



**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
September 13, 2026**

**HOLY TRINITY EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
1308 Mt. Holly Rd., Burlington, N.J. 08016  
Office: (609) 387-1202  
[www.holytrinityelc.org](http://www.holytrinityelc.org)

License # A-713124 for music where applicable.

September 13, 2026

10:00AM

**16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

*In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**\* THE CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who pours love into our hearts  
and healing upon the earth.

**Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,  
let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate God,  
**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness  
in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse.  
Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference  
keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show  
genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our  
world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your  
holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ✝ Jesus  
Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and  
the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.  
**Amen.**

*\*Please Stand as you are able*

\* **THE GATHERING SONG:** #835

*All Creatures, Worship God Most High*

\* **THE GREETING**

**P:** The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C:** And also with you.

\* **THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**THE WORD**

**First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21**

<sup>15</sup> Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" <sup>16</sup> So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, <sup>17</sup> 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

<sup>18</sup> Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." <sup>19</sup> But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup> So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm: Psalm 103:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

<sup>2</sup> **Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all God's benefits**

<sup>3</sup> who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases;

<sup>4</sup> **who redeems your life from the grave  
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**

<sup>5</sup> who satisfies your desires with good things  
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

<sup>6</sup> **O LORD, you provide vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.**

<sup>7</sup> You made known your ways to Moses  
and your works to the children of Israel.

<sup>8</sup> **LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**

<sup>9</sup> you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.

<sup>10</sup> **You have not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**

<sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

<sup>12</sup> **As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

<sup>13</sup> As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

**Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12**

<sup>1</sup> Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. <sup>2</sup> Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup> Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all

days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup> Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God. <sup>7</sup> For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup> If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup> For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." <sup>12</sup> So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

The Word of the Lord  
**C: Thanks be to God.**

**\* THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** (Sung page 151a)

**C: Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 18th chapter.  
**C: Glory to you, O Lord!**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35**

<sup>21</sup> Peter came and said to [Jesus,] "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup> "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup> When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, <sup>25</sup> and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup> So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' <sup>27</sup> And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup> But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the

throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' <sup>29</sup> Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' <sup>30</sup> But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup> Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup> So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

P: The Gospel of the Lord!  
**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**GOOD NEWS 101 Blessing of Backpacks**

**THE SERMON**

**THE HYMN OF THE DAY:** **#595**

*Jesus Loves Me*

**\* THE APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**\* PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

Hear us O God,  
**Your mercy is great.**

\* **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always,  
**And also with you.**

**THE OFFERING  
SPECIAL MUSIC**

\* **THE OFFERTORY: Give Thanks**

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, his Son. Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One, give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, his Son. And now let the weak say, "I am strong" let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. And now let the weak say, "I am strong" let the poor say, "I am rich," because of what the Lord has done for us. Give Thanks!

\* **THE OFFERING PRAYER**

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always.  
**Amen.**

\* **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

pg. 154

**Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not  
into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the  
kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**SENDING**

\* **THE BLESSING**

The God of love  
draw you into full accord and one mind,  
in the body of Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

The God of hope  
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances  
through the interceding of the Spirit.

**Amen.**

The God of grace

✠ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

\* **THE SENDING SONG:**

**# 288**

*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

\* **THE DISMISSAL**

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.  
**Thanks be to God.**



**THE POSTLUDE**

**Serving Today: September 13, 2026**

**Acolyte:** William Schmalz

**Lector:** Laura Poethke

**Ushers:** Schmalz Family

**Musician:** Danny Allen

**Sound System:** Amber Johnson

**Serving Next Week: September 20, 2026**

**Communion Assistant:** Amber Johnson

**Acolyte:** Johnson Family

**Lector:** Bonnie Mazza

**Ushers:** Bonnie Mazza & Steve Anderson

**Musician:** Danny Allen

**Sound System:** Bonnie Mazza