

Order of Worship for September 27, 2026

Prelude (8:30 Strings) “Allegro”, J. S. Bach Brandenburg Concerto No 2 arr. by Lynne Latham
Violin: Alice Chen & Kayleigh McLane Viola: Jan Beagley Cello: Lida Teske
(11:00 Brass) Exultate Justi (Psalm 33) - Lodovico Grossi da Viadana

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “*Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love*” – Hymn #900

Confession and Forgiveness page 151

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: The LORD lifts up the humble;

C: He casts the wicked to the ground.

P: Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God;

C: for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

P: The LORD builds up Jerusalem;

C: He gathers the outcasts of Israel.

P: He heals the brokenhearted

C: and binds up their wounds.

P: He determines the number of the stars;

C: He gives to all of them their names.

P: Great is our LORD, and abundant in power;

C: His understanding is beyond measure.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: The LORD lifts up the humble;

C: He casts the wicked to the ground.

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy): pages 152-153

Hymn of Praise: “*This Is the Feast*” page 155

Salutation: page 156

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Lesson: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, declares the LORD God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. Yet you say, 'The way of the LORD is not just.' Hear now, O house of Israel: Is My way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the LORD is not just.' O house of Israel, are My ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the LORD God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the LORD God; so turn, and live."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Philippians 2:1-4, 14-18

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse p. 156**Holy Gospel:** Matthew 21:28-32

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 21st chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)

[Jesus said,] "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" [The Pharisees] said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before

you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)**

Statement of Faith: Close of the Commandments - **page 322**

Children's Song (The Butterfly Song) and Children's Message (8:30)

Sermon Hymn: *"O God, My Faithful God"* – **Hymn #696**

Sermon: *"Yes and No Brothers"* - **Matthew 21:28-32**

It's election season, and it's almost impossible to avoid the campaign ads. It seems like they've all devolved into attack ads sooner than normal. And one of the most common attacks is that they are hypocrites. They say one thing and do another. They say they're against the war in Iran, but didn't vote to stop it when they had the chance. They say they're against raising taxes, but voted to raise them.

At the 1988 Republican National Convention in New Orleans, then candidate George H.W. Bush said "read my lips: no new taxes." When taxes were later raised by Congress during his term, he was accused of flip flopping, of saying one thing and doing something else. That was credited as one of the reasons he lost to Bill Clinton in the 1992 presidential election.

It's not just politicians that are hypocrites. Coaches and athletes say they are loyal sons forever true, but then leave chasing a bigger payday. But more than others, we are hypocrites, too. We say one thing and do something else. You say you're an environmentalist, but you litter and don't recycle. You pray before eating at a restaurant and then don't tip the wait staff. You tell everyone about how worried you are about something, but don't do anything about it. As a parent, I know my kids will say they will do something and then refuse to do it. I'll do the same thing to them.

When Jesus tells the parable of the two sons here, he knows he's talking to hypocrites. Not politicians, though, but religious leaders. Jesus is talking to the chief priests and the elders of the people on the Monday of what we call "Holy Week," the day after Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. On that day, you'll remember, Jesus had turned the money-changers out of the temple, overturning their tables and loot and freeing the sheep and birds they were selling on the temple grounds.

The next day, when Jesus and His disciples show up at the temple, the chief priests start questioning Jesus' authority. That's why Jesus tells this parable. He's not telling a parable to teach his disciples. He's telling a parable to try to teach these teachers of Israel, the ones who were supposed to know what was going on.

Jesus tells a story that we can all relate to. A man has two sons. He asks one to go work in the vineyard. The first son says he won't go, but then later does. The second son says that he will go,

but doesn't. Jesus then asks which one did the will of the Father? The answer given is the first. Actions speak louder than words.

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus, and the Pharisees and Sadducees, chief priests and elders, didn't listen to John or Jesus. But those who were alienated, those who had made poor choices, do listen to him.

The chief priests and the elders of Jesus' day thought they could make themselves righteous by obeying God's Law. Like the second son in Jesus' parable, they claimed to say, "Yes" to God; but when God's call to repentance and faith came to them, they said, "No." They were so certain that they had made themselves righteous that when John the Baptizer had called people to repent—that is, to turn from sin and to turn to God for forgiveness—in order to prepare for the coming of the Savior, Jesus, most refused to repent or receive John's baptism of repentance.

Meanwhile, prostitutes, corrupt tax collectors, and other notorious sinners who had been saying, "No" to God all their lives, like the first son in Jesus' parable, heard John's call to repentance, recognized and turned from their sin and turned to faith in God.

We're so often hypocritical, saying one thing and doing another. One man was invited to come to church, and he replied that he'd never go because there were too many hypocrites there. The pastor replied, that means there's always room for one more!

