

Sermon Followed by Service

August 1, 2021

Mark 7:31-37

Your neighbors are new to town; their daughter is sick; they don't have a doctor. You like your doctor; what do you do? You give a recommendation. We recommend doctors and dentists, movies and restaurants. On our caps and t-shirts, we wear our recommendations. On our phones we twitter and tweet and message, on the internet we blog and vlog and book. When we like something ... when we think something is good, we want to share the good news.

And so in our lesson, Jesus is recommended, not just 4 stars, but 5 stars - **“He has done all things well.”** So what did Jesus do to get 5 stars? Jesus' 5-star performance starts with a man who can't hear and, to make things worse, he couldn't talk right. Some of you might remember Nikki. A few years ago we had a teacher who couldn't hear. She was - still is - amazing. But working with her, some of us got an idea of just how frustrating it could be for her to not hear and know all that is going on. Put yourself in this man's place. You see people all around you, but you don't know what they're up to. You see people happy, but you can't join in. You see people scared, but you don't know why. You see people scowl, and you figure they're scowling at you. Why are they happy, scowling, scared? You want to ask, but you can't ask because you can't talk. Whenever you say something, people look at you like you're strange, like something is wrong with you. With all that, how do you feel inside? Confused? Lonely? Hurting? Heartbroken? Probably all that and more. But someone brings you to Jesus.

And what does Jesus do? He takes you aside - away from the moving lips you can't hear ... away from the pointing fingers, fingers pointing at you ... away from the staring faces, staring at you like some sideshow, some accident waiting to happen. Jesus takes you aside and shows he's there for you. He puts his fingers into your ears that don't work. He spits and touches your tongue that doesn't work. He looks up to heaven. Why? You know where every good gift comes from. And he sighs. You can't hear it, but you can see it - he hurts for you. And he says to you: **“Ephphatha ... be opened!”** Now by the power of his word ... those ears he touched ... that tongue he touched ... now you're able to hear; now you're able to talk right.

What do you say? What do you twitter-tweet, Facebook, blog, vlog, and message? What do you want people to know? Jesus has your recommendation! **“He has done everything well!”**

Is that the recommendation we give Jesus - 5 stars, thumbs up, he's #1 - no if, ands, or buts about it? Or do we ever throw shade or hedge on our recommendation?

What do I mean? How about this for a recommendation? We say: **“He has done everything well,”** but we live: “He really isn’t worth my time right now.” That’s not much of a recommendation, is it? Or we say: **“Jesus has done everything well,”** but then we worry and fret like we can’t count on him today. Or we say: **“Jesus has done everything well,”** but then in some way we add: “but what he says about sex is so old-fashioned, what he says about money is so impractical, what he says about forgiving and loving your enemies, he really doesn’t know what he’s talking about.” Do we ever give Jesus those kinds of recommendations?

What does the world do with those kinds of recommendations? They smirk and walk right on by. Not with a “who’s Jesus?” but with a “Who cares.” And what does Jesus do with that kind of recommendation? **“Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”** That’s one of those lines I want to read by quickly. But I need to let it sink in: **“Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”** What’s it like to be disowned by the Father? There’s a world of people gnashing their teeth in hell who know what it’s like to be disowned by the Father. How many of them thought themselves too smart, too strong, too busy for God? How many of them thought God too small, too weak, too out of touch to deserve their trust and allegiance? Whatever their reason, whatever their reason for not standing with God, today, they’re gnashing their teeth and kicking themselves for being so stuck on themselves.

There is also someone else who knows what it’s like to be disowned by the Father. He didn’t think God too small for him; he didn’t think himself too big for God. No, he lived his whole life in line with God, speaking up for God, speaking out for God, recommending God. And never, not once, did he throw shade or hedge on his recommendation. In every way, his whole life was a recommendation for God. And God knew it; time and again from heaven he recommended Jesus: **“This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him.”** And yet, what do we hear from Jesus? On the cross, disowned by his own people, abandoned by his own disciples, we hear Jesus disowned by his own Father: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** Why? Jesus was taking our place, disowned by God for the times we have disowned him with our words, disowned by God for the ways we have disowned him with our living. Yes, Jesus knows the pain of being disowned by God. And he knows the joy, the peace, the relief of being taken back in by God.

