

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
A Family Connecting in Christ



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SERVICE OF THE WORD

IN OUR WORLD TODAY... we see monuments toppled and legacies condemned. In some cases, we may agree. In most cases, we might wonder: "Is there anyone who could stand righteous before today's or tomorrow's judges?"

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY... we continue lessons from the book of Judges. We look at the legacies of Gideon and Samson ... and we rejoice in the way God sees us and judges us with grace!

OPENING HYMN

BAPTISM

737

God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It



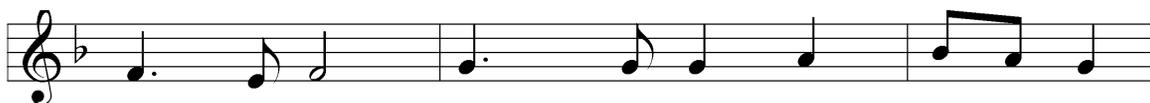
1 God's own child, I gladly say it:
 2 Sin, disturb my soul no longer:
 3 Sa - tan, hear this pro - la - ma - tion:
 4 Death, you can - not end my glad - ness:
 5 There is noth - ing worth com - par - ing



I am bap - tized in - to Christ! He, be -
 I am bap - tized in - to Christ! I have
 I am bap - tized in - to Christ! Drop your
 I am bap - tized in - to Christ! When I
 To this life - long com - fort sure! O - pen -



cause I could not pay it, Gave my full re -
 com - fort e - ven strong - er: Je - sus' cleans - ing
 ug - ly ac - cu - sa - tion; I am not so
 die, I leave all sad - ness To in - her - it
 eyed my grave is star - ing: E - ven there I'll



demp - tion price. Do I need earth's trea - sures
sac - ri - fice. Should a guilt - y con - science
soon en - ticed. Now that to the font I've
par - a - dise! Though I lie in dust and
sleep se - cure. Though my flesh a - waits its



man - y? I have one worth more than an - y
seize me Since my bap - tism did re - lease me
trav - eled, All your might has come un - rav - eled,
ash - es Faith's as - sur - ance bright - ly flash - es:
rais - ing, Still my soul con - tin - ues prais - ing:



That brought me sal - va - tion free,
In a dear for - giv - ing flood,
And, a - gainst your tyr - an - ny,
Bap - tism has the strength di - vine
I am bap - tized in - to Christ;



Last - ing to e - ter - ni - ty!
Sprink - ling me with Je - sus' blood?
God, my Lord, u - nites with me!
To make life im - mor - tal mine.
I'm a child of par - a - dise!

Text: Erdmann Neumeister, 1671–1756; tr. Robert E. Voelker, b. 1957 © 1991 Robert E. Voelker. All rights reserved.
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Tune: BACHOFEN (87 87 88 77) Johann Caspar Bachofen, 1695–1755, alt.

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.**

The Sacrament of Baptism

Mila Elena Peñaloza

(infant daughter of Mary-Ann and Jonas)

Christ's Command

Our Savior Jesus Christ commanded baptism when he said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Our Need for Baptism

All of us are born into this world with a deep need for baptism. From our parents we inherit a sinful nature; we are without true fear of God and true faith in God and are condemned to eternal death.

God's Promise in Baptism

But Jesus took away our sin by giving his life on the cross. At our baptism he clothes us with the robe of his righteousness and gives us a new life. Our sinful nature need not control us any longer. We recall what baptism means for our daily lives as we speak these words:

Baptism means that the sinful nature in us should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance, and that all its evil deeds and desires be put to death. It also means that a new person should daily arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

As baptized children of God we confess our sins:

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.

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. Amen.

The Sacrament of Baptism

In obedience to the command of our Lord and trusting in his promise, you have brought Mila to be baptized. Jesus told us: "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." In baptism God gives his forgiveness, his new life, and his peace to little children. By the power of God's Word Baptism washes away sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe.

Receive the sign of the cross on your head and heart to mark you as a redeemed child of God.

Mila Elena Peñaloza, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The almighty God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - has forgiven all your sin. By your baptism you are born again and made a dear child of your Father in heaven. May God strengthen you to live in his grace all the days of your life. Peace be with you.

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters in Christ:

Our Lord commands us that we teach his precious truth to all who are baptized. Christian love urges all of us, especially parents and sponsors, to assist in whatever way possible so that Mila may remain a child of God to eternal life. If you are willing to carry out this responsibility, then answer: Yes, as God gives me strength.

YES, AS GOD GIVES ME STRENGTH.

Merciful Father in heaven, we thank you for the blessing of baptism by which you offer and grant the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation. Help us to regard our baptism as the robe of righteousness to wear all the days of our life. Look with special favor on Mila and grant her a rich measure of your Spirit that she may grow in faith and godly living. Make us willing to carry out our responsibilities to those who have been baptized, so that all of us may finally come to the blessed joys of heaven, through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

1ST LESSON

Judges 8:27, 29b-35 (legacy of Gideon)

Gideon made ... an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family. ... During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years.

Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live. He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech. Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god and did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. They also failed to show kindness to the family of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) for all the good things he had done for them.

Judges 16:21-30 - (legacy of Samson)

Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison. But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands." When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain." While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived. Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years.

EPISTLE LESSON

Hebrews 11:32-40

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated — the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 7:1-5

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

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.**

HYMN

"Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive"
Hymn 493

(After a one-verse musical introduction...)

"Forgive our sins as we forgive,"
You taught us, Lord, to pray,
But you alone can grant us grace
To live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless
The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let
Old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals
The truth we dimly knew:
What trivial debts are owed to us;
How great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls
And bid resentment cease;
Then, bound to all in bonds of love
Our lives will spread your peace.

Christopher Columbus gone in the dark of night. Robert E. Lee gone. Stonewall Jackson gone. I don't know who and how many more. In Madison, some wanted Abraham Lincoln to be next. Hearing that, it can be easy to think: "What in the world are they thinking?!" And "Don't they know?!" "What in the world are *they* thinking?" "Don't *they* know?" "They and them. They and them. They and them." Do you hear the pronouns pointing? - "they and them." When everyone's pointing "they and them," how close do you think we are to peace, to getting along? Do you remember that prayer? - "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand...." That's not just something for "they and them" to do, is it?

Toppling monuments - we'll talk more about that Monday in Bible Class - 7pm - ZOOM!

Toppling monuments is nothing new. We see it in the book of Judges. Back in June we looked at Gideon. Gideon was God's man to free his people from the Midianites. With Gideon leading the charge, and the shouts of his 300 men - "**A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!**" God cut the Midianite army 132,000 strong down to size - a great victory for God and for Gideon. But what do we hear? When the great hero Gideon died, his people treated his memory and his family like nobodies.

That probably shouldn't surprise us. And not just because the thanking part of our brain is inseparably connected to the forgetting part of our brain. Gideon himself gave his people good reason to forget and disrespect his memory. Instead of living as a man of God, he lived as a man of the world and he poisoned his own legacy.

Now these last couple weeks we've looked at Samson, God's one-man wrecking crew, God's one-man fighting force against the Philistines. Samson had made a name for himself - fear and fame, a legacy. Until what? He toyed with sin and temptation. He toyed with God's grace and promises. And he lost it all - chained up as a slave, eyes-gouged-out blinded, put up on stage and ridiculed as a loser, a has-been - Samson's legacy was toppled.

But what do we see in our lesson today? Some would say redemption, that Samson redeemed himself. We know a better R-word - repentance. Instead of toying with sin and temptation, instead of toying with God's grace and promises, instead of toying with life, Samson turned back to God and the mission God had for him - to be God's one-man wrecking crew, God's one-man fighting force against the Philistines.

So when we look back at Samson and Gideon, who do we see? If we're in preschool, we might see two heroes of God. If we're older, we see: "Two heroes who lived some really messed up lives." In all my years of Sunday School and Lutheran grade school, high school, and college, in all my studies, I can't remember anyone ever saying: "Be more like Gideon; be more like Samson." When we look back at Gideon and Samson, it's almost like a lesson - how not to be a hero for God.

But when God looks back at Samson and Gideon, what does God see? God sees Gideon and Samson as heroes of faith! How can that be? Is God stuck in preschool? Does God wear blinders? Did God re-write history? Is God one of those revisionist historians?

