

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6-7, 2026



UNEXPECTED TRUTHS



14940 62nd St. N - Stillwater, MN 55082

651-439-7831

www.salemlutheran.org

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our services we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. Through God's powerful Word and sacraments he renews our faith and strengthens us to serve in joy.

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP: Loving Father, bless me in worship as I hear of your love and faithfulness in spite of my sin and error. Fill my heart with joyful praise and loud alleluias. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THEME OF THE DAY: When danger strikes, most people instinctively move away from it. Fire, violence, accidents, and disasters trigger a natural desire to find protection and safety. Yet first responders do the opposite. Firefighters, police officers, and paramedics run toward the very scenes others are fleeing. They enter burning buildings, approach violent situations, and kneel beside the injured in chaotic moments. This response is unexpected because it goes against basic human instinct. Today God calls us to be spiritual first responders when we see people in trouble because of sin. Instead of self-preservation and comfort, we choose service to them and to our Lord. Our motive is the grace of God and his desire for the salvation of all mankind.

WORSHIP SERIES: The Declaration of Independence boldly assert that certain truths are "self-evident"—truths accessible to human reason and widely recognized by observation of the world. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are recognized by most reasonable people.

The most important truths in the Bible are not self-evident at all. In fact, they frequently appear surprising or even contrary to human expectation. Humanity is not naturally good but deeply sinful. Salvation cannot be achieved through human effort but comes entirely by God's grace. God brings sinners to eternal life through Jesus' suffering and death. Biblical truth is revealed by God rather than discovered by reason alone. While some truths may seem obvious, the Bible is filled with unexpected truths.

SERVING GOD, SERVING US:

Preacher: Pastor Ryan Wolfe Piano/Organ: Abigail Ibsch, Luke Dorn

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Order of Worship

CW Hymnal, Setting Two

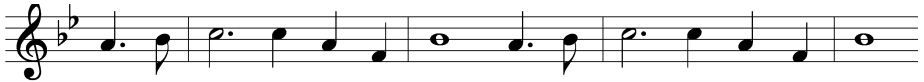


Hymn: Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

CW 839



1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee;
2 Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fill thy law's de - mands;
3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring, sim - ply to thy cross I cling;
4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when mine eye - lids close in death,



let the wa - ter and the blood, from thy riv - en side which flowed,
could my zeal no res - pite know, could my tears for - ev - er flow,
na - ked, come to thee for dress, help - less, look to thee for grace;
when I soar to worlds un - known, see thee on thy judg - ment throne,



be of sin the dou - ble cure: cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.
all for sin could not a - tone; thou must save and thou a - lone.
foul, I to the foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

Please remain seated.

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: 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 + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Hymn: All Glory Be to God on High

CW 935 sts. 1-2



1 All glo - ry be to God on high and thanks for all his
2 We praise and laud and wor - ship you; we give you thanks for -



fa - vor; no harm can touch or ter - ri - fy a child of
ev - er, O Fa - ther, for your rule is true and just and



God for - ev - er. God shows his good and gra - cious will and
chang - es nev - er. With bound-less pow'r, your might - y reign ful -



grants his peace, the world to fill; all strife at last has end - ed.
fills what - ev - er you or - dain; Lord, grant us ev - 'ry bless - ing!

THE WORD OF GOD

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, preserve the congregation of believers with your never-failing mercy. Help us avoid whatever is wicked and harmful, and guide us in the way that leads to our salvation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Be seated.

First Reading

Ezekiel 33:7-11

The Lord told Ezekiel if he didn't warn the Israelites about their sin, he was going to hold Ezekiel accountable.

⁷"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. ⁸When I say to the wicked, 'You wicked person, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. ⁹But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

¹⁰"Son of man, say to the Israelites, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?"' ¹¹Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?'

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: How Blest Are Those

Psalm 32B



1 How blest are those the LORD for - gives; how
2 I si - lent - ly con - cealed my guilt, but
3 I then con - fessed my sin to you, my
4 Let all the faith - ful pray to you while
5 You hide me, LORD; you hold me fast in



glad they are to hear their sin is gone, their
then I groaned all day: your heav - y hand, like
griev - ous guilt and shame, and you for - gave my
you may still be found; you place them safe a -
all ad - ver - si - ty, sur - round - ing me with



guilt a - toned, their rec - ord clean and clear.
sum - mer heat, took all my strength a - way.
wick - ed - ness by your most gra - cious name.
bove the flood, se - cure on high - er ground.
faith - ful love and songs of vic - to - ry.

Second Reading

Galatians 2:11-16

Paul wins his brother Cephas (Peter) over to the truth of the gospel.

¹¹When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

¹⁴When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

¹⁵"We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

Gospel Acclamation

1 Timothy 2:4



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Refrain

Gospel

Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus teaches us how to practice Christian discipline lovingly.

¹⁵"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷If they still refuse to lis-

ten, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸“Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated.

Children's Devotion

Hymn of the Day: Jesus Sinners Does Receive CW 654 sts. 1, 4-5, 7



1 Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive; oh, may all this
4 I, a sin - ner, come to you with a pen - i -
5 Oh, how blest it is to know, were as scar - let
7 Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive, e - ven I have



say - ing pon - der who in sin's de - lu - sions live
tent con - fes - sion. Sav - ior, show me mer - cy, too;
my trans - gres - sion, it shall be as white as snow
been for - giv - en. And when I this earth must leave,



and from God and heav - en wan - der. Here is hope for
grant for all my sins re - mis - sion. Let these words my
by your blood and bit - ter pas - sion, for these words I
I shall find an o - pen heav - en. Dy - ing, still to



all who grieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
soul re - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
do be - lieve: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.
him I cleave: Je - sus sin - ners does re - ceive.

