

“Have you seen my keys? Where’s my wallet? Who took the checkbook? I’m missing a sock.” Sound familiar? When something is lost, what do you do? Maybe you backtrack, working your way back to where you last had it. Maybe you work your search grid starting in one corner of the house, looking through everything, behind everything, under everything before you move on to the next spot. Maybe your favorite way to search is to shout: “Help! I can’t find my _____.” And then you run around like a chicken with its head cut off until you get stuck in front of the TV or the refrigerator.

After a while, after getting good and mad at the world for the way it keeps on losing your stuff ... after a while you might think: “It’ll show up. I’ve got a spare. I guess I’ll have to wear one of yesterday’s socks.” And we go on until we really need it. But what if what is missing is a child, your child? For a while we might think: “He’ll show up.” I hope we don’t think: “I’ve got others.” No. We hunt. We search. We call. We text. We do whatever it takes. We are going to find the lost no matter what it takes, no matter how long it takes, no matter how inconvenient it is. We are going to leave no stone unturned to find the lost.

That’s what we see in our lesson - the shepherd searching for his lost sheep. He doesn’t just wait. He doesn’t just make a couple calls. He searches. He searches in the thickets and thorns and gets all torn up. He searches in the marsh, in the muck and the mire, and gets all mucked up. He searches like that sheep is helpless to find its way back. He searches like if he doesn’t find that sheep it will die a most awful death, and part of him will die with that sheep.

And then there's the woman searching for her lost coin. The shepherd might blame the sheep and give up. But you can't blame a coin. So she goes on a mission. She looks under the bed and between the sheets. She checks every pocket and the bottom of the washer and the dryer, too. She checks every place she can think of ... and she checks every place else, until she finds her coin.

With the woman, with the shepherd, there's no settling for: "It'll show up sooner or later." There's no thinking: "I've got others. There's more where that came from." There's no: "Is it really worth it?" That woman, that shepherd are determined to find the lost no matter what it takes, no matter how long it takes.

That's God searching for his lost child. The drifting child who wanders off without knowing it, without knowing the danger he's in. The fighting child who goes off to do his own thing and don't anybody get in the way. That's God searching for his child - the hurting child who goes off to find some healing who knows where. Our lesson shows us God searching for his lost child, God searching for you and for me, so that we don't go from lost in this world to lost from God forever in hell.

When Jesus sees the lost ... when he saw you lost, he didn't think: "Oh, I've got others." No, he's thinking: "I died for him, for her, for you." He's seen you from before all time. You've been on his heart from before all time. He sees you and his cross, you and the life he gave for you, you and the death he died for you. He sees you and how he set you right for life with God. So when his lost children are difficult, he doesn't just think: "Oh, it's their own fault." He's thinking: "I've got what they need. I have the love they need, the forgiveness they need. I've just got to find them." When he sees how messed up the lost can be, he doesn't think: "Oh, they won't fit in

anymore, not after what they've done, the places they've been." No, Jesus is thinking: "I've got a place for them, a heart for them. I've got a place and a heart for you, a place in heaven for you."

And when the lost are found, then what? The woman with the lost coin, the shepherd with the lost sheep ... when they find the lost, then what? They call together their friends and neighbors: "**Rejoice with me! I have found what was lost.**" And when God finds the lost? The heavens rejoice!

When you were first baptized, the heavens rejoiced! When you first sang, "I am Jesus' little lamb," the heavens rejoiced! When you came back after that wandering spell, when you came back after your fight against God, when you came back for God's healing, the heavens rejoiced!

And when God found that other little lamb - the one who doesn't look like we look ... when God found that other little lamb - the one with the wrong politics ... when God found that other little lamb - the one with the messed up family ... when God found that other little lamb - the one who doesn't say much or that one who says too much ... when God found that other little lamb ... what did the heavens do?

The heavens didn't mutter: "It's about time." The heavens didn't wonder how those people or you people could fit in with them in heaven. The heavens rejoice! The heavens rejoice every time we're found. The heavens rejoice every time we turn to Jesus for forgiveness. The heavens rejoice every time they see us or hear us together with Jesus.

And what about us? We live in a world that loves to boo and complain like the Pharisees in our lesson. Somehow it makes us feel better about ourselves. If that's what we want to do in church, we can find plenty of reasons ... we can find plenty of people to boo and complain about in any church. But let me tell you: it's not a sign of genius to boo and complain. And to think that we're better than someone else ... that's not proof that we're right. The Pharisees thought they were the geniuses in the room; they thought they were the right ones in the room. They thought heaven should have been cheering over them. Instead heaven cheers over the lost who are found.

We get to be part of that cheering. We get to share that cheering. How do we do that? How do you show the people around you that heaven cheers to see them with Jesus? How do you show that stranger, that visitor in church, that heaven cheers to see them with Jesus? How do you show that quiet one, who doesn't talk with anybody ... how do you show them that heaven cheers to see them with Jesus? How do you show that child, that teen, that parent with the crying baby ... how do you show them that heaven cheers to see them with Jesus?

Today heaven is cheering over you because God worked history, he moved heaven and earth to find you. Whom do you know who needs to be found? Who do you know who needs to hear that heaven is cheering to see them with Jesus? Amen.

September 10 & 11, 2022

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY... do we fix or toss out? If we lose something, do we look and find, or just buy new? We live in such a throw-away, just get new world that we sometimes might think of people that same way.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see how Jesus sees you and me and each and every individual as precious. So precious he gave himself up to save us, so precious he turns the history of the world to find us. What in our life are we willing to sacrifice, what are we willing to turn over for the sake of a lost soul?