Yes! And No! First the "no!" God knows; he knew; and he gave us the history of Gideon and Samson that we read in Judges. But God knows more than just insecure Gideon and his power-tripping ways. And God knows Samson as something more than just a one-man wrecking crew. God knows the faith he worked in Gideon's weak, doubting, insecure heart. He knows the faith he worked in Samson's heart, even though we don't see or hear much of it. God knows the faith he worked, a faith that God would keep his promises and deliver his people - not just in the here and now, but God would deliver his people from the here and now for a life far better in heaven. Seeing Gideon and Samson with that faith, God sees Gideon and Samson holding to God's promise of a Savior. What does that mean for Gideon and Samson? God sees them with their Savior. He sees them with Jesus taking their sin and guilt. He sees them with Jesus covering their flawed lives with his life lived right. That's why - with Jesus - God sees them and judges them to be heroes of faith!

That's the way God sees you and me! He could see us without Jesus, in our guilt. He could topple our monuments, and see us and judge us by the worst of our warts. Who here wants that? Instead, God has re-worked our history by becoming part of our history; he has re-worked our history by bringing us into his history. In

baptism, he made you alive and adopted you to be his. In baptism, he called you and gathered you in to himself. In baptism, he's enlightened you so that you are "woke" to see the love and the life he has for you connected with Jesus. That's right - instead of toppling us and rejecting any good memory of us, he sees you and judges you connected with Jesus. Connected with Jesus, God sees your sin and guilt covered over and forgiven in the death of Jesus. Connected with Jesus, God sees your life with all its holes and warts filled and covered with the perfect life of Jesus. What does that mean for us? With Jesus, God sees you and judges you as right as Jesus, right for life with him in heaven.

That's the history God has of you. That's the memory God has of you. And that's the life God has for you.

So now what? Instead of getting worked up over monuments that won't survive Judgement Day, let's show the world a monument to remember! In the way we live before God, in the way we live with each other, in the way we live with the world out there - let's show the world the greatness of God's grace!

So, how will you show God's grace this week? How will you show what God's grace means to you? Amen.

HYMN

"Give Thanks to God on High"

Hymn 553

(After a one-verse musical introduction...)

Give thanks to God on high
For saints of other days,
Whose hope it was to live and die
In love's consuming blaze
For Christ and his kingdom,
His glory and his praise.

Their vision long-fulfilled,
Our prayer is still the same:
Upon their work of faith to build,
Their word of truth proclaim
For Christ and his kingdom
And for his holy name.

New tasks today are ours
Who serve a world in pain,
New calls to challenge all our pow'rs
Of heart and hand and brain,
For Christ and his kingdom
While life and breath remain.

Give thanks to God on high
For all the future sends,
In praise of Christ to live and die
Who calls his servants friends,
For Christ and his kingdom,
Whose glory never ends.

THE 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.

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, 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.

OFFERING

(Please fill out the friendship pads on the pews)

If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.



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CLOSING HYMN

“May the Peace of God”
Hymn 745

May the peace of God our heav’nly Father,
And the grace of Christ the risen Son,
And the fellowship of God the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within his love.

Refrain

And to him be praise for his glorious reign
From the depths of earth to the heights of heav’n.
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings.

May this peace which passes understanding,
And this grace which makes us what we are,
And this fellowship of his Communion
Make us one in spirit and in heart.

Refrain

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WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

At this time our services are for people wearing masks and social distancing!

Please know that even as we experience this awkwardness, your Good Shepherd holds you close to his heart and goes with you to share his love!

To Our Guests

- We pray that you receive a warm welcome and are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns. If you have questions, please ask!
- Our service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ – forgiveness and peace, help and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven.

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church. We invite our congregation members and visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us, but ask Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice. Further explanation is in the pew racks or from our pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

- If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

- **Large Print** Service Folders are available from an usher.
- **Hearing Assistance** for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop or personal hearing devices available at the "sound table."
- A **wheelchair lift** is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.



Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Our Ministry

St. John offers an excellent preschool-8th grade school program. We are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - www.wels.net.