

## Order of Worship for August 25, 2024

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Call to Worship:

P: We come into Your presence today, Lord, at the beginning of this academic year, gathering in Your house to hear what You have to say to us.

**C: We are here, Lord, a group of people, yet individual persons. We are students who wear masks of confidence during the week, but whose stomachs are churning and whose fears are known to You; the professor who must maintain the standards of the University, but who feels deeply the nervousness of the students; the parent who is not so certain of what makes a good parent, but hopes to be a good one; the housewife, merchant, farmer, workman, who need a new push and a reminder of our purpose as Your people; the children whose problems seem so small to the grown-ups, but are more than they can handle and were more than the grown-ups could handle when they were their age.**

P: In many ways Your people are individual strangers who have gathered in this place, Lord. Yet as we make our beginning we do it in the confident hope that You are here among us and within us to bind us to Yourself and to one another.

**C: So we begin this worship and this new academic term by invoking Your holy name:  
ALL: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

Opening Hymn: *“Earth and All Stars”* –Hymn #817

### Confession:

P: Let us confess our sins to God.

**C: We confess to you, O Lord, that we have sinned. We draw near to you with our mouths and honor you with our lips, but our hearts are far from you. We are so fond of idleness, so indisposed for labor. so soon at play, so late at prayer. So brisk in the service of self, So slack in the service of others. So eager to get, So reluctant to give. So full of good intentions, So backward in fulfilling them. O merciful God, grant us yet again Your forgiveness.**

P: Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and For His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### Service of the Word

Hymn of Praise: *“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”* - Norm

P: The Lord be with you,     **C: and also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day:**

P: Almighty and everlasting Father, You give Your children many blessings even though we are undeserving. In every trial and temptation grant us steadfast confidence in Your loving-kindness and mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 29:11-19**

R: And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

And the LORD said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, while their hearts are far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment taught by men, therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.

The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 5:20-33**

R: Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of His body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **Holy Gospel: Mark 7:1-13**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: Now when the Pharisees gathered to Jesus, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of His disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” And Jesus said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

And He said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

## **Sermon Hymn: “*Servant Song*”**

Will you let me be your servant? Let me be as Christ to you.  
Pray that I might have the grace To let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on the journey; We are brothers on the road.  
We are here to help each other Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you In the night time of your fear.  
I will hold my hand out to you Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping. When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, We shall find such harmony.  
Born to all we've known together Of Christ's love and agony.

## **Sermon: “*Submit to One Another*” - Ephesians 3:20**

When you preach a sermon the hope is that you are drawing out of God’s Word, not from the point you want to make, using the Bible to back it up. Otherwise it is not God’s Word, by my weak words. To help with that churches traditionally came up with lessons from the Bible

that follow a cycle. The idea is to have that cycle, rather than what concerns the pastor, guide the preaching.

But here we are left with a reading to begin the new school year from Ephesians 5. As a college student you will be struggling with how to make church and your faith relevant to college life. Then you're hit with these words, "Wives, submit to your husbands." Traditionally that was translated, "Wives, obey your husbands." Those words have been used throughout the years to give license to all kinds of abuse and mistreatment. If anything stands against what we are taught at a place like Iowa State University is these words which seem to give permission to practice sexism. So why bother with anything else the Bible or the church has to say? Honestly, don't those words shock you-- "Obey your husband"?

Pastor Richard Kapfer, who preached here from 1976-85 before he became district president and who was such a noted preacher that he had calls to both of our seminaries to teach preaching, said he wouldn't preach from this text because it took too much explaining and needed people to dialogue about it. I have felt the same way, but my concern is that many of you will not have a chance to study this in Bible class. And this has so much to say to us about how we are to live with each other.

"Wives, submit to your husbands." It is sad that the lesson began with those words and did not include what is written right before it. St. Paul writes in 5:21, "Out of reverence for Christ, submit to one another." Before we can understand what it means for wives to submit to their husbands, we need to know what it means to submit to one another. Otherwise, we will always get it wrong.

"Submit." That may sound to us like the trainer using a whip to master a caged tiger. It might bring up images of a slave submitting to a master, a poor peasant lying flat on the ground in front of a king, pleading for mercy. In chapter 6 of Ephesians, right after our lesson this morning, Paul tells children to "obey" their parents. The word "obey" definitely implies that the children are under the parent. The parents decide how you are to be clothed, fed, and educated.

