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BETTER TOGETHER

US

September 26, 27, and 30, 2020

What is the greatest life lesson for peace in this life and the next? It's probably not the first thing that comes to mind. It's forgiveness, learning to let go of the anger, hurt, and bitterness that so often and easily consume us and threaten to destroy our relationship with God and with each other. "Hurting people hurt people. Healed people heal people."

FACE MASK PLEASE

In humble service to all in our church community, we are asking all present from age 5 and up to wear a face mask during worship in voluntary compliance with Governor Evers' extended order. Face masks are available from the ushers if you are without one. If you are unable to wear a face mask for medical reasons, please do all you can to maintain social distance from others. In Christian love, let us seek to protect the health of others.

BELLS AND WELCOME

OPENING HYMN 255

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty

As we worship today, God comes to us with all his mercy, grace, and blessing. There is no more joy-filled place to be than sitting at the feet of our Lord and Savior and listening to his gracious words.

**Open now thy gates of beauty;
Zion, let me enter there,
Where my soul in joyful duty
Waits for him who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place,
Filled with solace, light, and grace!**

**Gracious God, I come before thee;
Come thou also unto me.
Where we find thee and adore thee,
There a heav'n on earth must be.
To my heart, oh, enter thou;
Let it be thy temple now!**

**Thou my faith increase and quicken;
Let me keep thy gift divine,
Howsoe'er temptations thicken;
May thy Word still o'er me shine
As my guiding star through life,
As my comfort in all strife.**

M In the name of the Father and of the Son and † of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

M Brothers and sisters in Christ, God does not show favoritism. He condemns everyone who does wrong and offers mercy and forgiveness to all in Jesus Christ.

C **Because we sin daily, we are grateful that God's love and mercy are freely extended to us as well.**

M Today, as we come into the presence of God in worship, we trust that he will indeed forgive us in Christ. With that confidence we humble ourselves before him and confess our sins.

All **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

You should cast me away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

M Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

RESPONSE

Speak, O God, and I will hear thee;

Let thy will be done indeed.

May I undisturbed draw near thee

While thou dost thy people feed.

Here of life the fountain flows;

Here is balm for all our woes.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you**

M Let us pray.

Lord, we rejoice in you and acclaim your unending faithfulness, forgiveness, and love.

C **May the praise we give you here in your house be the song we take out into the world.**

M Our desire, like yours, Lord, is for others to have the opportunity to experience your forgiving love.

C **Empower us to give witness to your full and free forgiveness with our lips and with the example of our own lives.**

M We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reign with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, now
C and forever. Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 50:15-21

After the horrible things Joseph's brothers did to him, forgiveness is the last thing one might expect from him. It is certainly the last think his brothers expected. But Joseph is able to see God's hand over his life and, since God is for us, then all is good.

¹⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" ¹⁶So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁸His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

EPISTLE LESSON

Ephesians 4:29-5:2

Paul gives instructions for Christian living and stresses forgiveness.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **5** ¹Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

HYMN OF THE DAY 493

Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

Our Hymn of the Day reviews the teaching and application of our sermon text from Matthew.

**"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.

SERMON

Matthew 18:21-35
Pastor David Kuehl

CONFESSION OF FAITH

The 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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

M The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

M Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M Let us give thanks to the Lord.

C **It is good and right so to do.**

M It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has called us to be his own so that we may live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

O holy, holy, holy

**Lord God of pow'r and might,
Your glory, earth and heaven
In countless ways recite.**

**Hosanna! Come and save us,
Lord God of hosts on high,
And in your grace and mercy
Receive our fervent cry.**

Hosanna in the highest!

**How truly blest is he
Who in God's name is coming
To set his people free!**

**He comes to bring salvation
And with his blood outpoured,
Deliver us from bondage—
Hosanna, mighty Lord!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.
By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.
By his innocent death, he overcame hell.
By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

C **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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

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

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

Please see Communion note on page 8.

