

17<sup>TH</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 19 September 11, 2016

LUTHERAN

## LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday.  
An opportunity to make the rhythms of the readings  
become a part of the rhythms of your life.

Available on line at:

[www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehemplutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)

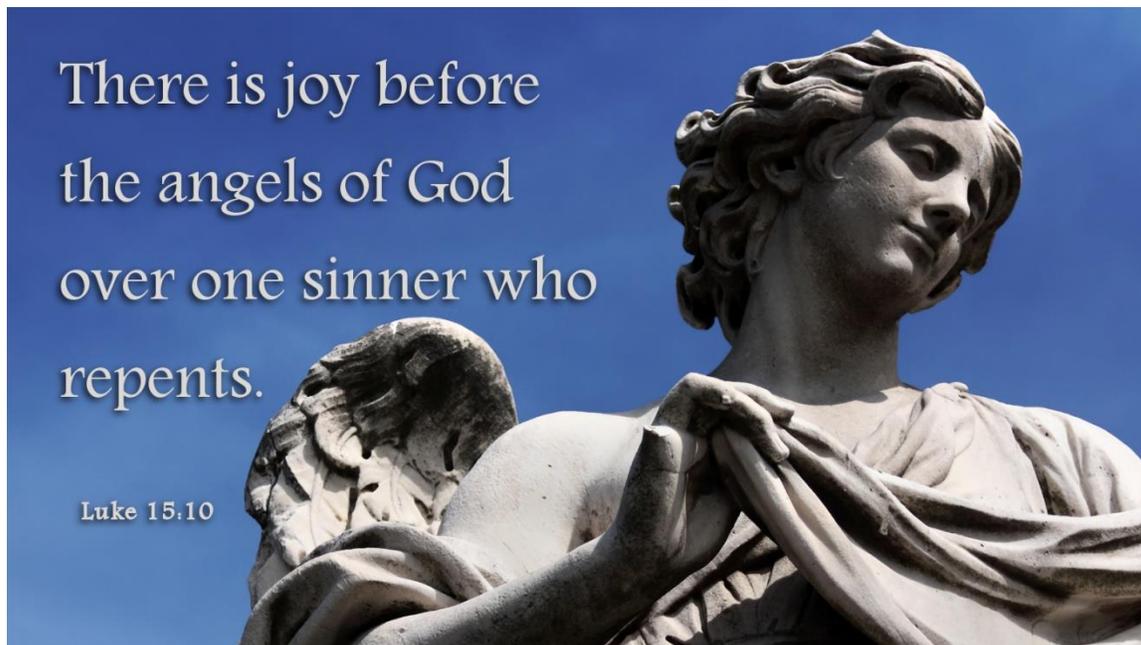
or

**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,  
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

September 8, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship midweek service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.)*



<http://carolinasnalc.org/page/53/> See comments after the Gospel.

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 609/974 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 324**

“Jesus sinners does (doth) receive”

You need the secret pages in the organist's edition of LSB to see 974. LSB 609 does not include verse 4 as found in TLH 324.

**Erdmann Neumeister, author**, "son of Johann Neumeister, schoolmaster, organist, &c, at Uechteritz, near Weissenfels, was born at Uechteritz, May 12, 1671...Neumeister was well known in his day as an earnest and eloquent preacher, as a vehement upholder of High Lutheranism, and as a keen controversialist against the Pietists and the Moravians by means of the pulpit as well as the press. His underlying motive was doubtless to preserve the simplicity of the faith from the subjective novelties of the period...He had begun to write hymns during his student days, and in later years their composition was a favourite Sunday employment. He takes high rank among the German hymn-writers of the 18th century, not only for the number of his productions (over 650), but also for their abiding value..."

[http://www.hymnary.org/person/Neumeister\\_E](http://www.hymnary.org/person/Neumeister_E)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeWZTHXlyMU> Hymn prelude on Meinem Jesum lass ich nicht (Darnstadt) by Kevin Hildebrand. One LSB Hymn a Week.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RODV7z-UQhI> Join 7<sup>th</sup> graders singing the hymn, CPH.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXdVXJYDPNE> A new tune by Matt Forman.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**Ezekiel 34:11-24; RCL, Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 or Psalm 14** (*Next Week: Amos 8:4-7; RCL Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 or Psalm 79:1-9*)

## The Lord GOD Will Seek Them Out

<sup>11</sup> "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup> And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup> I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup> I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. <sup>[a]</sup> I will feed them in justice.

<sup>17</sup> "As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats. <sup>18</sup> Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture;

and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? <sup>19</sup> And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

<sup>20</sup> “Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup> Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, <sup>22</sup> I will rescue<sup>[b]</sup> my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. <sup>23</sup> And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup> And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

- a. [Ezekiel 34:16](#) Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate *I will watch over*
- b. [Ezekiel 34:22](#) Or *save*

### “The Times They Are A-Changin’

These days .. are a season of changing times...

In this atmosphere of changing times and seasons, the words of Ezekiel 34 have an important message for all who identify themselves as the "sheep of his pasture" or the people of God (Psalm 95:7).