That's why we, at the beginning of this service, we confessed that we have sinned against God "by what we have done and by what we have left undone." We tell God one thing and do another. We say we will follow God's rules, and then do otherwise. We say we will not sin, and then we go off and do it anyway. Like Paul writes in Romans 7, "For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ... For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

Knowing God's Law informs us of God's will for us human beings. It may even lead us to regret our sin. But knowing God's Law or even having regret will not fit us for life with God. The first son is like the chief priests and the elders, and maybe like you and me, saying yes to God, but then turning away. These are the people of good intentions: their spirits are willing but their flesh is weak. I can certainly be like this.

The second son is like willful sinners, and maybe like you and me sometimes, saying no to God, but then, when God's Word works on us, calling us to turn to God and to God's way, for forgiveness and life with God, saying yes to His grace and forgiveness.

Jesus, the obedient Son, has said yes to the Father and in doing so, has said yes to you! Don't you wish the story ended another way? Don't you wish that there was a third son in Jesus' parable, a son who heard his father's wish and eagerly agreed to go—and then actually went? Instead of a son who says no and then goes or who says yes and never goes, don't you wish that there was a son who says yes and does it? I sure do! And the Good News is that there is!

The third son in the parable is the Son telling the story: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Lord and Savior, the righteous One. Jesus is the third Son! This is the Son Who said to His Father

after His Father told Him to go to a cross to offer His sinless life on a cross so that sinners like you and me can be forgiven and can have life with God, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup [of suffering and death] be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39)

This is the Son Who, though without sin, insisted that John the Baptizer baptize Him in the Jordan, where He took on the condemnation of our sin and our death in order “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Jesus gave up His righteousness to us, becoming sin who knew no sin, so that in the only perfect act of love and obedience this world has ever seen, rendered on the cross, He could take our guilt and give us His innocence. He could overcome our selfishness with His selflessness. He could take blame for our rebellion against God’s Law of love by submitting totally to God.

Jesus is the Son Who says “Yes” to God’s call to die and rise for us and then, despite the pain, the humiliation, and sorrow of it, does just that.

It’s because of Jesus and through Jesus, the faithful Son, that you and I, fickle and often faithless sons and daughters of God, can daily turn to Him, unloading our sins onto Him at the cross and be justified, made righteous and clean and eternally new in the eyes of God.

Shortly after this confrontation, Jesus goes and dies on a cross for you and for me, for all the Yes and No sons and daughters of God living on the face of this fallen, sinful world. Jesus is not a Yes and No son. Jesus is the Yes and Go Son of God! As the apostle Paul writes in Philippians 2:

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Son of Man. And he did everything God asked him to do in order to accomplish your salvation and save you from your sins. Jesus is the third Son in the story, but he is the only-begotten Son of God. What Jesus did on the cross for you, he did only for love. And that is why the Bible says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16, KJV). Jesus kept God’s Law perfectly and then died in your place. On the cross, Jesus declared “It is finished!” (John 19:30). And so, because of Christ, all of the things left undone are finally finished. They are completed only in Christ.

And now, as God’s forgiven children, let’s not go back to the old way of doing things, the way of the Yes and No sons who say one thing but do another. “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil” (Matthew 5:37). In other words, say what you mean and do what you say. And say you’re sorry when you fail and fall short. We have a loving and forgiving Father in heaven. And we have a big Brother named Jesus who already has done it all. “All the promises of God find their Yes in him” (2 Corinthians 1:20). And that’s what makes all the difference!

Politicians, sports figures, family and friends will all let you down. They will say one thing and do something else. You, too, will let others down. You will say one thing and do something else. But thanks be to God that isn't the end of the story. Jesus said and did all that you could not and would not, and He will never let you down. Thanks be to God for that.

Creed: Nicene?

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry

8:30 AM Continues:

“Renew Me, O Eternal Light” – **Hymn #704**

Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer:

Benediction: page 166

Closing Hymn: *“Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed”* – **Hymn #560**

Postlude

11 AM Continues:

Offering/Voluntary: (Brass) O God Thou Faithful God (from Cantata 24) -
J.S. Bach, arr. S. Drummond Wolff

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: page 160

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) page 161

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P:

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer and the Words of our Lord: page 162

Pax Domini (Peace of the Lord) Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) page 163

Distribution of Holy Communion:

Hymns: “*Renew Me, O Eternal Light*” – **Hymn #704**
 “*Lord, Enthroned in Heavenly Splendor*” – **Hymn #534**

Song After Communion: “*Thank the Lord*” page 164

Post-Communion Collect:

P:

C: Amen.

Benediction: page 166

Closing Hymn: “*Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed*” – **Hymn #560**

Postlude: (Brass) Fugue in F Major - J.S. Bach