we don’t go astray.* ♫
- ♫ *“Come follow me you dying, and I will give you life.” Oh raising voice of Jesus, which comes to help our strife! The enemy is eager, the journey hard and long. But you have made us mighty, and stronger than the strong.* ♫
- ♫ *“And whosoever follows, I will not cast him out.” Oh patient love of Jesus, which drives away our doubt! And though we be unworthy, of love so great and free, he calls out to us daily, with his word, “Follow me!”* ♫

Ἀγάπη 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:** “Doubt” (Sep 15, 22) | “Where the Crawdads Sing” (Sep 29, Oct 6) | “Legends of the Fall” (Oct 13, 20) | “The Wonder” (Oct 27, Nov 3)
- * **Holistic Health Class:** Sep 17, 24, Oct 1, 8 (Wed) 6-7 pm in the Bible study room
- * **Growing in H.O.P.E.:** Wednesdays @ DG (5:30 pm food/fellowship, 6:00 pm study)

Questions & Conversations:

- Oct 15 (potluck) — “Suffering & Evil”
- Oct 22 — “Death & Dying”
- Oct 29 — “Heaven & Hell”
- Nov 5 (potluck) — “Salvation & Other Religions”
- Nov 12 — “Sabbath”
- Nov 19 — “Artificial Intelligence”

- * **Game Night:** First Fridays @ DG (6 pm, BYOB), Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 5
- * **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 | September 14 - 21, 2025

Sun, Sep 14	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Acts 18:1-22
Mon, Sep 15	6:00 pm	Faith & Film
Wed, Sep 17	6:00 pm	Holistic Health Class
Sat, Sep 20	7-9 am	Breakfast & Devotion
Sun, Sep 21	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast Acts 18:23—19:17

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