Jesus wants you to know that same joy and peace; that’s why he went to the cross. Jesus wants you to know that same joy and peace of being taken back by God, so he shares with you God’s promise: “I forgive you. I forgive you for all of it. And I have a place for you with me in heaven, forever!” But that’s not all. At the same time that he’s telling you: “You’re forgiven full and free, and I have a place for you in heaven full and free,” Jesus is recommending you to God as forgiven and right, recommending you as

saint, recommending you as family, as son, as daughter fit for God. Yes, Jesus - the One who has done all things well - is recommending you ... he's putting his name on you for God and for heaven.

Sounds good, doesn't it? Do you know how to make it sound even better? As Jesus is filling heaven with his recommendation of you, fill the world with your recommendation of him! Echo the recommendation we have in our lesson - "**he has done all things well!**" Tell your world - at home, at work, over the back fence - tell your world what Jesus has done for you. When they share their worries - yes, you can be honest about your worries, but instead of playing the "my troubles are bigger than your troubles" game, tell them how Jesus has answered your prayers and taken care of you. When they're beating themselves up in guilt, tell them how Jesus has forgiven you and he has paid for their sin too. When they're afraid of what comes after all this (world), let them know the promise of heaven. Let them know: "**He has done all things well.**"

But don't stop there. How did the man who was healed in our lesson get to see Jesus and hear Jesus? He didn't get, he couldn't get to Jesus on his own. Was it his family, his friends, his neighbors who brought him to Jesus? We don't know who, but somebody brought that man to Jesus. They knew Jesus; they knew what that man needed; and when they saw the opportunity, they went out of their way to bring him to Jesus. I'd love to tell you a story about how hard it was to convince the deaf man to come along, about how many road blocks they had to blow through to get to Jesus; but I don't know any of that. I'd love to tell you how easy it will be for you and how every time you bring somebody to Jesus you'll see a wonderful miracle. But I can't promise you that. What I can do is point you to Jesus. Listen to his invitation - "**Bring the little children to me.**" Listen to his invitation - "**Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.**" Wouldn't it be said if that invitation were only for us to keep to ourselves? But it's not! We get to share his invitation! Listen to what Jesus commissions and empowers you to do - "**All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, go and make disciples.**" And know this - the people you tell and the people you bring ... Jesus loves them every bit as much as he loved the deaf man in our lesson. So point them to Jesus, bring them to Jesus, give Jesus the 5-star recommendation, and let them know: "**He has done all things well.**" Amen.

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
A Family Connecting in Christ



Pastor Kevin Raddatz
Principal Jon Woldt
501 West Park Avenue
Libertyville, IL 60048
847-362-4424
www.StJohnsLib.com

August 1, 2021

Service of Word & Sacrament

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we welcome Brooke Behl as our new Grade 3-4 Teacher. Just as we might share some favorite doctor, dentist, restaurant recommendations with her, our lessons remind us to share even more important recommendations with our family, friends, and neighbors - "Jesus does everything well!"

OPENING HYMN

"Good News of God Above"

Hymn 568

Good news of God above Is ours to tell abroad,
The Father's everlasting love In Christ the risen Lord.
For neighbors near and far The seed of life is sown;
Then spread the seed By word and deed
To make the Savior known.

The love of Christ proclaim Who left his home on high;
To live our human life he came, Our human death to die.
The Father's only Son Became the sinners' friend,
Our lot to share, Our sin to bear,
And death's dominion end.

The Lord of Glory lives! From cross and death and grave
His own abundant life he gives To those he died to save.
His righteousness and peace Declare from sea to sea;
His praises sound The world around
For Christ has made us free.

Hear now the Master's word To those who bear his name:
"So send I you; till all have heard, Make known, declare, proclaim!"
Go forth in all the earth; Embrace the path he trod
With Christ beside As friend and guide
To bring good news of God.

