



# Celebrate

Sunday, September 21, 2025

15th Sunday after Pentecost

*As we are invited today to consider what it means to be managers (rather than owners) of all that we have, it is crucial to recognize that we are bought with a price. “Christ Jesus, himself human, . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” Apart from the generosity of God we have nothing—we are nothing. By God’s gracious favor we have everything we need.*

## Prayer of the Day

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God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

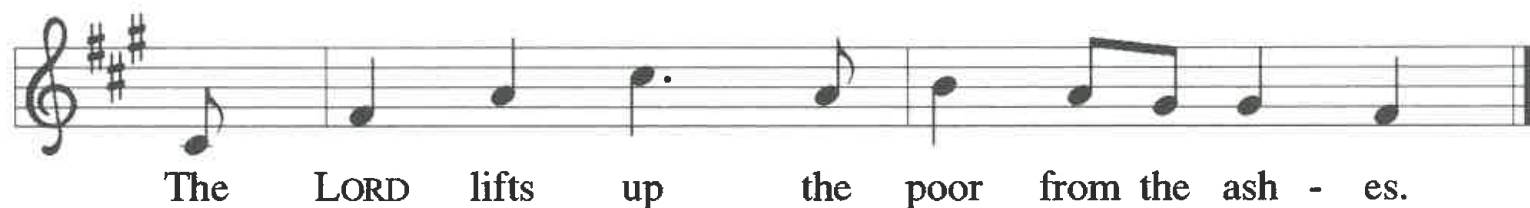
## First Reading

Amos 8:4-7

*Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.*

Hear this, you that trample on the  
    needy,  
    and bring to ruin the poor of the  
    land,  
<sup>5</sup>saying, “When will the new moon  
    be over  
    so that we may sell grain;  
and the sabbath,  
    so that we may offer wheat for sale?  
We will make the ephah small and  
    the shekel great,

    and practice deceit with false  
    balances,  
<sup>6</sup>buying the poor for silver  
    and the needy for a pair of sandals,  
    and selling the sweepings of the  
    wheat.”  
<sup>7</sup>The LORD has sworn by the pride  
    of Jacob:  
Surely I will never forget any of their  
    deeds.



Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants <sup>1</sup> of the LORD;  
praise the name <sup>1</sup> of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>**Let the name of the <sup>1</sup> LORD be blessed,  
from this time forth for- <sup>1</sup> evermore.**

<sup>3</sup>From the rising of the sun to its <sup>1</sup> going down  
let the name of the <sup>1</sup> LORD be praised.

<sup>4</sup>**The LORD is high a- <sup>1</sup> bove all nations,  
God's glory a- <sup>1</sup> bove the heavens. **R****

<sup>5</sup>Who is like the <sup>1</sup> LORD our God,  
who sits en- <sup>1</sup> throned on high,

<sup>6</sup>**but stoops <sup>1</sup> to behold  
the heavens <sup>1</sup> and the earth?**

<sup>7</sup>The LORD takes up the weak out <sup>1</sup> of the dust  
and lifts up the poor <sup>1</sup> from the ashes,

<sup>8</sup>**enthroning them <sup>1</sup> with the rulers,  
with the rulers <sup>1</sup> of the people.**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD makes the woman of a <sup>1</sup> childless house  
to be a joyful mother of children. <sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! **R**

*The pastoral epistles offer insight into how early Christians understood many practical matters, such as church administration and worship. The church's focused prayer for others is an expression of the single-minded passion God has toward us in Jesus.*

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup>This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself a ransom for all —this was attested at the right time. <sup>7</sup>For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

## Gospel

## Luke 16:1-13

*Jesus tells the curious story of a dishonest manager who cheats his employer and then is commended by him for having acted so shrewdly. Jesus wonders why his own followers are less creative and diligent in their stewardship given that they are managers of a far more valuable household.*

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. <sup>2</sup>So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ <sup>3</sup>Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ <sup>5</sup>So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ <sup>6</sup>He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ <sup>7</sup>Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He

said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ <sup>8</sup>And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. <sup>9</sup>And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

<sup>10</sup>“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup>No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

# Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

O God, teach your church to act in solidarity with the poor, frustrating the efforts of those who trample on the needy and practicing justice in our own life and community. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

Almighty Creator, we pray for an end to the misuse of the earth and its resources, that all people may benefit from your abundant gifts and that our stewardship of creation would be marked by justice and sustainability. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

Holy One, embolden elected leaders to pursue policies of economic justice for the benefit of all, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. Persuade them by your example of generosity and compassion. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

Compassionate God, we pray for all facing illness, those near death, or those grieving the loss of loved ones (*especially*). May they find comfort and strength in your love. Prepare us to surround them with your healing care. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of love, motivate our congregation to enact economic justice through tangible action, prioritizing the needs of our community and sharing resources generously through our outreach and justice ministries. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Gracious God, we give thanks for the saints (*especially Matthew and all*) who now join the heavenly chorus in praising your name. Lift us up from the dust of grief and remind us of your promise of new life. God of grace,  
**receive our prayer.**

We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.  
**Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** (Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist [transferred]) Matthew 9:9-13. **Tuesday** Psalm 12. **Wednesday** Proverbs 21:10-16. **Thursday** Psalm 146. **Friday** Proverbs 28:3-10. **Saturday** Proverbs 28:11-28. **16th Sunday after Pentecost** Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31.

CELEBRATE September 21, 2025 (Lectionary 25)

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