



## **“God’s Work. Our Hands.” Sunday 2022 Worship Resources**

**Sunday, Sept. 11, 2022**

**Lectionary 24, Year C**

Exodus 32:7-14 — *Moses begs the LORD to turn from anger against the Hebrews.*

Psalms 51:1-10 — *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. (Ps. 51:1)*

1 Timothy 1:12-17 — *Christ Jesus came for sinners.*

Luke 15:1-10 — *Looking for the lost sheep, silver coin; Jesus eating with sinners.*

### **Considerations for Preaching**

Sometimes disappointment subtly creeps in. Other times it announces itself boldly, standing front and center. In today’s reading from Exodus, disappointment rises up from among the people, who find that Moses has delayed his return to them. Their disappointment may be not only in Moses’ delay but also in the method in which this liberation from Egypt is taking place. Losing patience with the way God has chosen to lead, they are ready to forge their own course. Interestingly, this brings a sense of unity and camaraderie among the people as they contribute their own resources to create the golden calf. In many ways the people are looking for God’s presence to meet their needs, but they are not finding it.

Moses is the first to hear God’s disappointment — a burning anger ready to consume. Moses sees a different way, a way that happens to be through the other side of God’s burning anger. Moses asks God to remember, to be moved by God’s fierce devotion and to relent. In other words, the way past the isolation of disappointment and anger is through deepening relationships. God’s journeying, guiding presence is a gift the people need. Even though the people might be aware of that, they want God’s presence on their own terms and in a way familiar to them. Sometimes proceeding on our own terms limits our openness to God daring us to embrace new opportunities. The Scriptures consistently tell the story of God choosing the work of relationship-building even when humanity shares little interest in doing the same.

What does this mean for service in the wider community? Building and deepening a relationship of trust opens us to God’s movement within that relationship. It may lead to paths that we may not have envisioned. These new paths can lead to stronger communities that are more resilient when the disappointments of life announce themselves. As relationships deepen it is also possible that other pains or trauma emerge. These might have been simmering for years in the community and need the safety of trusting relationships and holy space that we can offer through our presence as God’s people. The relational dynamic in the Exodus story reminds us that presence matters. While completing projects often looks good and feels great, it is often the ongoing work of building relationships that turns us from our own strength and resources to appreciate what God can do with willing hearts and hands.

In the Gospel reading from Luke it is the tax collectors and sinners who are willing to draw near to Jesus and listen whereas the religious class is more willing to grumble and complain. While their complaint reveals their judgment on Jesus' character, it also reveals the difference between their expectations of hospitality and God's. One of the key questions about the chapter preceding and the chapter following this reading in Luke's Gospel is: who will respond to Jesus' invitation? Story after story invites those who truly hear Jesus to participate in an ever-deepening and -expanding fellowship of God's creation. If it looks as if Jesus is breaking protocol, that's because the protocol does not reflect the imagination and wonder that God intended.

The parables reorient our expectations of God's willingness. The contrast between the grumbling leaders and the rejoicing searchers is notable. A lack of imagination or fear often leads to grumbling. The rejoicing comes from a willingness to wonder where an invitation might lead, to follow the way of the God who won't stop searching and who invites us to continue to search for new possibilities.

The author of the first epistle to Timothy bears witness to the patient and merciful reach of God. The author expresses gratitude for the service God has appointed. This is received as a gift, as indicated by the phrase "even though I," then the author recalls his activities that did not reflect a life of service to God. Yet that lack of service did not prevent God's grace from overflowing. The apostle's life has shown that little can get in the way of God's persistent love. By attributing his capacity to serve to God's patience and mercy, the author is modeling a posture that can shape communities who receive God's transformative love. It is this love that leads us in service and strengthens our collective identity as we continue to respond to the invitation of Jesus.

*Henry Martinez*

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Trusting God at work in and among us, we raise our hearts and voices in prayer for the needs of the world.

For your work in the church, we give thanks. Plant and tend relationships among faith communities, that in faithful listening, speech, and action, our hands work to bear fruit for the sake of all in need. God of grace, we pray,  
**hear us when we call.**

For your work in creation, we give thanks. Sustain peoples and places affected by climate change, ecological devastation, and natural disasters. Prosper the work of creation-care ministries locally and globally, that with our minds and hearts opened, our hands work to lovingly care for the earth. God of life, we pray,  
**hear us when we call.**

For your work among the nations, we give thanks. Direct leaders in paths of honest service, that both their words and actions are carried out on behalf of those whom they serve. God of righteousness, we pray,  
**hear us when we call.**

For your work in places of need, we give thanks. Sustain all who are wearied by unemployment or lack of adequate food or housing, that we advocate for relief and just policy. Bring healing to all who are sick through the skillful hands and compassionate hearts of physicians, nurses, therapists, and caregivers (*We pray especially for...*) God of restoration, we pray,  
**hear us when we call.**

For your work in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities, we give thanks. Guide our common life together so that children, youth, and adults of all ages flourish. Teach us to listen attentively to our neighbors, that any new endeavors consider those who may be left out or under served. God of wisdom, we pray,  
**hear us when we call.**

For your work in this worshiping community, we give thanks. Bless the service project(s) of this day and throughout the year. Foster deeper connections among those who serve and a spirit of accompaniment as we work alongside those in our community. Strengthen our faith, that we trust God moving in and among us. God of love, we pray,  
**hear us when we call.**

