**Worship in the Home**

**Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Lectionary 21
August 23, 2020**

*In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.*

*The Prayer of the Day may be prayed.*

Let us pray.
O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
**Amen.**

*Then the readings for this Sunday may be read, as follows:*

**First Reading**:  Isaiah 51:1-6

1Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the LORD.
Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.
2Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for Abraham was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.
3For the LORD will comfort Zion;
comfort all its waste places,
and will make its wilderness like Eden,
and its desert like the garden of the LORD;
joy and gladness will be found in Zion,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

4Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation;
for a teaching will go out from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples.
5I will bring near my deliverance swiftly,
my salvation has gone out
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.
6Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats;
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.

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

**Psalm:***Psalm 138 may be sung or spoken in response to the First Reading.*

1I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with| my whole heart;
before the gods I will| sing your praise.
2I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your steadfast| love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name and your word a-| bove all things.
3When I called, you| answered me;
you increased my| strength within me.
4All the rulers of the earth will praise| you, O LORD,
when they have heard the words| of your mouth.

5They will sing of the ways| of the LORD,
that great is the glory| of the LORD.
6The LORD is high, yet cares| for the lowly,
perceiving the haughty| from afar.
7Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you| keep me safe;
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right| hand shall save me.
8You will make good your pur-| pose for me;
O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works| of your hands.

**Second Reading**: Romans 12:1-8

1I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4For as in one body we have many parts, and not all the parts have the same function, 5so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are parts one of another. 6We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

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

**Gospel**: Matthew 16:13-20

The holy gospel according to Matthew.
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

13Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son-of-Man is?” 14And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15Jesus said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19I will give you the keys of the dominion of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20Then Jesus sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The gospel of the Lord.
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Reflection**

*Having read these readings, think of this:*

If we think with sober judgment, as Paul counsels, we are none of us reliable as a rock. But then neither was Abraham, “the rock from which” the people of God “were hewn.” Abraham believed God, but according to the stories, he also repeatedly lied. And to call Peter “the Rock” — Peter, who doubted and then denied Jesus — seems like a joke. But in Matthew, Jesus speaks blessing, mercy, and forgiveness to Peter. He speaks these also to us. Following Jesus, in our conversations with and prayers for each other, we can be using the very keys that Peter is given, forgiving and loosing one another with the actual mercy of God, the mercy that will yet make of the afflicted earth a garden of thanksgiving. The forgiving mercy of God in the crucified Christ is the rock on which the church is built, even when all else falls and dies, the ground from which we turn in generosity to our needy neighbors, worshipping God by how we use our bodily lives.

*If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read “Built on a Rock” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*652), “The Church’s One Foundation” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*654), or “Son of God, Eternal Savior”* *(*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*655).*

[The Church’s One Foundation](https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/08/The-Churchs-One-Foundation.pdf)

[Son of God, Eternal Savior](https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/08/Son-of-God-Eternal-Savior.pdf)

Held together in one body by the Spirit of Christ, let us pray for the church and the world, responding to each petition with words from today’s psalm, “your steadfast love endures forever.”

*A brief silence.*

Bless the church, that despite the hardships experienced during this pandemic, Christians around the globe will stand firm on the rock, who is Christ. Support pastors, deacons, and congregational committees during this difficult time. Give wisdom to churches that are considering when and how to resume their communal worship schedule.

*A brief silence.*

Unfailing God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

Bless the earth, that it be saved from ecological harm. Restore all lands and seas to the beauty and vigor that you intend. Protect animals whose habitat is endangered. Train us to be gardeners of your creation. We pray for those suffering the effects of destructive summer storms and scorching heat.

*A brief silence.*

Creator God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

Bless the leaders of nations, that they govern their people with integrity and attend to the needs of the poor. Guard the United States from violence. Give clear purpose to protestors and to police. Inspire our political parties to conduct the election season with honesty and respect for all.

*A brief silence.*

God of justice, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

Bless our various means of communication, our phones, the internet, our postal service, and delivery businesses, that our communities be sustained for fruitful life together.

*A brief silence.*

Merciful God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

Bless students, that whether in class or at home they be kept safe and able to learn. Uphold faculty and families and protect all who will be affected by the opening of schools. Form college students to conduct themselves with maturity.

*A brief silence.*

Benevolent God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

Bless all who are in need; all who have tested positive for the virus; the sick and the dying. We pray for the unemployed; for medical workers; for those seeking a vaccine; for those who are overwhelmed with anxiety about the future. We pray for those we name here:

*A brief silence.*

Compassionate God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

Finally, we pray also for ourselves, that with Christ as our rock, we can stand firm.

*A longer period of silence.*

Merciful God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

We praise you for the lives of all your faithful people. We mourn the death of those we have loved. Bring us at the end, we pray, into the joy and gladness of life together in you.

*A brief silence.*

Eternal God, hear our prayer:
**your steadfast love endures forever.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
**Amen.**

*If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read “Take My Life, That I May Be” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*583/685); “Faith of Our Fathers” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship *812/813).*

[Take My Life, That I May Be (PATMOS)](https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/08/Take-My-Life-That-I-May-Be-PATMOS.pdf)

[Faith of Our Fathers](https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/08/Faith-of-Our-Fathers.pdf)

*Then conclude with these prayers:*

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

We thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word,
for calling creation into being,
declaring forgiveness from the cross,
and delivering the spirit of rebirth.
We praise you, O God, for your Word:
**we praise you, O God, for your Word.**

Your word is a lamp lighting our path,
a mirror reflecting our selves,
a shield providing us refuge,
a fire burning for justice and truth.
Your word is sweeter than honey:
it nourishes our bodies like milk,
it sustains your people like bread.
We receive your promises, more treasured than gold.
We bless you, O God, for your Word:
**we bless you, O God, for your Word.**

Open our ears to your prophets, apostles, and saints,
and to all the cries of the needy.
Breathe into your church the mighty Spirit of Christ,
that heeding your voice of beauty and power
we are strengthened to serve wherever we are called.

To you, Father, Son, and Spirit – the Source, Word, and Breath —
we offer our thanks for your life-giving Word:
**we offer our thanks for your life-giving Word.**

Amen.
**Amen.**

**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.**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.
**Amen.**

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain. Other suggestions provided above may be found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship. To purchase a copy of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/category/286515/Evangelical-Lutheran-Worship-Pew-Edition) or call 1-800-328-4648.

**Devotional Music Links:** For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: “[We Sing to You O God](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDN4KLkJhaY&feature=youtu.be),” “[Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN66tdUXP4g&feature=youtu.be) ,” “[Christ, the Solid Rock.”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTK96xsqMvY&feature=youtu.be)

**Readings for the Week:**
**Monday** (Bartholomew, Apostle) John 1:43-51. **Tuesday**Romans 11:33-36. **Wednesday** Isaiah 28:14-22. **Thursday** Psalm 26:1-8. **Friday** (commemoration of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, died 430; Moses the Black, monk, martyr, died around 400) 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12. **Saturday**Jeremiah 15:10-14. **Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost**Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 26:1-8; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28.