Ezekiel 34 is addressed to those people of God who have been living in exile in Babylon. I am expanding the lectionary text to include verses 1-10 which is essential for understanding what follows. Following will be brief comments on Psalm 95 and Matthew 25, other texts for the day.

### The Failure of the Politicians (Ezekiel 34:1-10)

The first saying in this chapter begins with "Thus says the Lord God" and then continues with a harsh word directed at the "shepherds" which is a common metaphor for kings, or political leaders. The saying begins with "hoy" usually translated as "woe" in prophetic writings; the sense of the word is to announce doom, even the funeral of the ones being addressed (cf. the NIV "woe").

These "shepherds" have totally failed in their responsibilities. Instead of feeding their sheep they have been fattening themselves. They have neglected the sick, the injured, the lost. Their rule has not been kind but harsh. The "scattered" sheep is a clear reference to the exile. The saying consists of a sharp criticism of the failure of the shepherds, but with a glimmer of hope of rescue for the sheep, i.e. the people Israel.

Applied to our own time, this criticism of Israel's leaders has a word for those who hold public or pastoral (the word "pastor" comes from the Latin word for "shepherd") office. By telling what these leaders have failed to do in Ezekiel's time, they give a picture off what public officials ought to be doing...

### A Search and Rescue Operation (Ezekiel 34:11-16)

And now for the good news. The people's leaders have failed but there is a search and rescue operation going on. Everyone knows the story Jesus told about the good shepherd who

went in search of the one sheep that was lost (Luke 15:3-7). Now, says Ezekiel, just such an operation is going on.

The Lord, the Good Shepherd, has not forsaken those who are scattered in the gloom and darkness of exile, but is searching them out. That God will rescue them and bring them home (13-14). That God will make them to lie down in green pastures and will be their caring Shepherd (15-16). And they will be fed with *justice* (Hebrew, *mishpat*) which is the final, climatic word in this saying in both the Hebrew and English...

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1043](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1043) James Limburg

*Professor Emeritus of Old Testament,, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.*

“When there are these notes at the beginning of the chapter, we know that the chapter was associated with the famous person mentioned. But when there are not notes at the top, that means that there wasn’t even a legend about who wrote it.

The author was totally anonymous -- most likely an unknown more ordinary person. It was written by an ordinary person moved by the Holy Spirit.

And in Psalm 119 the absence of the top note tells us that there wasn’t really even any speculation about who wrote it. As far as anyone knew, it didn’t come from some super saint Bible hero but from an ordinary person like you or me struggling along to make sense of the chaos in his life...” (continued below)

**Psalm 119: 169-176; RCL, Exodus 32:7-14 or Psalm 51:1-10 (Psalm 113; RCL, Amos 8:4-7 or Psalm 113)**

## **TAW**

“The final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *Taw* or *Tav*, represents the final section of Psalm 119. Looking closely at each section has generated a new appreciation for the longest psalm that has lifted it in my mind from the mundane to the sublime.

[Academy BJE](#) states that *Taw* symbolizes perfection and “alludes to the three essential services of the soul: *teshuvah* (repentance), *tefillah* (prayer) and Torah,” which is God’s law. The letter represents truth. It begins the word *tikkun* (redemption) and refers to the concept of *teshuvah* (a returning to the Source for forgiveness).

These meanings of the Hebrew letter seem to summarize the truths we’ve seen repeatedly in our Psalm 119 meditation marathon. Although no one can obtain perfection until heaven, we ought to strive continually for a more sanctified life of repentance and prayer, based on the truth of God’s law. Redemption is possible only when we turn to Christ for forgiveness...”

<https://glendafayemathes.com/2011/06/15/truth-psalm-119-taw/> “ Glenda Faye Mathes writes across genres for all generations. Her fiction for adults and children (as Glenda Faye Mathes) and nonfiction (as Glenda Mathes) convey timeless truths through literary excellence... She is a scribe who strives to ascribe glory to God. Her literary writing touches hearts, engages minds, and inspires souls.

- <sup>169</sup> Let my cry come before you, O LORD;  
give me understanding according to your word!
- <sup>170</sup> Let my plea come before you;  
deliver me according to your word.
- <sup>171</sup> My lips will pour forth praise,  
for you teach me your statutes.
- <sup>172</sup> My tongue will sing of your word,  
for all your commandments are right.
- <sup>173</sup> Let your hand be ready to help me,  
for I have chosen your precepts.
- <sup>174</sup> I long for your salvation, O LORD,  
and your law is my delight.
- <sup>175</sup> Let my soul live and praise you,  
and let your rules help me.
- <sup>176</sup> I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant,  
for I do not forget your commandments.

“And as I look at this awesome acrostic poem -- truly a masterpiece -- I see verse 172 as a kind of summary sentence or thesis statement for the entirety of Psalm 119.

Vs 172 -- “Let my tongue declare your word, because all your commandments are righteous.”

