



Our *hearts*  
in HIS *hand*

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly (1 Peter 4:8).*

**2021 LWML SUNDAY  
Worship Service**

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Aitkin, Minnesota**  
**October 3, 2021**  
**LWML SUNDAY – Online Service**

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is an official auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Since 1942, the LWML has affirmed each woman's identity as a child of God and her relationship with Jesus Christ. Lutheran Women in Mission are women of faith, empowered for active service in Jesus' name and bold support of missions through Mite Box offerings. As Christians, we have been given the kingdom of God to bear its fruit.

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word and call upon Him in prayer and praise,, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

C **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

P 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

ENTRANCE PSALM

Psalm 86:5–12

P For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,

C **abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.**

P Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace.

C **In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.**

P There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

C **All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.**

P For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

C **Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.**

P I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

C **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.**

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Let us pray: O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; 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 READING

Ezekiel 36:22–27

<sup>22</sup> "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. <sup>23</sup> And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. <sup>24</sup> I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

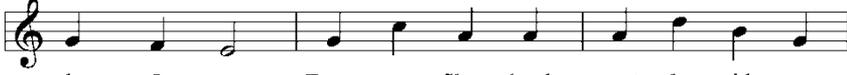
## CHILDRENS MESSAGE

# 740 I Am Jesus' Little Lamb

LSB 740



1 I am Je - sus' lit - tle lamb, Ev - er glad at  
2 Day by day, at home, a - way, Je - sus is my  
3 Who so hap - py as I am, E - ven now the



heart I am; For my Shep - herd gent - ly guides me,  
staff and stay. When I hun - ger, Je - sus feeds me,  
Shep - herd's lamb? And when my short life is end - ed,



Knows my need and well pro - vides me, Loves me ev - 'ry  
In - to pleas - ant pas - tures leads me; When I thirst, He  
By His an - gel host at - tend - ed, He shall fold me



day the same, E - ven calls me by my name.  
bids me go Where the qui - et wa - ters flow.  
to His breast, There with - in His arms to rest.

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## EPISTLE

1 Peter 1:18–22

<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. <sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

## HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 12:28–31

<sup>28</sup> And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

*After the reading:*

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

#### APOSTLES' CREED

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

SERMON. "Love One Another from Pure Hearts" 1 Peter 1:22

**1 Peter 1:22: “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.”**

Today is LWML Sunday. “LWML” stands for the “Lutheran Women’s Missionary League.” The LWML is an auxiliary of our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and has members throughout North America. As the word “missionary” in their name suggests, they sponsor mission efforts reaching around the world. They do that with what they call “mites.” Mites are small offerings that together help people learn the Good News about Jesus.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. The logo for this LWML Sunday pictures a heart in a hand. Holding a heart in a hand is what a transplant surgeon does. He takes a diseased heart out with his hand and uses that same hand to put a new heart in. Well, let me tell you: that’s what God has done for you and me.

In the logo besides the heart in a hand, there is also a cross and the drop of water. The cross, of course, represents: Jesus dying for the forgiveness of our sins. And the drop of water represents our Baptism. Baptism is how God gives us a new heart.

Long ago God had promised through the prophet Ezekiel, **“I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you”** (Ezekiel 36:26). God kept His promise. Unlike a physical transplant that lasts only a few years, the new heart God gives you and me through Baptism will live forever.

Why did God have to give you and me this “transplant?” It is because within our hearts are thoughts and feelings, ideas, and urges that are sinful. There are things deep down in our heart that we don’t want others to know about. My heart by nature is not pure and neither is yours. We are born with original sin, inherited from our ancestors before us, all the way back to Adam and Eve, and we daily commit actual sins. This sin

in us, original sin, and the actual sins we commit daily, this is the Old Adam who continues in us, yes, even in us who are forgiven; this sin will continue until the day we die. When we go to the funeral home to pay our respects to someone who has died, that person before us is no longer sinning. When we die, we stop sinning.

The wonderful thing about Baptism is that it brings us the forgiveness of Jesus Christ here-and-now and gives us grace to live new and holy lives here-and-now. St. Paul says, **“We were buried ... with him [Christ] by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:4). St. Peter describes it as a new birth. **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”** (1 Peter 1:3). Mysteriously, Baptism brings a daily death and a new life. When a surgeon transplants a human heart, new physical life comes to a fatally ill patient. Through Baptism God has given us a new heart, a pure heart, and with it, newness of life. And, with the life God gives, we have love, His love.