*Here other intercessions composed for the local community or related to a local service project may be added.*

For your work among those who came before us, we give thanks. We remember those who have died and are held forever in your loving hands (*especially*). Hold us in your presence now and always. God of heaven and earth,  
**hear us when we call.**

Receive these and all our prayers, Gracious God. We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

### **Additional Prayers**

*In addition to the collects below, you may wish to consider prayers related to your particular service project. For example, if the project relates to creation care, a specific prayer on care for the earth may be fitting. See Evangelical Lutheran Worship, pp. 72-87, and All Creation Sings, pp. 46-55.*

Mighty and merciful God, lover of justice and equity, you call us to support the weak, to help those who suffer, and to honor all people. By the power of your Holy Spirit, make us advocates for your justice and instruments of your peace, so that all may be reconciled in your beloved community; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (*ACS*, p. 47)

By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 75)

Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 75)

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 86)

### **Affirmation of Christian Vocation**

*Within the sending rite of the service, this affirmation may be made by individuals or groups, and may be introduced by a description of the area of service to be affirmed. Or, the affirmation may be made by the whole assembly.*

*The presiding minister addresses those affirming Christian vocation.*

Siblings in Christ, both our work and our rest are in God.  
Will you endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
in gratitude to God and in service to others, at morning and evening,  
at work and at play, all the days of your life?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Almighty God, by the power of the Spirit you have knit us your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look with favor upon us in our commitment to serve in Christ's name. Give us courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Blessing and Sending for Mission**

*This order is intended for use when material resources or people are being sent forth from the assembly as a tangible expression of the baptismal call to share in Christ's mission to all the world.*

*This order may precede the blessing and the dismissal in a congregation's primary service, or it may be adapted to be used independently.*

*The leader addresses the assembly, adapting these words to the occasion.*

Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God and seek God's blessing as we send *these* \_\_\_\_\_ to *description of destination and purpose*.

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

You made the whole earth for your glory; all creation praises you.

We lift our voices to join the songs of heaven and earth

in thanksgiving for the many blessings you have given us.  
Renew in us the commitment  
to use our gifts in the service of others, and especially of those in need.  
Let us be your hands to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless,  
clothe the naked, comfort the weary and outcast,  
welcome the stranger, care for creation,  
and be loving neighbors to all people.

*The leader continues with one or more of the following petitions, adapting as appropriate.*

*Sending of people*

Bless those who go out from here to labor in/at \_\_\_\_\_.  
Prosper the work of their hands.  
Bless those who receive [*them and*] the fruits of their labor,  
and may those who are sent receive blessing in return.  
May the gifts they use and share be signs of your love to all people.

*Food, sustenance*

Bless these \_\_\_\_\_.  
May those who receive them be nourished and strengthened,  
and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people.

*Medical and personal-care supplies*

Bless these \_\_\_\_\_.  
May those who receive them be cared for and healed,  
and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people.

*Clothing, quilts*

Bless these \_\_\_\_\_.  
May those who receive them find dignity in their use and comfort in their warmth,  
and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people.

*The prayer concludes:*

To you, O God, be glory and honor through your Son, Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in your church and in the world, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Hymns and Songs**

*The following suggestions may be especially suitable for this day. For additional suggestions, explore the topical indexes in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, All Creation Sings and This Far by Faith. Singing on this day may take place in settings outside the worship space, such as a service project work site. Any song can be sung unaccompanied, but hymns marked with an (\*) lend themselves more readily to singing without the aid of instruments or printed materials.*

ELW 513	* Listen, God Is Calling
ELW 538	Enviado soy de Dios / The Lord Now Sends Us Forth
ELW 546	To Be Your Presence

ELW 548		Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen
ELW 549	*	Thuma mina, Nkosi yam / Send Me, Jesus
ELW 583 / 685		Take My Life, That I May Be
ELW 722		O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate
ELW 741	*	Your Will Be Done
ELW 748		O God in Heaven
ELW 798		Will You Come and Follow Me
ELW 808		Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song
ACS 939		Touch That Soothes and Heals
ACS 984		May the God of Hope Go with Us
ACS 985		Let Us Enter In
ACS 987	*	Guide My Feet
ACS 991		Go to the World
ACS 1000		God's Work, Our Hands ^
ACS 1003	*	For Such a Time as This
ACS 1022		God, Bless the Hands
ACS 1036		Commonwealth Is God's Commandment
ACS 1043		Spirit, Open My Heart
ACS 1045		Come, Share the Spirit
ACS 1047		What Is the World Like
ACS 1048		Founded on Faith
ACS 1056		God Bless to Us Our Bread
ACS 1059		Come Now, You Blessed
ACS 1061		Caminemos con Jesús
TFF 130	*	Listen, God Is Calling
TFF 134		O Lord, Open My Eyes
TFF 243	*	Your Will Be Done
TFF 244 / 245	*	Send Me, Jesus / Thuma mina

^ Two versions of the "God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday hymn are available at [ELCA.org/dayofservice](http://ELCA.org/dayofservice), one set to a familiar tune (as presented at ACS 1000) and another set to a new tune, with permissions to reproduce them for local, nonsale use in synods, congregations and other ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

A setting of the newly composed tune for SATB choir and optional assembly [is available for purchase from Augsburg Fortress](#).

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