

Sebastopol United Methodist Church
Sunday, September 13, 2020 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost

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Order of Worship, including Scripture

Seasonal Theme:

The teaching and ministry of Jesus the Christ.

Theme for the day:

Making the right decisions for Christian behavior.

Call to worship:

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: I will sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted.

People: **The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.**

Pastor: The Lord is my strength and my song, he has become my salvation.

People: **He is my God, and I will praise him.**

Pastor: He is my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Unison: **The Lord will reign for ever and ever. Amen.**

Centering & Prayer of Illumination:

(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)

Gracious God, the renewer of our minds, cleanse our spirits with the mercy of your grace so we can clearly go beyond ourselves. Clarify our fellowship with one another and grant us courage to defend the lowly and the marginalized. Enhance our ability to sing new songs of your faithfulness and to dance into your glory, in Jesus's name and way. Amen.

Readings from Scripture: **Romans 14:1-12** **Matthew 18:21-35**

[texts of Scripture follow the service, beginning on page 2]

Message: **BEYOND FORGIVENESS**

Pastoral Prayer

With thanksgiving for God's gifts to us, let us offer ourselves and the fruits of our labor for God's work in the world. Thank you for continuing to send your offerings and pledges by mail.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:

(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)

O Merciful God, we commend you for all your blessings upon us. May all places of sorrow and mourning know the sound of your love. Transform this offering into hope and joy for our world. Transform our ministries into instruments of grace. Transform us into people of promise and hope, a people who live and die in the Lord. In your son Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Blessing and Benediction:

Stay firm as people of God. Stay focused on his forgiveness, which he has already given. Be faithful and be hopeful. Stay with God's blessings.

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Scripture Readings – September 13, 2020

first reading -- **ROMANS 14:1-12**

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do

not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

second reading – **MATTHEW 18:21-35**

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he

would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

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Thank you for worshipping with us today.