That gets us back to our text: **“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart”** (1 Peter 1:22). **“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth”** sounds like we can make ourselves pure by keeping the commandments. That’s not what Peter means. Peter is simply talking about faith. Our new heart, our new birth, makes us “children of the heavenly Father” who trustingly look up to Him and want to live holy lives for His sake. Being pure before God is not our doing, it’s all grace. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God** (Ephesians 2:8).

We could paraphrase our text, this way: Now that the cross of Jesus has come into our hearts through Baptism, we can love one another. Once again, the logo shows it so well. The cross comes through Baptism into our hearts. And each new, purified heart is surrounded by a much bigger heart. That's the church; it's a big-hearted place where all our hearts are together in His hand.

Together with one another, God gives us His Word, His Word of new birth, His Word of life and love in Christ. Together we receive this transforming Word as we hear it, spoken and sung, and as we receive it physically in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. There are various reasons we come to church, but more than anything else, we come to worship because here all our hearts are together, not only together with one another, but most importantly, together with one another in His hand.

When you think about it that way, there is something about worship that is different from other groups or associations we may have. Maybe you belong to an organization, perhaps a service organization, like the Lions. Maybe you belong to a veterans' organization, like the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Maybe you belong to a fitness club. Maybe you just like to hang out with friends. That's all well and good, but isn't there, shouldn't there, be something different about being together here, something uniquely special about fellowshiping with church members, gathering as the baptized to hear God's Word and receive Jesus' body and blood in the Holy Communion? This is what's unique about our coming together each week in worship. It's here that God comes through His means of grace to make us a big-hearted fellowship filled with His love. That's how we **"love one another earnestly from a pure heart."** That is the reason we still come to church even in these COVID times.

And, we are to love those outside the church, too. Jesus is not content to hold only us in His hand. He wants to use us to

reach His hand out to others. When a leper met Jesus and begged to be healed, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him (Mark 1:41). When Jairus's daughter died, Jesus took her **"by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cumi,' which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise'"** and she had new life (Mark 5:41). When Peter tried to walk to Jesus on the water and he got scared and began to sink. **"Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him"** (Matthew 14:31). **"And he took them [the little children] in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them"** (Mark 10:16). Today He reaches out His hand through you and me to people who don't yet know His life and love, to people who still have spiritually diseased hearts and desperately need the new heart Jesus gives.

Remember when I mentioned organizations outside the church, like civic organizations, veterans' groups, and the like? It's good when we are involved in those organizations. It's good because they we can point people who have their struggles, their hurts, their hopes, their joys to Jesus. We do that because we have a heart, a new heart in His hand that wants to reach out to others.

Here's a quotation from Martin Luther: **"Then what is a pure heart? What is meant by a "pure heart" is this: one that is watching and pondering what God says and replacing its ideas with the Word of God. This alone is pure before God, yes, purity itself, which purifies everything that it includes and touches. Therefore, though a common laborer, a shoemaker, or a blacksmith may be dirty and sooty or may smell because he is covered with dirt and pitch, still he may sit at home and think: "My God has made me a man. He has given me my house, wife, and child and has commanded me to love them and to support them with my work." Note that he is pondering the Word of God in his heart ... If he attains the highest purity so that he also**

**takes hold of the Gospel and believes in Christ — without this, that purity is impossible — then he is pure completely, inwardly in his heart toward God and outwardly toward everything under him on earth.”**

I pray that describes each of us. I hope we remember the transformation that forgiveness has brought into our hearts and lives through Baptism. Coming together in worship, God makes us a big-hearted church that extends His hand of love to everyone. ***Above all, keep loving one another earnestly (1 Peter 4:8). Amen.***

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- P Let us pray. Almighty God, You search our hearts and have seen our sin, and yet in Your love have reconciled us to Yourself through Your Son. Give us Your Spirit, the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, that our lives may grow in devotion to You for the salvation You have so graciously given us.
- P Guide, we pray, our congregation in life and witness. Give us Your grace, so that in a land where strife is too common, we will be a place of peace. In our divided nation, make this Your congregation a gathering place of hearts united in You who extend Your welcome to all. Inspire all the members of Your congregation to love this place where Your name is invoked and Your grace proclaimed.
- P We pray for the mission of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League in this congregation and throughout the world, that every heart will beat with Your love and all hearts extend Your hand of service to others. Through the faithful gathering of mites, may Lutheran Women in Mission continue to encourage us to put all You have given us into the mission of reaching the lost and erring.
- P We pray for the daily bread that sustains us in life: For food and health, for housing and clothing, for

employment, for moderate weather, for justice and peace in our community and nation, that in every time of abundance and time of need, we may know Your peace in our hearts.

P For... (*additional intercessions of the congregation*).

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

LSB 196

C **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.**

#### BLESSING

P Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

C **Amen.**

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