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

M: God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

LORD, HAVE MERCY

M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **♪ Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **♪ Christ, have mercy.**

M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **♪ Lord, have mercy.**

M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:

C:  Amen.

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.



C: O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.



Al-might-y God, mer-ci-ful Fa-ther, you crown our life with your love.



You take a-way our sin; you com-fort our spir-it; you make us



pure and ho-ly in your sight. You did not spare your on-ly Son,



but gave him up for us all. O Lord, our Lord, how glo-rious is your



name in all the earth. O Son of God, e-ter-nal Word



of the Fa-ther, you came to live with us; you made your Fa-ther known;



you washed us from our sins in your own blood. You are the



King of glo-ry; you are the Lord! O Lord, our Lord,



how glo-rious is your name in all the earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (*Spoken Together*)

Almighty God, you have committed to your Church the task of making disciples of all nations. Enlighten with your wisdom those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship and serve you from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Deuteronomy 11: 1-7, 16-21

Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the desert until you arrived at this place, and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done....

Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

PSALM 78



O my people, hear my `teaching;*
listen to the words `of my mouth.

I will utter things `from of old,*
what we have heard and what our fathers have `told us.

we will not hide them from our `children;*
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds `of the Lord.

Refrain

The LORD decreed statutes for `Jacob*
And established the law in `Israel.

So the next generation would `know them,*
And they in turn would tell their `children.

Then they would put their `trust in God*
And would not forget his deeds
but would keep `his commands.

**Glory be to the Father and `to the Son*
and to the Holy `Spirit.**

**As it was in the be`ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. `Amen.**

Refrain

VERSE OF THE DAY

**Alleluia. The Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge
and understanding. Alleluia.**

(Proverbs 2:6)

♪ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
These words are written that we may believe that
Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 7:31-37

Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.

After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

HYMN

"Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"

Hymn 353

Praise the one who breaks the darkness With a liberating light;
Praise the one who frees the pris'ners, Turning blindness into sight.
Praise the one who preached the gospel, Healing ev'ry dread disease,
Calming storms and feeding thousands With the Father's word of peace.

Praise the one who blessed the children With a strong, yet gentle, word;
Praise the one who drove out demons With the piercing, two-edged sword.
Praise the one who brings cool water To the desert's burning sand;
From this well comes living water, Quenching thirst in ev'ry land.

Let us praise the Word incarnate, Christ, who suffered in our place;
Jesus died and rose victorious That we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness, Seeing what our God has done;
Let us praise the true Redeemer, Praise the one who makes us one.

SERMON

Mark 7:31-37

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

INSTALLATION OF OUR NEW TEACHER

Miss Brooke Behl - 3rd & 4th Grade Teacher

M: Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ said to his Church: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

A Christian school is one way we carry out our Lord's command as we let children come to him and do not hinder them, but rather nurture them with the life-giving word of God. We do this trusting God's promise: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

Exhortation to the Teacher-Elect

M: Dear sister in Christ, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church has called you to serve as teacher. You have been prepared for this ministry by careful instruction in the Word of God so that you carry out your duties in conformity with that Word.

As an ambassador of Christ you are to teach the pure doctrine of God's Word, to instruct the young in the way of salvation, and always to have in your heart the spiritual welfare of every soul under your care.

You are to devote yourself to the meditation and study of the Scriptures. You are to be an example to others in godliness and Christian living, putting no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that the ministry will not be discredited.

You are to speak the truth in love, as the apostle Peter reminds us: "Love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever."

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your heart to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The ability to carry out this calling is not in us, but comes alone from God, as St. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians: "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God."

The Holy Spirit, who himself has called you to this ministry, will be with you.

Promises by the Teacher-Elect

M: In keeping with the word and will of the Lord, you are about to be installed as teacher at St. John Lutheran School. I ask you, in the presence of God and this congregation:

Are you fully determined to carry out this work according to the grace which God will give?

R: I am.

M: Do you believe that the canonical books of the Old and New Testament are the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

R: I do.

M: Do you accept the three Ecumenical Creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian—as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn?

R: I do.

