



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

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

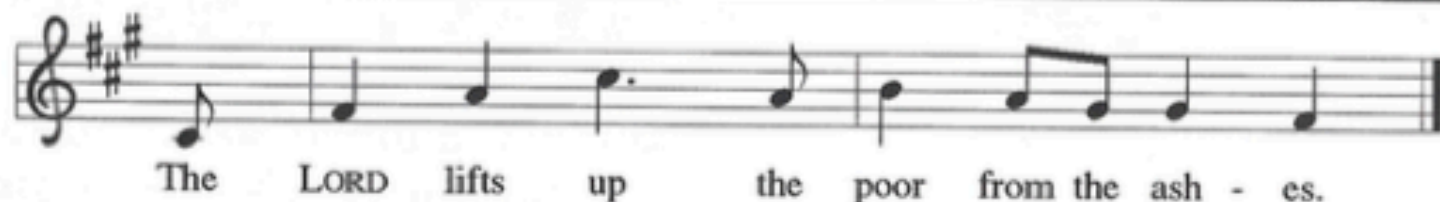
Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.

Hear this, you that trample on the
 needy,
 and bring to ruin the poor of the
 land,
⁵saying, "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,
⁶buying the poor for silver
 and the needy for a pair of sandals,
 and selling the sweepings of the
 wheat."
⁷The LORD has sworn by the pride
 of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their
 deeds.

Psalm

Psalm 113; refrain, Ps. 113:7



Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants ¹ of the LORD;
praise the name ¹ of the LORD.

²Let the name of the ¹ LORD be blessed,
from this time forth for- ¹ evermore.

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

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

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

⁶but stoops ¹ to behold
the heavens ¹ and the earth?

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

⁸enthroning them ¹ with the rulers,
with the rulers ¹ of the people.

⁹The LORD makes the woman of a ¹ childless house
to be a joyful mother of children. ¹ 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, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God;

there is also one mediator
between God and
humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,
⁶who gave himself a ransom
for all

—this was attested at the right time. ⁷For 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. ²So 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.' ³Then 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. ⁴I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' ⁵So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' ⁷Then 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.' ⁸And 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. ⁹And 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.

¹⁰"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. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No 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)

Volume 56, Number 4

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN, 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1553. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$5.79 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Dorothy Christopherson. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year C* (Augsburg Fortress, 2006). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year C.