OPENING HYMN

“Good News of God Above”

Hymn 905

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.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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 T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let
us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
Amen.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

CW 176

Refrain: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we
give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take
away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right
hand of the Father; receive our prayer. *Refrain*

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the
Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.
Amen. Amen. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord, we pray that your mercy and grace may always go before and follow
after us that, loving you with undivided hearts, we may be ready for every
good and useful work; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Hosea 3

The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you."

For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN

"In Hopelessness and Near Despair"
Hymn 738 CWS



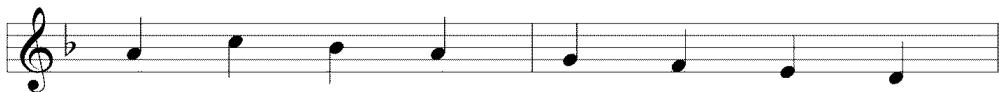
1 In hope - less - ness and near de - spair, I
2 I see my heart's con - di - tion now, My
3 I trem - ble as I feel your hand, Ex -
4 For - giv - en, free of guilt and shame, Grant



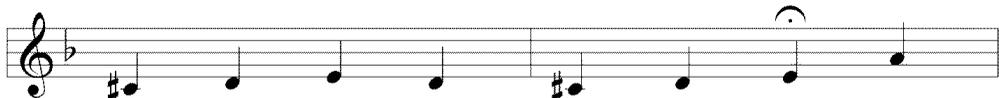
cry to you, my Sav - ior! My guilt is more than
heart's di - verse af - fec - tions. Why do I love the
pec - ting re - tri - bu - tion, Yet hear no curse or
me some time to ren - der A gift to glo - ri -



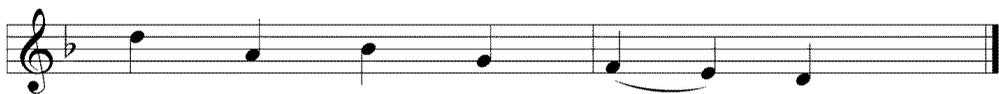
I can bear. I have not earned your fav - or. You
things you loathe; I'm torn in two di - rec - tions: Now
re - pri - mand, But grace and ab - so - lu - tion: With
fy your name, Love to re - flect your splen - dor: This



know me as I real - ly am: How
prod - i - gal, now Phar - i - see. O
you there is for - give - ness, Lord, You
world must know what I have learned, That



much is truth, how much is sham; Why
God, be mer - ci - ful to me; Who
speak the sweet, con - sol - ing Word, And
you be - stow what none has earned: The



should you heed my plead - ing?
else but you can help me?
I am sure you love me!
joy of full for - give - ness!

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 2:5–11

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive.

And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Luke 15:10

Alleluia. There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-10

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Jesus Sinners Does Receive"

Hymn 654 vs. 1-4, & 7

Jesus sinners does receive; oh, may all this saying ponder
who in sin's delusions live and from God and heaven wander.
Here is hope for all who grieve: Jesus sinners does receive.

We deserve but grief and shame, yet his words, rich grace revealing,
pardon, peace, and life proclaim; here their ills have perfect healing
who with humble hearts believe: Jesus sinners does receive.

Sheep that from the fold did stray are not by the Lord forsaken;
weary souls who lost their way are by Christ, the Shepherd, taken
in his arms that they may live: Jesus sinners does receive.

I, a sinner, come to you with a penitent confession.
Savior, show me mercy, too; grant for all my sins remission.
Let these words my soul relieve: Jesus sinners does receive.

Jesus sinners does receive, even I have been forgiven.
And when I this earth must leave, I shall find an open heaven.
Dying, still to him I cleave: Jesus sinners does receive.

SERMON

HYMN

"I Hear the Savior Calling"

Hymn 743

I hear the Savior calling! The gospel comes to me;
my eyes, once closed in blindness, are opened now to see
that I myself was helpless to live eternally,
but, dying, Christ did save me, and now he calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He leads a soul to me,
a soul in bitter anguish, one needing to be free.
The gift I have to offer is Christ, my Lord's decree
that all have been forgiven; my Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He gives this charge to me:
to serve the best I'm able, whate'er the call may be.
Thus hand in hand with others who share the gospel key
we spread the gospel tidings; my Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He changes hearts for me;
from door to door I witness to share my Savior's plea.
Yet nothing can be added, no word on bended knee,
beyond the simple gospel; my Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! His call has urgency;
each moment souls are dying, soon comes eternity.
And so, my precious Savior, this is my humble plea:
prepare me for my mission, for you are calling me!

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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Eternal God and Father, we give you thanks for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for the opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for the occasions to serve and be served, for fellowship with believers in our congregation and in our synod.

Help us to rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and to use them faithfully.

Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open our eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of the lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, O Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

Awaken us to the opportunities you give to proclaim your message of love.

Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly. Help us to speak the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, an acquaintance, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Silent prayer

Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care, and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. Amen.

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.

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

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

“I Love to Tell the Story”

Hymn 746

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story because I know it’s true;
it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

Refrain

I love to tell the story; ’twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,
’twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long. *Refrain*

OFFERING

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Join us **Saturday, September 17**, for a special 125th Anniversary Picnic! This is our annual Church-School-Community Picnic, only better!

We worship at 4 p.m. with our school children singing. Feel free to wear your St. John t-shirt to worship and the picnic!

We picnic at 5ish. Since this is an anniversary event, our meal will be catered. We can look forward to roasted and hand-carved pig, fresh corn on the cob, hot dogs with all the toppings, a bean bag tournament with prizes, and so much more!

Open House - Do you want to see or show off our new classrooms? They will be open from 5-5:30 (and then locked down).

Wondering how you can help? Set up starts at 10 a.m. Saturday (tables, chairs, and tents) and we always need help with cleaning up afterward.

We hope to see you there!