M: Do you solemnly promise that all your teaching will conform to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions?

R: I do.

M: Will you give faithful witness to Christ in the world that God's love may be known in all that you do and say?

R: I will, and I ask God to help me.

M: Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

Exhortation to the Congregation

M: Brothers and sisters in Christ, you have heard the solemn promise given by the teacher you have called. I urge you, therefore, to receive her with joy and to keep in mind always what the Word of God expects of you as members of this congregation:

Work together with her for our Lord's kingdom so that by your works of service the Body of Christ might be built up.

Help her by your word and example in teaching the young, remembering how the Scriptures urge you to bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Pray for her continually, that her ministry among you may be greatly blessed and that she may have a cheerful spirit in all her duties.

Provide also for her physical needs, for the Lord says, "The worker deserves his wages."

Honor and love her, as the apostle Peter urges, "Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."

Promises by the Congregation

M: I now ask you, in the presence of God:

Are you willing to receive her as a servant of Christ? Will you show her love and honor, and support her with your gifts and prayer? If so, answer: we will, and we ask God to help us.

C: We will, and we ask God to help us.

M: The almighty and merciful God strengthen and assist you always.

M: Students of St. John School, Jesus our Savior has promised eternal life to those who trust in him. Show your love to Jesus by cheerfully obeying your teachers, so that you benefit from their instruction, especially as they teach you God's saving Word. Give them honor and respect, so that their work will be a joy for them and an eternal blessing to you.

Installation

Brooke Behl, I install you as teacher at St. John Lutheran School in the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord pour out on you his Holy Spirit for the work committed to you that you may faithfully proclaim the gospel.

Prayer

M: Almighty God, fountain of all wisdom, we praise and thank you for your goodness in giving us a Lutheran elementary school. Continue to bless our labors here, so that your Word may dwell richly in us and in our children and that your name may be glorified. Give the Holy Spirit to Brooke, and equip her with heavenly wisdom and strength, that she may lead our children to you, and despite any discouragements faithfully carry out the duties of her calling. Move our students to godliness and obedience and cause them to grow through her instruction in your Word, so that she may serve you throughout her life and finally inherit eternal life. Help us at all times to regard our teachers as those whom you have sent, so that we support them in their ministry and pray and work for the welfare of our school. Hear us for Jesus' sake.

M: Go, then, take up the work to which you have been called.

The Lord bless you and make you a blessing to many, that you may bear fruit, and that your fruit may remain to eternal life.

HYMN

“Let Children Hear the Mighty Deeds”

Hymn 512 (v. 1,2,4, & 5)

Let children hear the mighty deeds Which God performed of old,
Which in our younger years we saw, And which our fathers told.

Make unto them his glories known, His works of pow'r and grace,
And we'll convey his wonders down Through ev'ry rising race.

Oh, teach them with all diligence The truths of God's own Word,
To place in him their confidence, To fear and trust their Lord,

To learn that in our God alone Their hope securely stands,
That they may ne'er forget his works, But walk in his commands.

PRAYER AND 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.

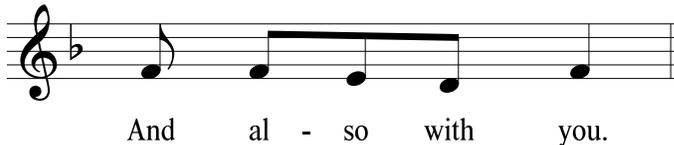
THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

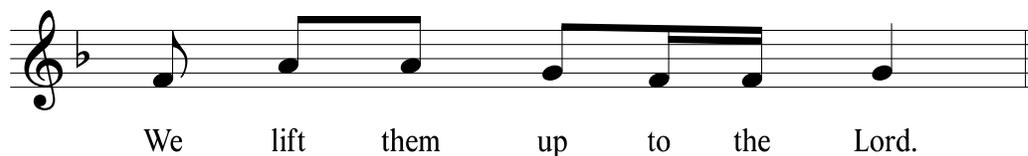
(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)

(Before and after Communion prayers are found in *Christian Worship*, page 11.)

