

Old Testament Reading:
Deuteronomy 30:15–20

¹⁵“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

Epistle: Philemon 1–21

¹Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved fellow worker ²and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints, ⁶and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. ⁷For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.

⁸Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— ¹⁰I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹(Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹²I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

¹³I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will. ¹⁵For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.

²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Holy Gospel: Luke 14:25–35

²⁵Now great crowds accompanied [Jesus], and he turned and said to them, ²⁶“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

³⁴“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? ³⁵It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”



*Holding fast to Him,
for He is your life and length of days*



About the Cover: As the people of Israel finally neared the time of entry into the Promised Land, they were exhorted to hold fast to the Lord. Though Israel would continually fail, the Lord nonetheless held fast to them. He has been steadfast in His promises, which have culminated in the sending of Jesus, who was fastened to the cross to bring forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in Him. Today as we hold fast to Him by faith, we see that He has never let go of us.

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)

8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254

309-949-2516

September 4, 2022 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Service Three (Lutheran Service Book, p. 184)

Hymn of Invocation 873 Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Invocation and Versicles (p. 184)

Duet: *The Man Is Ever Blessed*

Gloria Patri (p. 186)

Collect of the Day

P O merciful Lord, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all. Grant us courage and strength to take up the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen. *(sung)*

Readings (on back of bulletin)

Gradual

Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

Fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing!
**Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.**

The Nicene Creed (p. 191)

Hymn of the Day 853 How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

Sermon

Offertory (p. 192)

Presentation of the Offering

Prayer of the Church

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P ...for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Service of the Sacrament (p. 194)

(Please see the Communion statement in the pew pads for receiving the Sacrament at St. John's.)

Distribution Hymns

621 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

716 I Walk in Danger All the Way

565 Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ

Nunc Dimittis (p. 199)

Hymn to Depart 660 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

(Please remain standing for the hymn.)

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

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Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org
https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo

**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

Rev. Timothy Nerud **Pastor**
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Aaron Raschke

Organist: Gail Tutt

Greeter: Janet Bertsons

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

Today's Readings: Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Epistle: Philemon 1-21
Holy Gospel: Luke 14:25-35

WE PRAY: Holy Spirit, to whose charge the keeping of the faith in the hearts of God's people is given, grant us such a single-minded devotion to Christ that no other love or loyalty can tempt us from the course on which You have set us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Father are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)
(Tuesday) 9 am—12 pm
(Thursday) 9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm
(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.

STREAM SERVICES <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school— Adult Bible Class—11 Worship—47

OFFERING

Offering last Sunday \$2,218.25
Weekly 2022 Budget income needed \$4,084.71

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today 8:45 am SS/Adult & Youth Bible Study
10:00 am Divine Worship/Holy Communion
Monday **OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY**
Tuesday 6:30 pm Adult Instruction
Next Sunday 8:45 am SS/Adult & Youth Bible Study
10:00 am Divine Worship
11:30 am Confirmation class

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Psalms 122:1*

LUKE 14:33 – "So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." None of what we have is ours. It all belongs to God. That is the foundation of Christian stewardship. What we have been given is to be used for God's purposes according to our callings in home, Church, and society. As we learn to leave generously in these callings, we renounce our ownership of our wealth. It's not "ours," it's His. God owns everything, and we manage for the furtherance of His goals.

ATTENDANCE PADS are at the end of each pew. Each family (members and guests) should sign using only **ONE** box per household, naming all family members present in the one box. **EVERYONE** needs to indicate their intention to receive Holy Communion on a Communion Sunday. Return pad to the right end of your pew. Thanks for your help with this.

ALL LADIES ARE INVITED to attend the Rock Island Zone Fall Rally at Faith Lutheran Church, Kewanee, on Tuesday, September 20. The guest speaker is Rev. Rodney G. Blomquist, CID Prison/Jail Coordinator and a member of the CID Human Care Committee. Let Liz Neumann or Bev Peterson know if you would like to attend by September 4.

