

Pentecost 17

September 20, 2026

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 20 (Year A)

God's generosity to his people is beyond our human understanding. We often count and keep score of what is given to us and compare it to what others have received. This is not the way God works. God gives to each according to their need, and it is given out of love and mercy. It is not for us to compare or to cry "Unfair!" because God's ways are beyond our limited human understanding.



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE TEXTS

First Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9**God's Ways are Higher**

God's loving compassion is incomprehensible to the human heart because his ways are so different from our human ways. Isaiah called for a return to the Lord of life, the one who made a covenant with David and is true to his original promise.

Psalm 27:1-9**The Lord is My Light and Salvation**

The psalmist sang of the Lord's protection and mercy. The Lord was his rock and fortress, protecting him in every situation. With God on our side, there is nothing to fear. The psalmist made one request of God: to live in his holy house forever.

Second Reading: Philippians 1:12-14, 19-30**Suffering for Christ**

Paul's suffering in the Lord makes a powerful witness to those who believe. It gave his flock courage in the face of their own suffering, and it advanced the message of the gospel. Paul counted his suffering in the faith as having genuine meaning. He found that to die to his old self was to gain true life in Christ.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 20:1-16**Parable of the Vineyard Workers**

Jesus told a story that illustrated the nature of God's abundant generosity. Whatever God gives to a person is completely up to God. He gives out of compassion and love — which, in Jesus' story, was offensive to those who showed up to work at the beginning of the day only to receive the same wages as those who barely worked. What one person receives as a blessing versus what another receives is entirely a matter of grace, because it all comes from God's generosity.

Suggestions for the Day:

Liturgical Color: Green

During the Season of Pentecost:

- Use either the Kyrie or the Hymn of Praise.
- Use the Apostles' Creed.

There are many believers around the world who are suffering for Christ. To read about what is happening around the world to Christians, go to www.persecution.com — the website of Voice of the Martyrs. You will find stories there of believers' houses being burned down because of antagonism toward the Christian faith, people being kidnapped or otherwise separated from family because of their faith, and other violence against believers.

SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR WORSHIP

Hymn Titles:

	LBW	WOV	LSB	ELW	REC	Sola
We Give Thee But Thine Own	510	---	781	686	42	42
Jesus Shall Reign	530	---	832	434	268	268
All Creatures of Our God and King	527	---	---	835	20	20
In You (Thee) is Gladness	552	---	818	867	19	19
Blest Are They	---	764	---	728	---	---
Lord of All Hopefulness	469	---	738	765	200	200
Where Charity and Love Prevail	126	---	845	359	---	---
O Jesus, I Have Promised	503	---	---	810	79	79
Lord of Light	405	---	---	688	---	---
Cup of Blessing That We Share	204	---	---	---	---	---

The hymn suggestions above can be found in: LBW = Lutheran Book of Worship, WOVS = With One Voice, ELW = Evangelical Lutheran Worship (Augsburg Fortress); LSB = The Lutheran Service Book (Concordia Publishing), REC = The ReClaim Hymnal for Church and Home (ReClaim Resources), and *** means you can find it on SOWeR at "Hymns and Music."

CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Praise Song Titles

Show Me Your Ways
(CCLI# 1151713)
Behold (Then Sings My Soul)
(CCLI# 7068430)
Branches
(CCLI# 7007329)
Good, Good Father
(CCLI# 7036612)
This I Believe
(CCLI# 7018338)

The contemporary song suggestions above are noted by their CCLI number. To print these songs, a congregation must have a CCLI license.