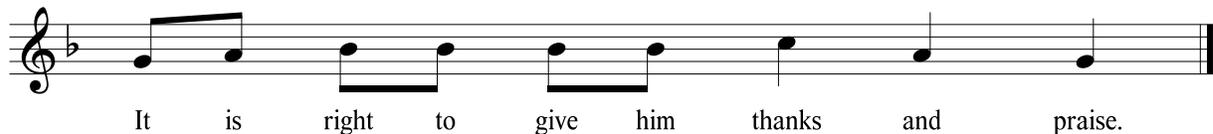
M: The Lord be with you.



M: Lift up your hearts.



M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.



M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He sends the Holy Spirit to testify that we are his children and to strengthen us when we are weak. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.
You are my God and I will ex - alt you.
I will give you thanks for you have be - come my sal -
va - tion. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly is the Lord of hosts.
The whole earth is full of your glo - ry.

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

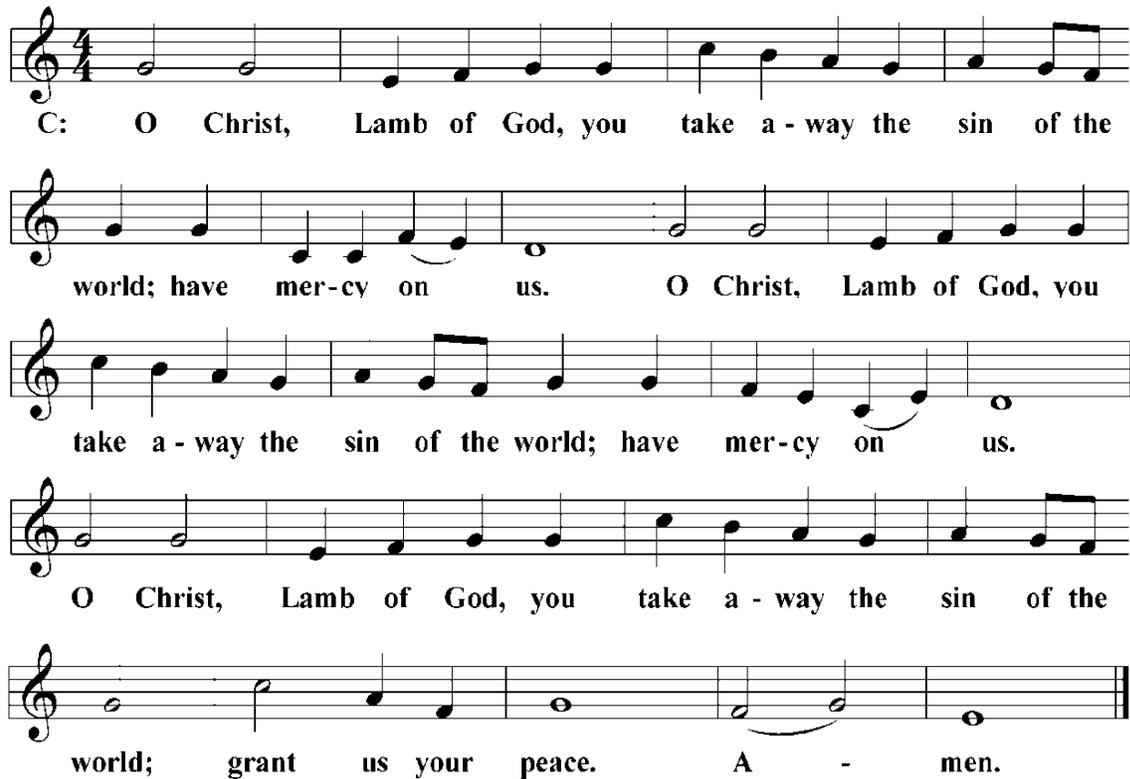
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.



C: A - men.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD



C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A - men.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

CLOSING PRAYER

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

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.

CLOSING HYMN

“God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage”

Hymn 293

God's Word is our great heritage And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way; In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations.

OFFERING

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan
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