COLLECTION FOR ABILITIES PLUS, Kewanee. Articles will be gathered at the LWML Zone Rally. If you would like to contribute, deposit them in the box beside the coat room. Articles needed are Large Duplo Lego Blocks, Receiving Blankets, Soft Baby Books, Adult Coloring Books, Colored Pencils, Art and Craft Supplies, Word Search Books, Paper Plates, Paper Napkins, Adult and Simple Puzzles, Plastic Tablecloths, Small Bingo Prizes, Adult and Children's Board Games. Cash or checks are welcome also. Make checks payable to Abilities Plus. Cash or checks are also being accepted for *Portals of Prayer* subscriptions for the East Moline Correctional Center. Make checks payable to Women of Faith. Cash or checks may be given to Bev Peterson or Liz Neumann. **Bring all donations to the church by Sunday, September 18th.**

SPECIAL OFFERING –Holy Trinity Lutheran church is the only LCMS congregation in Bristol, TN, formed in 2002. These 40 faithful members met in first in a hotel meeting room and presently at St. Columbia Episcopal church. In recent years they purchased a house & remodeled it to serve as a fellowship hall where they have Bible study classes, Sunday school and Sunday Bible class. This building also houses the Pastor’s office. This building is paid for. Currently, a modest building is in construction. It includes a 42’ x 28’ nave & chancel, remodeling an exiting carport to serve as Narthex with restrooms and coffee area. This will connect the house and church together. Funding was secured through the LCEF. However, the city of Bristol and TN Dept of Transportaion are requiring a concrete culvert for the drive at an additional cost of \$50,000 unexpectantly putting the congregation over loan and down payment by \$43,000. Your prayers and monetary gifts are greatly needed. An offering plate is on the table under the Office window. Your gifts will be match by money from Karna Holletz estate.

WHO WILL HELP? We have one volunteer, of 3 needed, to serve on the nominating committee. This committee will secure the names of congregational members willing to be on the ballot for the Church council for 2023. ASAP, please contact Don Hock (309-945-6675) or Pastor Nerud if you are willing to help. A big thanks to the three people who have volunteered to serve on the Constitution Committee.

ALTAR FLOWERS—The 2022 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms. Cost for weekly flowers are \$30 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. Please sign up for a Sunday.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Rejoice in God’s goodness in Christ as you pray:

MISSION—Thank God for family. Pray that God would guide all families to love each other with the love of God in Christ Jesus.

ST JOHN’S—Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Kulpa—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Daniel, Fern, Gracelyn, and Peter and ask Your blessings upon them.

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Carolyn Werner
Paula Chapa	Arlyn Helke	Carolyn Wildermuth
Jim Dahl	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods
Lois Esterlein	Drew Schillinger	

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

Virginia Miller (mother of Jamie Werling)

Rev. Justin Kane (son of Sandra Kane)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Zachary/Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Lois Esterlein)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“We all belong, first and foremost, to God. His creative and redemptive acts bring value and meaning to our lives. Because we belong to Him, He provides all we need. Our lives also belong to each other, and because we are connected through the body of Christ, we are not alone. We are necessary to each other as we serve through our vocations.” *Michelle Bauman, director of Y4Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

ROCK ISLAND CIRCUIT YOUTH GROUP—Mark your calendars - regular meetings resume on Sunday, September 11th. All youth (7th grade thru High School) from all churches in the Rock Island Circuit are welcome to attend. Meetings are every Sunday from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 3300 24th Street, Rock Island. First hour - youth meet with Pastor Astrowski for a devotion followed by a discussion on Apologetics (learning to defend the faith). Second hour - youth gather in the fellowship hall and gymnasium with our Youth Leaders for activities, games and snacks. Make sure to bring your friends. Remember to wear comfortable clothes and shoes and for the activity hour. Please park and enter the church building on the west side. Continue to watch the newsletter and bulletin for upcoming fall events. For any questions, please contact Kathy Welch at 309-714-5491.

WALK FOR LIFE—Pregnancy Resources annual fund raiser is set for Saturday, September 10th. Walkers may check in between 8:30—11:00 am at the East Shelter of Ben Butterworth Park. Walkers may walk any time between 9-11:30 am. If you wish to support this event but are unable to walk, you may send your donation to: Pregnancy Resources, 3825—16th St., Moline IL 61265.

THE G.R.I.T. RUN is back on October 1 at Camp CILCA. Run trails, cross creeks, see great sights, and earn your place with the brave souls who meet this challenge each year. Cost is \$30 for adults and \$10 for children 17 and under. Register at www.cilca.org/grit-run.

SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES are here again! Word of God Lutheran Church for the Deaf will offer free beginning sign language classes on Tuesday evenings, 7:30-8:30 pm, at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 115 W. 12th Ave., Milan, Illinois. The emphasis will be on conversational sign language. Classes will run ten weeks, from Sept. 13 – Nov. 15, and are open to the entire community. Pre-registration is not required. For more information, please call Rev. Tim Eckert, 563-359-7105, or e-mail him at DeafLutheran@q.com.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 4, 2022

Text: Luke 14:25-35 (Gospel)

Other texts: Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (Old Testament Reading); Philemon 1-21 (Epistle)

“Count the Cost”

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

St. Luke records that Jesus has great crowds following Him as He travels to Jerusalem, but do they understand what it means to *truly* follow Him? Have they counted the cost of being His disciple? Or are they just finding Him interesting at the moment, following Him as “something to do,” instead of something “needing to be done”? Like the builder who began to build and was not able to finish,¹ will their discipleship end up falling short, that is, short of eternal life in heaven, because they didn’t seriously count the cost of being His disciple in the first place? Consequently, Jesus tells them the costs up front.

Now it is true that He doesn’t give an exhaustive list during His sermon, but Jesus does hit on three general, yet very serious conditions of discipleship. Surely, the first cost can’t help but ruffle our feathers, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters...he cannot be my disciple.”²

In English, this seems offensive and outright wrong, but it was a Hebrew way of speaking. To say “this I love, this I hate” is a strong way of saying who or what is preferred and loved more. Thus it is written, “[Jacob] loved Rachel *more* than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. When the LORD saw that Leah was *hated*.”³ Thus, “to hate” parents, spouse, children, and siblings means to love Jesus more. Recognizing this, no doubt we all breathe a huge sigh of relief. Yet, that’s exactly what Jesus does *not* want us to do, hence why He uses this strongest of Hebraisms, calling upon us to “hate” all others *in comparison to our loyalty to Him*.

You see, love and hate here is not really emotions as we tend to view them. No doubt, emotion comes into play, but they are primarily viewed as a matter of priority. To love one is to, in comparison, spurn the other. Thus we are to love Jesus by hating our family. This in no way contradicts or abrogates the honor in which we are to hold our parents and the love and service we are to offer our family. However, when it comes to a comparison, when something would cause us to have to choose one or the other, then we are to spurn our family, *hating* them when weighed against our relationship to Jesus.

This means that our first loyalty is to Christ, His Word, and His Church. It means working to encourage family members in their relationship with the Lord, and if no relationship is there, sharing with them the Word so that God may create such a relationship. It means not letting them get between us and the Lord, not letting them cause us to separate ourselves from worship and time of devotion and prayer. It means not supporting them in their sins, but instead, calling them to repentance (and no, they won’t like it). It means supporting others, such as pastors, congregational leaders, and our fellow believers, who are doing that very thing, even if (more likely “when”) it causes family trouble.

Understanding this, we have a better understanding of the other thing that Jesus calls us to hate, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate...even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”⁴ Again we are not to take these words in a simplistic way that ignores other Scripture, that is, thinking that God wants us to despise or hurt ourselves. Our life here on earth is a gift from our heavenly Father, has been redeemed by His Son, Jesus, and has been given meaning and purpose by being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Thus the Fifth Commandment rightly condemns suicide and all forms of hurting and despising ourselves. Yet, if we are to be Jesus’ disciple, then we must love Him so much that we spurn our earthly life, hating it in comparison.

We hate our life by not finding our self-worth in our jobs or our abilities, whether physical or intellectual. We hate our life by having our self-esteem be *Christ*-esteem, finding our true value in Him and His sacrifice for us. We understand that true worth comes from our creating and saving Lord, and that seeking it outside of Him is pride, as it makes an idol out of our *self*.

So we hate our life by living a life of repentance, daily killing our sinful nature with all its desires that would lead us onto a path of disobedience to God’s will as revealed in His Law. We hate our life by remaining true to the Holy Trinity in steadfast faith, conforming our life to His will, remaining firm in our Christian confession and His Church by being willing to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away just as our confirmation promises state.

