Order of Worship for August 17, 2025

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"* – **Hymn #809**

Confession and Forgiveness

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

R: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

P: Christ Jesus, You call us to follow You in the journey that will be the rest of our lives here in earth. But it is so easy for us to tire, to get sidetracked, to want to go our own way.
C: Other ways look easier, more inviting, more doing what everyone else is doing, more tempting to us.
ALL: We fail to endure. Lord, have mercy . . .

P: For the joy of saving us from our sin, Jesus endure the cross and shame and died to take away our sins. We are forgiven each day by Him so that we can indeed endure.
C: Thanks be to God!

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:
P: Give thanks to the LORD for He is good;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.
P: To Him who endured like no other;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.
P: To Him who is faithful to His promises;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.
P: To Him who gathers an enduring people;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.
P: To Him who strengthens His people in their weariness;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.
P: To Him whose return is soon;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.

P: And to Him whose kingdom will have no end;
C: for His steadfast love endures forever.
ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be forever. Amen.

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day:
P: O God, our defender, storms rage about us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue Your people from despair, deliver Your sons and daughters from fear, and preserves us all from unbelief, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C: Amen.**

Hymn of Praise: *"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"* (see screen)

Old Testament Lesson: Joshua 23:6-13
R: Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, but you shall cling to the LORD your God just as you have done to this day. For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as He promised you. Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.
R: This is the Word of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Philippians 3:8-14
R: Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 10:16-22
P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the tenth chapter.
C: Glory be to You, O Lord.
P: Jesus said, "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.
C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

Statement of Faith: Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer and Explanation

Sermon Hymn: *"Run to Finish"* (see screen)

Sermon: *"Endure"* - **Hebrews 12:1-3**
With the beginning of the school year just over a week away, student athletes are beginning to train. The high school cross country runners run past my house in north Ames occasionally, and I get to watch them run, usually in small groups, shouting words of encouragement as they do their training runs. They have to do the physical training so they can endure running the longer races.

I'm not a runner, but I'm told by those who are that it's not the physical training and preparations that are the hardest part. It's the mental part. Physical training makes your body able to endure the rigors of the race. But it's the mental part, knowing that you can do it, is the hardest part. It's the part that makes it able to endure.

There's a reason stories of endurance continue to be popular. Homer's epic struggle to return home in The Odyssey is still required reading thousands of years after it was first told. John Bunyan's allegory of Christian's journey to the celestial city in The Pilgrim's Progress has appeared in 200 languages and has never gone out of print. Peter Jackson has brought almost a billion visitors to Middle Earth to follow Frodo and Samwise Gamgee's mission to destroy of the ring of power, and Tolkien's books continue to be bestsellers. We continue to find inspiration in Anne Frank's hiding place in Amsterdam and Louie Zamperini's unbroken determination in Japanese prison camps.

There are two meanings to the word endure. The first has to do with being patient or resilient, exercising perseverance, showing determination and resolve. In this sense, endure is most often used to describe something that people are forced to do (or not). The second sense has to do with permanence, stability, and dependability. It that case, endure isn't something someone does. It's something or someone else, but it's something that makes it easier for people to endure.

We can endure because of what Jesus endured for us on the cross. We can endure because Jesus endures, is always the same yesterday today and forever. We can endure because we are not alone. We can endure "because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" That is why we can "say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?'"

Endurance. It's what you and I both need to keep moving forward in this life. Against all odds. Against all opposition. Against all setbacks, disappointments, and disillusionments. When nothing turns out like we expect. When, despite all the pain, we need to get back up and keep running our race. It's what we'll need to finish all that we start.

How can we do that? "People need a powerful why if they are going to be able to endure any how," wrote New York Times columnist David Brooks, echoing the words of Nietzsche, that were made famous by Viktor Frankl, psychologist and Holocaust survivor who wrote Man's Search for Meaning. If we are to endure, the question isn't how we endure. The question is why we should endure.

Hebrews 11 gives us many stories of the great heroes of the faith. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses. The list goes on; discussing people who were a thousand years gone at the time the book of Hebrews was written, almost 2000 years removed from us. When we hear about the heroes of the faith, we remember their struggles, but also why they could endure. When the three young men faced a fiery furnace, they endured because they were not alone.

When we think about those 12 apostles of Jesus, they went out and every one of them, virtually every one of them died bearing witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The symbols depicting them around the clock in the student center almost all show how they die. Would they have done that for a fable, for a myth, for something was false? Not a chance. James who was opposed to his brother, Jesus, and Paul who was a murderous threat to Christians. Both of them encountered Jesus and were changed for the whole rest of their life and underwent terrible suffering and martyrdom at the last because it's true. They could endure because of the why, the purpose they had in what Jesus had endured for them. They knew what Jesus had endured for them, and they saw how much Jesus loved them, and they never got over it.