But Ephesians 5 says "submit," not "obey." There is a difference. The word "submit" actually comes from a military context. The New Testament is written in Greek. Five hundred years before Jesus the Persians were the great empire. The conquered other nations by sheer force of their armies and by clever diplomacy. They invaded Greece, whose armies were small. But at places like Marathon, Thermopylae, and Plataea, the Greeks man-handled them. Though the Greek armies were small, they were very disciplined and worked together to win in combat. This might seem surprising because the Persians soldiers were slaves while the Greek were citizen soldiers. However, the Greek troops willingly worked together and sacrificed for each other to protect their land.

At the core of this was the way the Greek formed into battle. Instead of going against the enemy as individuals like the mass of Persians did, the Greek formed ranks which made solid lines of shields and spears. When the Greek formed into battle lines, they literally "submitted" to each other. Your shield didn't just protect you; it protected the man to your left. This way his right side was free to attack with a spear or sword. You depended on each other. You voluntarily "submitted" to protect and be protected.

That is what it means when Paul says, "Submit to one another." It is not the forced obedience on a slave, but the willing sacrifice to help each other.

This is the opposite of what we often see in the world. As students you do compete against other students for grades and then job offers. No one cares if you did your best if there are so many others who do better. Certainly on the Iowa State football team players “submit” to one another to help the team. No one knows the names of the offensive linemen, but if they don’t do their job, there is no running game and the quarterback will get sacked all the time. Many modern college teams come out on the field holding each other’s hands as a symbol of the team over the individual, but all those players have to compete to make the team. And they compete against other teams. Businesses have found that some of the most effective leaders are those who are humble and sacrifice for the good of the company. But there is still competition to get a job and promotions with the company. And the company is competing against other companies.

But there is no competition among “God’s team.” We do not become followers of Jesus based on anything we have done or deserve. We have been called by grace. Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins and restore us to God. Paul doesn’t just say, “Submit to one another,” but, “Submit to one another, out of reverence for Christ.” Only in a relation with Jesus Christ does submission make sense. If I am put under someone else, the implication is always that I am inferior. So to tell a woman to submit to her husband implies she is less of a human than he is. It is a license to mistreat others. But “submit” means something different among those who follow Jesus. Jesus, the one who calls us to “submit,” is the one who submitted to His Father, became a human like us, and suffered for us. One of the cardinal principles of the Christian faith is that Jesus and the Father are equal. Jesus is not His slave. Yet, Jesus voluntarily submitted to the will of the Father—to save us!

To submit to one another is not a put down but the highest calling. It is the chance to be like Jesus—nothing tops that! If we live in that submission, we do it not to gain anything, but to do it as Jesus did—out of love. What did Jesus have to gain from it when as God he has all?

This is Memorial Lutheran Church. Martin Luther once expressed what submission means in these two statements, “I am a Christian, free from sin and slave to no one.” I am a Christian, a slave of Christ to serve others.” Put together what Luther said is a paradox. How can one be free and slave at the same time? How can we submit and not be forced? On our own it is impossible. Either we are real slaves or we are just doing it to gain something for ourselves. But “out of reverence for Christ,” as His people, we can live that way.

That is what makes you unique in this world. Other people can help others, but there is always something behind it, something to gain for it, be it friendship, feeling good about it, or the desire to have others depend on us. But as those “who reverence Christ,” we can submit as Jesus did. Because the highest calling for us is not to get on the Dean’s List or get the best job or marry the perfect spouse or have the greatest kids or the most recognition. The highest calling in a marriage and within all human relationships is to serve as Jesus serves us.

**Creed:** Second Article of Creed and Explanation

**Prayers:**

**Sharing Our Ministry:**

**Student Surveys:**

**Offering:**

## Service of Holy Communion

### Call to Communion:

P:

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

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

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**The Words of Our Lord:** (Pastor)

### The Lord's Prayer:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: Amen**

### Distribution of Holy Communion:

**Communion Hymns:**     *"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"* –**Hymn #575**  
                              *"In Christ Alone"* - **Norm**

**Dismissal** (pastor)

### Affirming Our Calling:

P: People of God, both your work and your rest are now in God. In Holy Baptism, you died with Christ Jesus to the forces of evil and rose to new life as members of His body. As we begin this academic year, will you endeavor to be faithful to our Lord Jesus through service, worship, and personal prayer? And will you strive to recognize the gifts that God has given you and discern how they may be used in the building of God's reign of peace and justice?

**C: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

P: Be at peace among yourselves. Encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing** (Pastor)

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn:**   *"10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)"* - **Norm**

**Postlude**