



Celebrate

Sunday, July 21, 2024
9th Sunday after Pentecost

Mark's gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.

Prayer of the Day

O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the "flock" of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David's line to save Israel and Judah.

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. ²Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."



The LORD is my shep-herd; I shall not be in want.

The LORD ¹ is my shepherd;
I shall not ¹ be in want.

²The LORD makes me lie down ¹ in green pastures
and leads me be- ¹ side still waters.

³You restore my ¹ soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways ¹ for your name's sake.

⁴Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall ¹ fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
they ¹ comfort me. **R**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence ¹ of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is ¹ running over.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days ¹ of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the ¹ LORD forever. **R**

Second Reading

Ephesians 2:11-22

The author of this letter reminds his audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, however, they are included in God's household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.

Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new

humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Gospel

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ's desire to be among those in need.

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a

shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

One in the communion of saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices in prayer.

A brief silence.

For the church of Jesus Christ in this and every land: Through the One who is the cornerstone of a firm foundation, join us together and build us up as a temple of mercy and peace. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the creation: Cause new trees to be planted. Restrain the melting of polar ice caps. Save land from destruction. Like a shepherd tends her sheep, raise up from among us caretakers of all you have made. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the leaders of nations and heads of tribes (*especially*): Where peace seems far off, bring it near. Where justice seems fleeting, bring it to light. Where discord seems relentless, bring harmony. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (Mary Magdalene, Apostle) John 20:1-2, 11-18. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the church, 1373) Zechariah 9:14—10:2. **Wednesday** Luke 15:1-7. **Thursday** (James, Apostle) Mark 10:35-45. **Friday** Colossians 3:12-17. **Saturday** 2 Kings 4:38-41. **10th Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Johann Sebastian Bach, 1750; Heinrich Schütz, 1672; George Frederick Handel, 1759; musicians) 2 Kings 4:42-44; Psalm 145:10-18; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21.

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Tracks 1 and 2

For the health and well-being of family, friends, and neighbors: Heal those who are sick (*especially*). Give courage to all who struggle with addiction. Touch with your tender care all who reach out to you in pain. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For this assembly and for the faith communities represented this week at the ELCA Youth Gathering: Nurture the faith of young people as they encounter new experiences and people. Break down dividing walls and inspire collaboration among people of every age. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

In thanksgiving for those who have died (*especially*): Make us certain that in Christ we are no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints in the household of God. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, holy and merciful: into your outstretched arms we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.
Amen.