Endurance is "the ability to withstand hardship or adversity." It's the capacity and power to bear up under difficult circumstances. It's a hopeful fortitude that perseveres to the end. It is a quality

built by remaining under pressure, something our natural inclination wants to drift away from. And we need a why to be able to endure.

Endure was the theme of the LCMS 2025 National Youth Gathering held in New Orleans this summer. Over 20000 high schoolers, youth leaders, young adult volunteers, and others gathered together for worship, service projects, breakout sessions, and more. One of the speakers at the evening mass events was Bethany Hamilton. You may know her story from the film Soul Surfer. She was attacked while surfing off the coast of Hawaii at the age of 13, and a shark bit her arm off. Yet through her faith, she's endured the challenges that come with the loss of her arm. She returned to surfing, and uses her platform to encourage others in their faith. At the National Youth Gathering, she shared how her faith carried her through loss, recovery, and the unknown. Those who were there were reminded that endurance doesn't come from within—it comes from the God who never fails. "God doesn't say life is going to be perfect but He does say His grace is sufficient for us!"

His grace is sufficient. The word used for race in our text also has the connotation of a struggle or fight. That is exactly what we experience every day. As you run the race of faith, you struggle with sweat pouring in your eyes or the tiredness that just makes you want to stop and rest. In our spiritual race we struggle with our sinful nature, the sinful world that surrounds us, and the evil one which all daily try to take our eyes off Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. The witnesses, those who've run the race before, know those struggles and temptations.

The writer of Hebrews has one final word of advice. "Let us run the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." Pioneer translates a particularly rich Greek word, archegos. The archegos is the author, the beginner, the instigator, the trailblazer who goes before us. In the context of a race, the archegos is the team captain. In the Greek games, the team captain would run the race and then wait at the finish line to encourage his teammates as they followed in his steps. Yet Jesus is not simply the pioneer; he is also the perfecter. Priests perfect and complete what we lack, bringing us to our goal so that we may have full access to the presence of God. So, Jesus not only calls us across the finish line but also fills in and fills out what is lacking in our faithfulness. He takes our incomplete faith and makes it whole.

More than just making our faith whole, Jesus makes us whole with each other. While we think of racing as an individual event, it's not. In high school, runners run as part of a team, and the individual results affect which school wins. Many who train to run marathons train as part of a running club, and even on the day of the race, find someone to keep pace with so they can complete the race. Bikers keep pace with a leader, following the peloton and riding in the draft of those who are in front. Drivers may get the fame in auto races, but they wouldn't make it far without their pit crew. We think of faith as an individual event. It's not. God's purpose is not to save isolated individuals, but to create a community, the church, that cares for each other.

We know we can endure whatever hardships come our way. We can endure because we have a why. We can endure because we know what Jesus has done for us. We can endure because we know what we're looking forward to. We have the perspective of where we're going, the heavenly city. We have the perception of progress, knowing we're one day closer to Jesus' return than we were yesterday. We have the promise that we will never be forsaken or left alone. That's why we can endure.

2025 National Youth Gathering Presentation

Responses on Endurance:

P: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1)

C: "Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. Full of splendor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever." (Psalm 11:2-3)

P: "'All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,' but the word of the Lord remains forever." (1 Peter 1:24-5)

C: "Look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." (Hebrews 12:2-3)

P: "Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are His house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope." (Hebrews 3:6)

C: "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." (Hebrews 4:14)

P: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)

C: "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:13)

P: "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him." (James 1:12)

C: "Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful." (James 5:11)

P: "For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one." (Hebrews 10:34)

C: "For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly." (1 Peter 2:19)

P: "Resist the devil, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." (1 Peter 5:9)

C: "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Timothy 2:10)

P: "I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown." (Revelation 3:11)

C: "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

P: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

C: "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing." (Thessalonians 5:11)

Prayers:

Sharing Our Ministry:

Offering/Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament

Exhortation to Communicants:

P: Christ Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, suffering its shame, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God calls us to come His meal of His true body and blood, in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion. He does this to forgive us of our sins and give us encouragement as we follow Him. We hear His call and come to His supper.

The Lord's Prayer:

The Words of Our Lord:

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

Distribution: *"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"* – **Hymn #702**
"Lamb of God" **– Hymn #550**

Prayer After Communion:
P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, because of Your tender love toward us sinners You have given us Your Son that, believing in Him, we might have everlasting life. Continue to grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may endure in the faith to the end and finally come to life everlasting; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)
C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"* – **Hymn #770**

Postlude: