



17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2020

God's Promise to Abram

Often God's promises are filled in surprising ways.

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Announcements

Call to Worship

Our God flings stars into space and says,
"See! You are all my children, each and every one."
We come, the stars in the skies, the sand on the shore,
all God's children everywhere,
drawn to God, drawn to love,
drawn to worship.

Gathering Music

Lord, Please Lord

The Light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it.

Confession & Forgiveness

We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

God of all ages,

You have chosen us as your own, yet we so often live as if it were not so. We give in to things which are not good for us. We believe we know better than you. We refuse to put our trust in your promises. Sweep away our foolishness and bring us back into a trusting relationship with the one who has lovingly created us and longs to be our strength and life.

Dear people, hear the joyful words that God has forgiven us! Our misdeeds and folly are forgotten; grace and mercy abound. Let us give thanks that we have a compassionate creator! **Amen.**

Opening Song

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Red ELW 733 vv. 1,2

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You long for us to trust that you hold our lives safely in your hands. Reveal the surprises you have for us in your good time, and show us that your mercy never fails us, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching & song

Abram doubted that God would fulfill God's promise of descendants. But God reaffirmed God's promise, stating Abram's descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Often God's promises are grand, and they are fulfilled in surprising ways.

Invitation to the Word

Jesus Name Above All Names

**Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Savior glorious Lord
Emmanuel God is with us
Blessed Redeemer living Word**

Scripture Reading

Genesis 15:1-6

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

²But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴But the word of the Lord came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." ⁵He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Message

Special Music

"Power of the Blood"

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Sung before prayers

**What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear--
all because we do not carry ev'rything to God in prayer!**

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Often the plans we make look nothing like the amazing future you have in store for us. Keep us open to the unexpected and surprise us with your grace.

Faithful God, **Hear our prayer.**

As the days and nights even out and we reach the midpoint of the season, we pause to thank you for the fruits of the earth, the beauty of nature, and our interdependence with this planet on which we live.

Faithful God, **Hear our prayer.**

When we try to count the stars, we fall short; how easily we underestimate the vastness of your creation. Give us respect for our relative size within the cosmos and awe at the splendor of all that you have made.

Faithful God, **Hear our prayer.**

Be present with those who have given up hope of anything improving in their lives, and compel us to encourage others by the promises you give to all. Send your healing strength to those whom we name today...

Faithful God, **Hear our prayer.**

We celebrate Bishop Nelson Wesley Trout, the first African-American *bishop* in the ELCA and all who have played pioneering roles in your earthly church. Give us courage to walk where you lead, even if no one has ever walked that way before.

Faithful God, **Hear our prayer.**

Other petitions are offered.

Our prayers—and our lives—are safe within your hands. We trust in your faithfulness and give thanks that you have heard us, for the sake of Jesus. **Amen.**

Offering Prayer

Heavenly Father, in response to your faithful promises, we offer our gifts for the sake of your kingdom. These gifts were first given to us by you and now, we gratefully return them for your Church. May you bless them and multiply their impact for the sake of the poor, the hungry and suffering in the world. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Sharing God's Peace

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

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

Blessing

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God,
Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit,
be with you today and always.
Amen.

Sending Song

Praise to You, O God of Mercy

Red ELW 208

**Praise to you, O God of mercy:
thanks be to you forever!
Raising high the weak and lowly:
thanks be to you forever!**

**From of old you loved and sought us:
thanks be to you forever!
Truth and justice you have taught us:
thanks be to you forever!**

**Strong is your faithfulness,
strong is your love,
rememb'ring your covenant of life with us.**

**Praise to you, O God of mercy:
thanks be to you forever!
Raising high the weak and lowly:
thanks be to you forever!
Thanks be to you forever!**

Sending

Go in peace and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

In the Presence of Jehovah

- arr. Mark Hayes



Participants

- Pastors: Courtney Steitz, Michael TeKrony
- Assisting Minister: Paul Thomas
- Liturgy leaders: Lisa Grimm, Darlene Mader, Bonnie Yockstick
Pam Thomas, Edgar, Jade & Gavin Tomlinson & Youth,
Melinda Powelson
- Special Music: Diane & Kevin Klinkerfues
- Prayer Music: Jordan Ortman
- Postlude: Meredith Lusby
- Musicians: Diane & Kevin Klinkerfues
- Photographs: Amy Evancheck