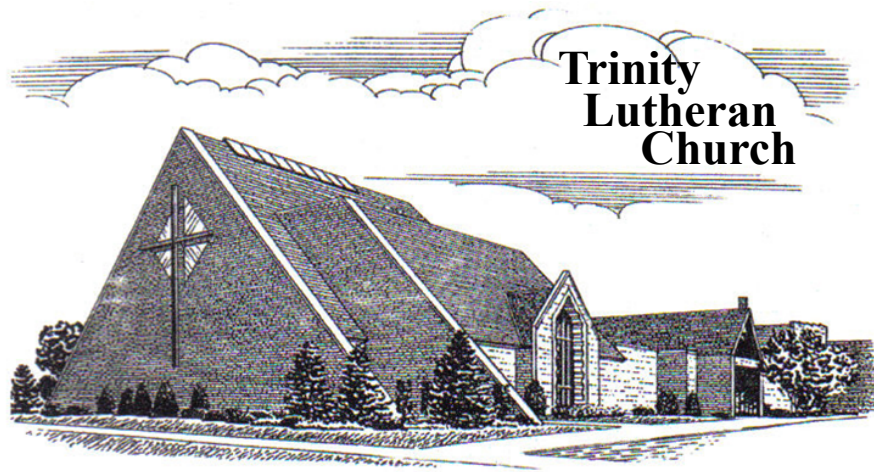


Proper 17



Aug 24-Aug 30, 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 24: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Aug 26: Romans 12:9-21

Aug 28: Matthew 16:21-28

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

When God called Jeremiah as a prophet in chapter 1, God told Jeremiah exactly how the kings, priests, and people of Judah would respond. God said, "They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you."

Throughout the book of Jeremiah, the prophet complains to God of persecution. Our reading is one of those complaints. Jeremiah says that he found God's words and "ate them." They were the delight of his heart. He refused to join the wicked in their deeds because God's Word was his burden. He was faithful to God in word and deed. But Jeremiah's righteousness meant very little during the evil times in which he lived. In fact, it brought him hatred from others, not goodwill. So he complains to God, "Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Will you be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail?" In comparing God to a deceitful brook, Jeremiah is asking if God's help will disappear right when it is most needed, just as a brook dries up in the summer heat. God's response is to call Jeremiah to continue in faithfulness, promising that he will make Jeremiah like a bronze wall that attackers fail to tear down.

That's not as comforting as it sounds, because it means that those who persecute Jeremiah will continue to persecute him. Jeremiah's situation in the world will not change. The comfort is found in the promise of the outcome. Jeremiah will be saved in the end. That is our hope as well. We live in the midst of many dangers. As the world continues to pursue sin in opposition to God, those who maintain their faithfulness to God in word and deed will come under all kinds of pressure. Our comfort is not found in a change of circumstance but in this promise: that in the end, we will be saved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday

The older I get, the more I find myself sharing proverbial wisdom with my kids. Things like: Idle hands are the devil's workshop; It takes two to tango; What goes around comes around. The first is for when they're bored, the second is for when they are fighting, the third is for when they should think before they act. Most of life can be directed through a proverb. Paul was never married, but he had thousands of spiritual children, and at the end of his letters, he often taught them using proverbs. Romans 12:9-21 is like a playlist of Paul's favorite proverbs: Let love be genuine; Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer; Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. A multitude of situations in life could be addressed by choosing a proverb from these 12 verses.

Proverbs are useful because they give us an overall direction for life that we can then bring to bear in specific situations. Consider the first one that Paul uses: Let love be genuine. What does it mean for love to be genuine in a marriage? If I serve my wife with grumbling, letting her know through little comments how much I dislike what she's asked me to do, has my love been genuine? If we do good for a friend only because we want him to do good for us, has our love been genuine? If I go to church because I need God's help but abandon the church when I don't have a pressing need, has my love been genuine? Those four words, "Let love be genuine," provide direction for a person's entire life.

Ultimately, every proverb that Paul uses was displayed in the life of Jesus Christ. His love was truly genuine, without any flaw or ulterior motive. Christ rejoiced in hope even through his passion. He was patient in tribulation and constant in prayer. He was not overcome by evil, but he overcame evil through his perfect life for our sake. That is what scriptural proverbs do. They encapsulate the perfections of Jesus Christ so that we can contemplate them, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, begin to live them out. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday

Just a few verses earlier, Peter had made the good confession. When Jesus asked him, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." That is the heart of the Christian faith: that Jesus is the Christ, the one chosen by God as the world's only Savior. There was just one problem. Peter did not understand what it meant for Jesus to be the Christ. So Jesus begins to explain it.

Matthew tells us, "From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Jesus knows exactly what it means for him to save us from our sins. It means that he will be rejected by the religious leaders and offered as a willing payment for all sins on the cross. But Peter says, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." Peter wanted Jesus to be the Christ, but he wanted Jesus to be the Christ on Peter's terms. To save in a way that Peter thought was fit. But that isn't Peter's decision. It isn't ours either. We can either have Jesus as the crucified Christ, or we cannot have him at all. That is why Jesus responds to Peter by saying, "Get behind me, Satan!"

Everyone recognizes that this world is an evil place, which means that everyone is looking for a savior of some kind. But few look for Jesus. We want medical saviors, political saviors, financial saviors. But what Jesus offers us is none of those things. Instead, he offers us salvation from our ultimate problem, our own sin. He accomplished this by taking our place on the cross. He died that we might live. So let us cease looking for other saviors, but with Peter, the apostles, and all the saints throughout the world, boldly proclaim, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." 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

When the goodness and loving
kindness of God our Savior
appeared, he saved us,
not because of works
done by us in righteousness,
but according to
his own mercy,
by the washing of regeneration
and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom
he poured out on us richly
through Jesus Christ our Savior.

TITUS 3:4-6