We will distribute the Lord's body and blood using "continuous Communion." The pastor will explain the process before distribution. As you stand in line in the center aisle, please maintain social distance from the person in front of you. Cup your hands to receive the wafer. Pause as the pastor says, "Take and eat. The body of the Lord." Move to the communion table and pick up a cup. The pastor will say, "Take and drink. The blood of the Lord." Then dispose of the cup and return to your seat by one of the side aisles.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN 135

The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord

In this Holy Supper we have a sure and solemn guarantee that we are forgiven and eternally loved.

**The death of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
We celebrate with one accord;
It is our comfort in distress,
Our heart's sweet joy and happiness.**

He blotted out with his own blood
The judgment that against us stood;
He full atonement for us made,
And all our debt he fully paid.

That this forever true shall be
He gives a solemn guarantee;
In this his holy supper here
We taste his love, so sweet, so near.

A precious food is this indeed –
It never fails us in our need --
A heav'nly manna for our soul
Until we safely reach our goal.

Oh, blest is each believing guest
Who in this promise finds his rest,
For Jesus will in love abide
With those who do in him confide.

Help us sincerely to believe
That we may worthily receive
Your supper and in you find rest.
Amen! They who believe are blest.

CLOSING PRAYER

M We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BLESSING

M 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.

C Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEEKLY CALENDAR

For the week of September 28, 2020

MON	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
TUE	9:30 am	Ministry Growth Team Meeting
	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	10:30 am	Ministerial Team Meeting
	11:00 am	Wedding of Todd Rebillot and Jodi Rebillot
	4:30 pm	Public School Confirmation Classes (Main Church)
	6:00 pm	Divorce Care (School Classroom 8)
	7:00 pm	<i>Following the Promise</i> Bible Study
WED	6:30 am	Sunrise Bible Study (Faith Room)
	7:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
THURS	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
SAT	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast Bible Study (Grace Room)
	5:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service
SUN	7:45 am	Traditional Worship Service
	9:15 am	Traditional Worship Service
	9:45 am	The Bridge Communion
	10:15 am	The Bridge
	10:45 am	Traditional Worship Service

OUR COMMUNION PRACTICE

The Lord's Supper is a fellowship meal. In this meal Jesus expresses his fellowship with us by giving us his body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. In this meal we also express our fellowship with each other, that is, that we are united in a common confession of faith.

We at St. Paul's want everyone to enjoy this fellowship meal. However, we cannot ask someone to express agreement with us until we give that person an opportunity to discover what we teach. That is why we schedule frequent membership classes, entitled *Following the Promise*, to provide an overview of our teachings. Contact Pastor Nate Strobel at nstrobel@stpaulmuskego.org for more information or to register for the class.

If you are a member of St. Paul's or a member of a WELS or ELS congregation, we invite you to express our common confession by communing with us. Please register your intent to commune as a member or guest by filling out the Connection Card and placing it in the basket in the church lobby.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

FUNERAL

Bill Albert Graumann, born March 3, 1931, began eternal life with his Savior on September 20, 2020. Funeral arrangements are set for October 10, 2020. Visitation begins at 1:00 pm and the funeral is at 2:00 pm. Please keep Bill's widow, Avis, and their family in your prayers.

BAPTISMS

Brynn Nora Sobczak, born in August 22, 2020, will be baptized at 1:00 pm Sunday afternoon, September 27, 2020. Jack Daniel Schulz, born August 12, 2020, will be baptized after the Saturday worship service on September 26, 2020. May God bless Brynn and Jack today and always.

HOSPITALIZED

Lois Guhr (hospice care at Care-Age in Brookfield), Paul Gionfriddo (Care-Age in Brookfield), Fred Liermann (hospice care at Autumn Leaves in Franklin), Dorrette Probst (home hospice care), Brittany Michaels (Duke Hospital in Durham, North Carolina), and Lois Stichmann (The View at Pine Ridge in Oconomowoc). Dan Dockter, Linda Hartwig, and Lois Zdroik have returned home.

ATTENDANCE

The following attended last week's services: 91 on Saturday, 57 on Sunday 7:45 am, 64 on Sunday 9:15 am, 299 at the outdoor service, and 29 on Wednesday.