“Watch out for sin”

Please stand after the sermon.

THANKSGIVING

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.**

Be seated.

Offering



 **Connect Card**

Our members give offerings to support God’s work in our church. Offerings can be put in the basket or made online by scanning the code. Visitors may give, but aren’t expected to.

We ask members and visitors alike to fill out the connection card and place it in the basket now or as you leave. Please share your prayer requests that we can pray for you.



 **Give Online**

Please stand.

Prayer of the Church

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.

Be seated.

Prayer

M: 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.

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.

Hymn: Reformation Song

CW 877 sts. 1-2, Ref, 3-4



1 Your Word a - lone is sol - id ground,
2 Thro' faith a - lone we come to you;
3 In Christ a - lone we're jus - ti - fied;
4 By grace a - lone we have been saved;



the might - y rock on which we build.
we have no mer - it we can claim.
his right - eous - ness is all our plea.
all that we are has come from you.



In ev - 'ry line the truth is found,
Sure that your prom - is - es are true,
Your law's de - mands are sat - is - fied;
Hearts that were once by sin en - slaved



and ev - 'ry page with glo - ry filled. v. 2 name.
we place our hope in Je - sus' free.
his per - fect work has set us free.
now by your pow'r have been made new.



Silent Prayer and Announcements

Salem Minute

Fellowship & Spiritual Growth

Sunday morning, all are invited to enjoy refreshments and fellowship in the entry. Adult Bible study begins at 10:15 in sanctuary.

For Worship Next Week

Worship theme: Beyond the Temple Walls to a Greater Responsibility

Bible Readings: Deuteronomy 11:1-7, 1 Timothy 4:1-16, Luke 6:43-49

Hymns: 834, 861, 671, 697, 704

From our Ministry Partners:

Save the date! Salem women are invited to Camp Croix's Fall Women's Retreat, "Rest & Rise," October 2–4, 2026, built around Isaiah 60:1 — "Arise, shine, for your Light has come!" Registration is \$125 (five meals, lodging, and materials included) — register at campcroix.org/womens-retreat.

Join us for the St. Croix Circuit LWMS Fall Rally on Saturday, October 10, 2026, hosted by Brooklyn Lutheran and Redeemer Lutheran at Brooklyn Lutheran Church (5840 69th Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55429). All are welcome to attend. If you'd like to donate mission offerings, please turn them into the church office by September 20.

Special Presentation at St Croix Lutheran Academy- Pastor Mike Novotny is Talking Taboo - September 15, 6:30 p.m., Auditorium. Anxiety. Depression. Suicide. Sex. Pornography. Gender. Identity. Race. Join Pastor Mike as he tackles the questions Christians are actually asking and explores what God has to say about life's toughest issues. Everyone welcome. No charge.

TRY OUR COMMUNITY. SUNDAY JAM

THE SINGLE BIGGEST FACTOR IN WHETHER YOUR KID
KEEPS THEIR FAITH? YOU.

Kids with actively engaged parents are 2x as likely to still be attending church weekly as adults. Faith sticks because it's lived both at home and in community surrounded by people who love God and love them. Your home is the most important factor, but a child's faith is strongest when it is reinforced by congregational life, mentors, and peers.

That's exactly what Sunday JAM is built to do: give your family a weekly rhythm. We're a room full of Christian friends who know their name, and a crew of Christian youth and adults who pray for them, laugh with them, and watch them grow up.

NEW THIS YEAR: MONTHLY PARENT GROUP

Raising faithful kids isn't a solo job, and it was never meant to be. So this year we're making official what's already been happening informally: on the first Sunday of every month, all JAM parents are invited to a small group study.

Come coffee in hand and toddlers underfoot to talk honestly about the hard parts of raising kids in faith and lean on each other. We'll walk us through the next month of lessons and talk about how to bring them home. Mostly, though? We want to be your community.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER: [SALEMLUTHERAN.ORG/JAM](https://salemlutheran.org/jam)

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

FOR OUR GUESTS

We are glad that you joined us to worship our Savior today. If you have questions about our church or service simply ask an usher or someone near you. We're happy to help!

Please take note of a few helpful things:

- ✦ Restrooms with diaper-changing tables are located straight down the hall opposite the sanctuary entrance.
- ✦ Our sanctuary is equipped with a "loop" system for hearing assistance. Please set hearing aids to the "T" position or ask an usher for a headset.
- ✦ You will find a connection card in your pew. Please share names, contact information, and prayer requests.
- ✦ Salem members give an offering to support the work we do for the Lord. Guests are not expected to give anything, but if you wish to make a donation you can place it in a basket as it's passed during the service or give online.
- ✦ Our services are streamed live on our YouTube channel. If you would prefer not to be on camera, please sit in the seats located beneath the balcony.

FOR THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

We love to see families worship together and we welcome children to sing, pray, and grow with us in our services.

We provide a few special worship aids and helps for families:

- ✦ Children's bulletins & activity bags are available in the entry, just to the left of the office hallway. Ask an usher if you need help finding them.
- ✦ If your child needs a quiet space, you can use the fireside room down the hallway across from the restrooms. The service is streamed live into the room.
- ✦ Children of all ages are invited to come to the front of church for the weekly children's message. Parents are welcome too!

**Salem Lutheran Church exists to glorify God
by teaching his timeless Truth, that all may
grow in grace and faith to share tomorrow's eternity.**

