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**THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, July 26, 2020  
The Reign of the Kingdom**

(P: pastor; C: congregation)

**P:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen**

**P:** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **C: Amen**

**P:** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination*

**P:** Most merciful God,

**C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

**P:** Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen**

**P:** This is the day the Lord has made. **C: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

**HYMN: "All Things Bright and Beautiful" WOV 767**

*(Text and tune: Public Domain)*

*Refrain:* **All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.**

**Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colors, God made their tiny wings. Refrain:**

**The purple headed mountains, the river running by,  
The sunset, and the morning that brightens up the sky. Refrain:**

**The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden, God made them ev'ry one. Refrain:**

**God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell  
How great is God Almighty, who has made all things well. Refrain:**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love, that, receiving what You have promised, we may love what You have commanded; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen**

**FIRST LESSON:** Deuteronomy 7:6-9, *A people chosen by God as his treasured possession*

“For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup>but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.

**P:** The word of the Lord.      **C: Thanks be to God!**

**SECOND LESSON:** Romans 8:28-39, *Nothing can separate us from God’s love*

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

<sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**P:** The word of the Lord.      **C: Thanks be to God!**

**GOSPEL:** Matthew 13:44-52, *Parables of the reign of heaven*

**P:** The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.      **C: Glory to you, O Lord!**

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup>who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. <sup>48</sup>When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. <sup>49</sup>So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup>and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup>And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

**P:** The Gospel of the Lord.      **C: Praise to you, O Christ!**

**SERMON**

**HYMN: “I Love Your Kingdom, Lord” LBW 368**

*(Text and tune: Public Domain)*

**I love your kingdom, Lord, The place of your abode;  
The Church our blest Redeemer saved With his own precious blood.  
I love your Church, O God! Its walls before you stand,  
Dear as the apple of your eye And graven on your hand.  
Beyond my highest joy I prize its heav’nly ways,  
Its sweet communion, solemn vows, Its hymns of love and praise.  
Sure as your truth shall last, To Zion shall be giv’n  
The brightest glories earth can yield, And brighter bliss of heav’n.**

**PRAYERS**

*Prayers and intercessions are said by the pastor. In concluding the prayers the pastor says:*

**P:** Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

**C:** 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

**BENEDICTION**

**P:** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. **C: Amen**

**DISMISSAL HYMN: “Be Thou My Vision” WOV 776** *(Text and tune: Public domain)*

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
Thou my best thought by day and by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.  
Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
Thou my soul’s shelter, thou my high tower, raise thou me heav’nward, O Pow’r of my pow’r.  
Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always.  
Thou, and thou only, first in my heart, great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.  
Light of my soul, after victory won, may I reach heaven’s joys, O heaven’s Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

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Faith Memorial Lutheran Church, Pastor Eric Schoech  
753 N. Calumet Ave., Valparaiso, Indiana 46383 (219) 462-7684 [www.faithvalpo.org](http://www.faithvalpo.org)