SMALL GROUP COMMUNION SERVICES

We will continue to offer small group Communion twice per month. However, because of the overflow seating in the Grace Room, small group Communion will be offered in the sanctuary after the Saturday 5:00 pm and Wednesday 7:00 pm services and on Wednesday from 10:00 am until 12:00 noon. Registration for small group Communion will continue to be offered through a "Needs List" e-mail and by calling the church office at 414-422-0320.

SUNDAY MORNING KIDS CLUB TO LAUNCH IN-PERSON ON OCTOBER 4

The 2020-2021 Kids Club season will begin in-person on Sunday, October 4, 9:15-10:15 am in St. Paul's School. Enter via the Trinity Cafe. Kids Club will offer classes for ages 3K-Grade 6. To make this opening as safe as possible, Kids Club is requiring that all students attending wear masks and that any adults dropping off or picking up children do the same while in the building. We will also be observing other safety protocols. Contact Dr. Nelson at jnelson@stpaulmuskego.org to learn more. Please register your child in advance on the St. Paul's website if you plan to join in. This will assist the Kids Club staff with planning safely for the "come back."

FOLLOWING THE PROMISE BEGINS SEPTEMBER 29 ON TUESDAYS

"Come one, come all!" to the fall session of *Following the Promise* (FtP), running 12 weeks through December 15. Taught 100% online and "recorded so you can miss a class and watch later," a computer or iPad is all you need! Each week from 7:00 until 8:15 pm we journey from creation's fall into sin to the "goodness" of Good Friday to the halls of heaven--finding Jesus at the heart of the Scriptures. Text your interest to Pastor Nate at (414) 426-8236, email him at nstrobel@stpaulmuskego.org, or register on the back of your Connection Card. This class serves as a path to membership.

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY WITH PASTOR PETE

Every other Thursday, Pastor Pete leads a Zoom Bible study at 7:00 pm, generally using the GroupWork Bible study material. The next study will be on October 8. Register on the Connection Card or simply click the Zoom link that will be sent out just prior to the study.

ST. PAUL'S NEWS

COUNSELING AND CARE MINISTRY SEMINAR: RESPONDING IN FAITH TO ABUSE

Survivors of abuse are all around us. Even in the church. 1 in 3 men and women have experienced a relationship violence-related impact their lifetime. Abuse is a difficult topic, but so important for us to address. Research shows that survivors who have support from their church have more feelings of well-being and are less likely to return to an abusive relationship. All of us need to better understand this tragic phenomenon and how to respond. On Saturday, October 17, from 8:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. Michelle Markgraf will present a highly interactive seminar where all the members of the congregation are invited to learn

- The different forms of abuse
- Effects of abuse and trauma on the survivor
- How you can help a survivor
- How our church and community can help survivors and address abuse
- And more

Please save this date. Lunch and snacks will be provided. More information on registration will be coming in the weeks ahead.

AWAKE AND ALIVE—NEXT ZOOM YOUNG ADULT EVENT—SEPTEMBER 27, 6:30 PM

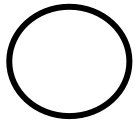
Brandon Steenbock will be the featured speaker for Awake and Alive's next large group gathering online. Here is the big idea we'll be exploring for the night: *"Speak your truth." But how do you know when your truth is true? And what happens when your truth changes? Or when your truth doesn't match someone else's? Wouldn't it be nice if there was some solid source of truth, outside yourself, that could guide you? And wouldn't it be nice if that was more than just a philosophical idea, if there was someone who could give you truth directly and help you make sense of the world? Join us for a conversation about truth - and how to find what you're looking for.* Registration is free, just go to awakealive.com for more details.

SUPPORT MINISTRY AT THE WELS BARGAIN CENTERS

For over a half century, the WELS Bargain Center has provided over \$4,000,000.00 to various WELS ministries by operating thrift stores at two separate locations in the Milwaukee metro. The south store, located at 5005 W. Howard Ave. (414-327-2529), invites you to their "going out of business" clearance sale, which will last through the end of October. The south store is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The north store, located at 8401 W. Lisbon Ave. (414-463-2595), plans to continue operations into the future but still has a critical need for new volunteers. The north store is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Please contact the north store for more information on how you can help and please consider a visit to the south store while you still can.

LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY UPDATE

Due to the Coronavirus, there will not be a LWMS Fall Rally, but LWMS and WELS mission work is still ongoing – and urgent! We have the knowledge and comfort of God's gift of salvation through his Son, Jesus – but millions of souls do not. The LWMS is one way you can share in the privilege of the gospel work our Lord and Savior called us to do. Please join in praying for our missionaries and supporting this wonderful work. The LWMS Milwaukee South Circuit will once again be conducting a Fall Mission Collection. This collection will support the Home Mission Project – Tools for Outreach and the World Mission Project – Africa. If you would like to give a gift to support the LWMS, you can place it in the offering plate in an envelope clearly labeled "LWMS" the weekend of October 4. You can also give online at www.stpaulmuskego.org/give. Enter your gift into the "wish list" and add LWMS in the memo line.



GroupWork

Bible Study Discussion Starters

Life application materials for use in Life Groups, home devotions, and other small groups.

1. This week's message theme is forgiveness. Begin your time together sharing your earliest memory involving forgiveness.

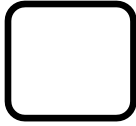
2. Which do you feel is more difficult for most people to say (and which is more difficult for you)?
 - a) "I'm sorry."
 - b) "You're forgiven."

3. Consider Joseph and his brothers. (Read Genesis 37:12-36 and Genesis 45:1-15 if you need a refresher.)
 - When do you imagine Joseph made the decision to forgive his brothers?
 - Read Genesis 50:15-21, focusing on verses 19-21. Can you think of a time when, like Joseph, you have experienced someone trying to harm you but God turning it into good? How did that impact your relationship with the person who was trying to harm you?

4. Imagine you had a dear friend who had been betrayed or hurt deeply by someone and, as a result, was withholding forgiveness. What could you say to that friend that may help them gain the courage to forgive?

5. Read Psalm 32. What words/phrases/verses in this psalm may help encourage a person to show love and forgiveness without limits as God commands?

6. Think of one person whom you may be struggling to forgive or someone from whom you need to ask for forgiveness. Break into groups of 2-3 and pray together that God helps you to forgive or ask for forgiveness in imitation of Christ's self-sacrificial love.



NoteSheet

Sermon Outline

Take notes during the sermon to help you remember the main points.

Matthew 18:21-35

+ Better Together: Us – The Forgiven Forgive +

Introduction: Little black crosses

I. We recognize God's forgiveness of us.

- Peter wants to know how many times he should forgive.
 - He's listened carefully to Jesus' teaching.
 - He's caught the meaning of Jesus' words.
 - He's grasped the truth that he's to be patient and forgiving.
- We want to know how often we should say, "I forgive you."
- We believe we're absolutely justified in withholding forgiveness.
- Jesus' response to Peter's question is incredible.
 - "not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (v. 22).
 - A disciple of Jesus wears the moniker: "Always willing to forgive."
- We look for ways to get across this principle.
 - "I'll forgive, but don't expect me to forgive."
 - We want the luxury of a little grudge, a little payback, a little retaliation.
- Jesus says that how forgiveness is not better than no forgiveness.
 - Partial forgiveness is not forgiveness.
 - We don't count—in our minds or on our calendars—how often someone sins against us.
 - We live by the Apostle Paul's words: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

2. We reflect God's forgiveness by forgiving others.

- The forgiven servant is an example of double-standard behavior.
- Our first reaction is to ask, "Who's going to act like that?"
- Hypocrisy strikes at the very heart and soul of the Christian faith.
- Jesus' closing words are harsh because they are unadulterated truth.
 - We have a way of forgetting or taking for granted how forgiving God is.
 - We break his laws and violate his standards.
- God's response to us every time we pray, "Lord, have mercy," is this: "I do forgive you—fully and forever."

Conclusion: The forgiven are always willing to forgive.

Next Steps

- **Memorize** Ephesians 4:32 – "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
- **Read** the Parable of the Vineyard Workers in Matthew 20:1-16 to prepare for the Unfair sermon in next week's new series Unexpected.
- **Put** a little black cross before the name of anyone who has hurt you in any way—to remind you to forgive them as God has forgiven you.