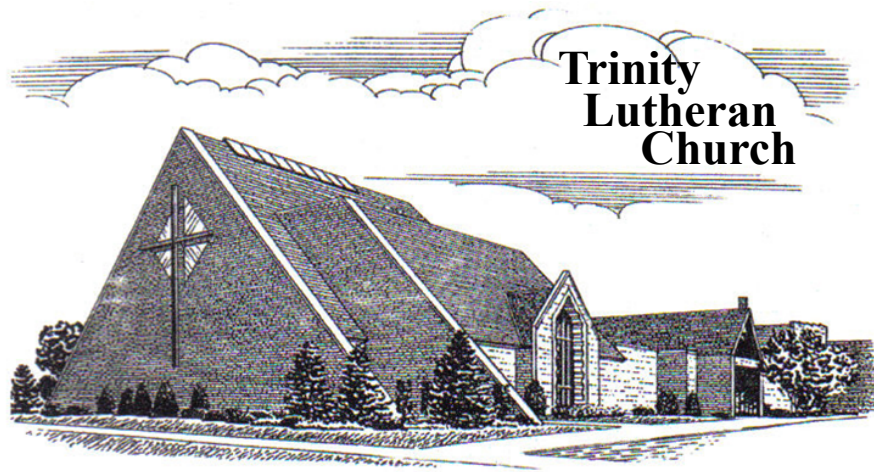


Proper 15



Aug 10-Aug 16, 2026

Weekly Outline

Invocation

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: and my mouth shall declare your praise.

L: Almighty, everlasting God, Lord, heavenly Father, whose Word is a lamp to our feet and a light on our way: Open and enlighten my mind that I may understand thy Word purely, clearly, and devoutly, and then, having understood it aright, fashion my life in accord with it, in order that I may never displease thy majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Scripture

Aug 10: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Aug 12: Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32

Aug 14: Matthew 15:21-28

Devotion

Closing Prayer

L: Faithful God, whose mercies are new to us every morning, we humbly pray that you would look upon us in mercy and renew us by your Holy Spirit. Keep safe our going out and our coming in, and let your blessing remain with us throughout this day.

Preserve us in your righteousness, and grant us a portion in that eternal life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

C: Amen.

Monday

America has proven to be a very strange country in the history of the world. It possible that everyone reading this devotion has lived in this country for his entire life. Thus, many of the things that Scripture teaches don't seem that radical. For example, in our Old Testament reading, God promises that the way of salvation is open to all people.

That doesn't seem radical, but that is because we live in a country that was deeply shaped by Scripture, a country that assumed the principle of equality under the law for all men, even when it wasn't perfectly practiced. But human history paints a very different picture. Not one of equality before men or God, but assumed inequality to justify exploitation. This was not a unique European problem or American problem. It was a human problem. After the Fall, Man forgot that every person is equally God's creature.

However, the witness of Scripture that is that God loves all that he has made without exception. Before men, there will never be perfect equality. But before God, there is no room for social ladders. As Jesus often says, "The first shall be last and the last first." Or as we read in Isaiah, "Everyone (everyone! what wonderful words) who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer." No matter who a person is or where he comes from, God has made room for him in the church because he sent his Son to be the savior of all people. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday

Receiving a wonderful gift can easily make one proud. Think of Joseph's coat of many colors. That was a gift that made Joseph's brothers jealous, and probably tempted Joseph to pride. In receiving a great gift, we are tempted to praise ourselves for how worthy we must have been to receive the gift instead of giving thanks for the kindness of the one who gave it.

In Romans 9-11, Paul is considering the hardness of his fellow Israelites and the fact that many non-Jews had been gifted salvation by God. He likens Israel to an olive tree. God broke off dead branches (unbelieving Israelites) and grafted in foreign branches in their place (believing Gentiles). But Paul warns, "Do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness." Receiving the gift of salvation could easily make a person proud. He could begin to think, "I must be pretty special since God did this for me." But the gift of salvation is not God's "Amen" to our worth, but his kindness for our need.

Everyone who has ever been saved has received that salvation as a gift of God's kindness. You and I don't deserve the gift anymore than a person who rejects it. We have the same need. The only difference is that one took the gift while the other pushed it away. Our reception of salvation is not a cause for pride, but thanksgiving. Thanksgiving for the kindness of God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," crushing words that our Savior spoke to the Canaanite woman that day. She had come to Christ in hope that he would heal her demon-possessed daughter, only to be told, "I wasn't sent for you."

We never expect to hear those words from Christ. One of my favorite verses in the New Testament is John 3:16, where we are told, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, would not perish, but have eternal life." The key word there is "whosoever." Scripture affirms over and over again that Jesus came for all people. Jesus died for all people. Jesus sent his apostles to preach the Gospel to all people. You just never expect him to say, "I wasn't sent for you." And while we may not hear those words from Christ, we often experience them in our lives. The picture of the Canaanite woman at the feet of Jesus is a picture of a Christian at prayer, asking for Jesus' help. But instead of hearing, "I wasn't sent for you," we hear something even worse, silence. Jesus seems uncaring, unresponsive, unconcerned with our need. But that is when we must imitate the faith of this great woman, who even hearing Jesus' refusal said, "Lord, help me." And because she persisted in seeking mercy, she found it.

We don't know why Jesus is so long in answering our prayers, but even in his silence, we trust that he came for us as well, and with the Canaanite woman, we reach for mercy, confident that in seeking God's grace, we will find it in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Evening Prayer

You may pray one or more of the following after dinner or before bed:

I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day; and I pray you that you would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.



Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take; and this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.



Visit, O Lord, our home, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell in it to preserve us in peace, and may your blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Parent's Blessing

You may place your hand on the head of your child before kissing them goodnight and say:

My loved one, rest securely,
for God this night will surely
from peril guard your head.
Sweet slumbers may he send you
and bid his hosts attend you
and through the night watch o'er your bed. Amen.

Memory Verse

MEMORY VERSE

Now may our Lord
Jesus Christ himself,
and God our Father,
who loved us and gave
us eternal comfort and
good hope through
grace, comfort your
hearts and establish
them in every good
work and word.

2 THESS. 2:16-17