The word translated as “declare” in the CEB can also be rendered as “sing” or “speak” (as in public speaking) or “shout” or even “yip.” And different translations render it differently...

I have an African friend who is a part of the Anglican tradition -- what we’d call Episcopalians in the US. And the Anglican churches throughout most of the world, like the Lutherans, and Covenant churches are vibrant and alive -- including Africa -- more so than in Europe and North America.

My African friend was very proud of his Anglican bishop and how godly of a man he is. So he was telling a story of one time when his bishop visited the United States.

At the port of entry the US customs officer asked him, “Do you have anything to declare?”

“Yes,” answered the African bishop in a very official purple clergy shirt -- which is what Anglican bishops wear.

The agent trying to figure out which form to fill out asked, “Well, how many things are you going to declare?”

“One,” said the soft spoken bishop.

“What, then, do you have to declare?” asked the customs agent.

The bishop in a loud and enthusiastic voice stated so that everyone in the whole terminal could hear: “I am declaring that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead! That is what I have to declare.”

This is the vibrancy of the word “declare,” here in Psalm 119:172. And while the psalmist does not yet know that Jesus, the Word of God, is going to be raised from the dead... That’s perhaps a good 800 years in the future for him... he does know that the word of God is worth declaring.”

<http://www.freshfishfood.org/2012/11/psalm-119169-176.html>

**I Timothy 1:(5-11) 12-17; RCL, verses 12-17 only (I Timothy 2:1-15; RCL, 1 Timothy 2:1-7) Readings from Timothy will continue each week until Reformation Day, October 30/31.**

“Probably the first thing to be said about preaching from one of the letters whose Pauline authorship is disputed is, “Hardly ever should the question of disputed authorship come up in the sermon.”

Disputes about authorship are technical exercises among scholars, and their role in building up the Body of Christ is strictly incidental. All too often, preachers use sermon time for cheerleading on behalf of their particular side (“As everyone knows, Paul did not write this” or “Some radical skeptics think Paul did not write this, but we know...”) or showing off the fact that they have a seminary education. There may be congregations where taking sides on this topic actually advances the cause of the gospel, but I do not think I have ever met one.

If you trust that Paul wrote the letter, just go ahead and preach; if you doubt it, do not make a point of that within the sermon (instead of saying “Paul says,” you can say “The epistle says” or “Our lesson says,” or avoid using constructions that would require identifying personal authorship). Then, schedule a series of educational events to explore the reasons and counterarguments about Pauline authorship at some other time...” .

[https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=687](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=687) **A.K.M. Adam** Tutor in New Testament St. Stephen's House, Oxford University Oxford, England, U. K.

*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. <sup>6</sup> Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, <sup>7</sup> desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

*<sup>8</sup> Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, <sup>9</sup> understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers,<sup>[a]</sup> liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound<sup>[b]</sup> doctrine, <sup>11</sup> in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.*

## **Christ Jesus Came to Save Sinners**

<sup>12</sup> I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup> though formerly I was a

blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,<sup>14</sup> and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.<sup>15</sup> The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.<sup>16</sup> But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.<sup>17</sup> To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.<sup>[c]</sup> Amen.

- a. [1 Timothy 1:10](#) That is, those who take someone captive in order to sell him into slavery
- b. [1 Timothy 1:10](#) Or *healthy*
- c. [1 Timothy 1:17](#) Greek to the ages of ages

## “The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 15th Chapter

### “Glory to You, O Lord”

**Luke 15:1-10** (*Luke 16:1-15; RCL, Luke 16:1-13*)

#### The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.<sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable:<sup>4</sup> “**What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?**<sup>5</sup> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.<sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’<sup>7</sup> Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.



## The Parable of the Lost Coin

<sup>8</sup>“Or what woman, having ten silver coins,<sup>[a]</sup> if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

- a. [Luke 15:8](#) Greek *ten drachmas*; a *drachma* was a Greek coin approximately equal in value to a Roman *denarius*, worth about a day's wage for a laborer

*The next parable is the Prodigal Son.*

“When I was in kindergarten, I would never have imagined my teacher having a thought about me after the 3:20 bell. She had better things to do. Whatever grown-ups did when they drove away in their cars, she did that. And I was gone from her mind until Bluebirds Story Circle the next day.

I had almost graduated from college before I discovered I may have been wrong. I learned this by being a student teacher in a kindergarten classroom. Ms. Kepper loved her students – our students. We talked about them incessantly. “Chad hugged me today. He’s beginning to trust.” It was a revelation to me how much her students meant to her.

Jesus reveals how much we matter in this huge universe. We could get lost in here. It’s so big and, what’s worse, we’re sinners. We wandered off. How could we mean anything to the world’s Creator?

But we are thought of, fretted over, cheered for. We are wanted; we have been from all eternity. And when someone pleads to be forgiven, all heaven breaks loose. For “there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” <http://carolinasnalc.org/page/53/>

**“This is the Gospel of the Lord”    “Praise to You, O Christ**



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Holy Cross Day is Wednesday, September 14, 2016. The Gospel reading for that day is John 3:13-17.