

14th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, August 30, 2026

Introduction to the day

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the LORD is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

PSALM: Psalm 26:1-8

Your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. (Ps. 26:3)

SECOND READING: Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

GOSPEL: Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a "rock."

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Take Up Your Cross

Jesus issues a difficult invitation to his disciples: "Take up [your] cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). While the disciples may have hoped for a Messiah who would set the world right through satisfying displays of force and strength, Jesus offers them a different vision. His new kingdom or reign will not be built on traditional concepts of power and glory. It is instead a kingdom centered on the cross.

Today we, too, may long for a mighty Messiah to put the world back in order, throw down corrupt rulers from their thrones, and take away suffering once and for all. And like Peter, we may find ourselves crying out in disbelief, "God forbid it, Lord!" (v. 22) when Jesus redirects our gaze to the cross.

The cross reminds us that following Jesus requires nothing less than our whole lives. To follow Jesus is to love our neighbors with a self-sacrificing love, to sit in the discomfort of another's struggle, and to be willing to lay down our own power and privilege to see the world from our neighbor's point of view. Following Jesus requires practicing courage as we show up for one another in the least glamorous moments of life: in the hospital room, at the gravesite, in the living rooms of the brokenhearted, in the streets marching for justice. To follow Jesus is to open our hearts to the world's pain and to practice loving others with God's generous love, trusting that there is always more than enough.

Putting love of God and neighbor above power, prestige, and comfort is countercultural. It might even get us into trouble. But through Jesus' own life, death, and resurrection, we are freed to enter into the world's suffering, trusting that God's love always gets the last word and that we will indeed be brought to new life through God's resurrection power.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

For the church in every land, that its mission and ministry is anchored in the love of Christ. When threats or challenges arise, teach us to take up our cross and follow you in faith. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the well-being of your creation, that all that lives and grows on the earth may thrive. Bring relief to areas ravaged by droughts, floods, fires, storms, and other disasters, especially the wildfires throughout our country. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**

For the nations and all in authority, that they seek to live in peace with one another. Bless the work of international and diplomatic organizations and all who work to bring peace to a world scarred by violence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For all those in need, that they be satisfied. Ensure all your children have safe access to food, water, shelter, and medical care. Bring healing to all who bear wounds in body, mind, and spirit especially Chris Burchat, Natasha Gagnon-Burchat, Claude Jeannotte, Glenda Panke, Joanne Robinson, Bernadette Schueneman, Adam Schroeder, Heather Schruder, Doug Sell, Harold Warlich, Roy Zadow, those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For this congregation gathered here to serve you, that they remain strong in faith and united in purpose. Guide our committees, study groups, and other meetings toward honesty and humility, always seeking genuine love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the faithful departed, that their witness continues to strengthen and guide the church. Renew our hope in your promises in this life and the life to come. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.