This leads us to the second general cost of being Jesus’ disciple, “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”⁵ We bear our cross when we suffer because we are Christians. We bear the cross when we are claimed as heretics by false religions or branded as erring Christians by those who themselves teach or follow false teaching. We bear the cross when we are ignored, insulted, detested, passed over, or worse due to our Christian confession of the truth of God’s Word, when we hold up Christ in word and deed by being unwilling to go along with the sinful world, whether friends, family, school officials, employers, the government, or whomever.

Thus we see that to bear our cross is not, of itself, the normal earthly afflictions that we all endure in this life such as illnesses, death of a loved one, unemployment, misery on the job, or such things. For only believers can bear the cross, and unbelievers experience such things as well. Yet these too become a cross of sorts as Satan tempts us to think, and perhaps others actually say to us, “If God loved you so much, He wouldn’t let you suffer like this,” or “A real Christian with a strong faith would be able to overcome this struggle.” In addition, Jesus’ cross was a sacrifice of Himself *for others*, so too we bear our cross by sacrificing ourselves for our neighbor, becoming a willing and faithful servant to others, just like Onesimus became to Paul, and was willing to become to Philemon.

Finally, Jesus gives the third cost of being His disciple, “Any of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”⁶ We renounce all we have by recognizing that this life and the things of it are temporary; they will not last. We renounce all we have by recognizing that all our earthly possessions are gifts from God of which He calls us to be faithful stewards, using them as He instructs us. Thus we give to our church to support the ministry of the Gospel, to charities to help those in need, and to care for the needs of our family and self. We renounce all we have by enjoying the earthly possessions God has privileged us with, but by being willing,

yes, ready to give them up before we give up on our giving to the church and to charity, just as we would give them up before giving up feeding our family.

Dear believer, count the cost! Do you have the resources to be Jesus' disciple? Have you kept Jesus first in every aspect of your life? Do you believe that you can do so? The only honest answer to these questions is "No, I have not done it, nor can I do it." It is true that Jesus teaches us the path of discipleship. But though His teaching is perfect and clear, our sinful nature stops us from doing it as He instructs. But Jesus is more than a teacher, He is first and foremost a Savior. For He has done more than teach us how to be a faithful disciple, He has walked the path of faithful discipleship Himself, walked it perfectly *for us*.

Jesus hated His family saying, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."⁷ Jesus hated His life, willing to bear His cross to the fullest extent by giving up His life on one in obedience to His Father for He, "being found in human form...humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."⁸ He renounced all His possessions, not only suffering earthly poverty, but giving up the very riches of heaven for the sake of others, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."⁹

It is true that we cannot be the disciples that we are called to be. But Jesus has paid the price of our feebleness and our outright sinful failures. In our Baptism, He has washed those sins away and, even more, has covered us with the righteousness of His perfect discipleship.¹⁰ Thus, though the cost is beyond what *we* can pay, He has paid it for us, and even more, gives to us the resources that we need, that we can follow Him, living faithfully as His disciple. The Holy Spirit forgives our feebleness and sins, and more, keeps us on the path of discipleship, strengthening our weary feet, leading us on the narrow path because our confidence is ever more placed in Jesus' perfect discipleship and our focus is ever more on His Word.

So dear Christians, count the cost. Count the cost *that your Savior Jesus paid with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death* in order to redeem you from sin, death and the devil. Count the cost you would pay if your discipleship doesn't go the distance, an eternity in pain and regret. Count the cost in this life now, where the things that seem to matter the most really don't when compared to eternity with God and His saints and angels. Count the cost that you would love Christ and so, in comparison, hate others, hate your own life, bear your cross, and renounce all that you have. Do so boldly, confident that the Holy Spirit will give you the strength to do so, until all such things fade away in the joys of heavenly glory.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."¹¹ God grant us such ears of sincere faith that we may truly live as faithful disciples of our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

¹ Luke 14:30.

² Luke 14:26. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV)* unless otherwise noted.

³ Genesis 29:30-31; cf. Romans 9:13

⁴ Luke 14:26.

⁵ Luke 14:27.

⁶ Luke 14:33.

⁷ Luke 8:21.

⁸ Philippians 2:8.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 8:9.

¹⁰ Galatians 3:27.

¹¹ Luke 14:35.