

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service of the Word

First Lutheran Church, Lynn, MA

September 20, 2020



Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. **Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love.**

In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

Welcome to worship!

Yes, *this is worship!* It is not the way any of us *want* it to be, but God is alive and present in this virtual gathering. God's work will still speak to us through the Holy Spirit, and we are still the Body of Christ, joined together in a fellowship of love, even if it is not in person.

Create a sacred space in your home.

Light a candle. Pour yourself a warm beverage. Welcome the presence of God into your dwelling. Set aside this time for worship as if you were in church. Put away the cell phone (unless you are watching on your cell phone!) Adopt a posture of prayer that works for you.

We will get through this.

This is temporary. This is not the "new normal." This may last several months, but we will be back together one day. We are blessed to be living in a time with technology that allows us to gather in this way. For that we can rejoice!

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Meditation on FAITHFULNESS
Pam Gervais

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

As loving parents have compassion for their children, God has compassion for us. Confident in God's love, let us confess our sins.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Generous and faithful God,
**we confess to you all the ways, known and unknown,
that we reject and undermine your steadfast love.
Though you made us your people, we treat strangers with suspicion.
Though you forgave our debts, we collect with interest.
We are quick to pass judgment on others.
Have mercy on us, O God, and remember your promise to us,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

The minister announces God's forgiveness, to which the assembly responds:
Amen.

Great Is Thy Faithfulness



1 Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther; there is no
2 Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon, and
3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thine own dear



shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
pres - ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright



pas - sions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for - ev - er wilt be.
man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Refrain



Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Morn - ing by



morn - ing new mer - cies I see; all I have need - ed thy



hand hath pro - vid - ed; great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

In autumn, our liturgy comes from Setting One in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, our red hymnal. Traditional yet bright and fresh, it was composed in 2005 and has become quickly beloved because of its beauty and ease of singing.

Glo - ry to God in the high -
est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.
Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - mighty God and
Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we
praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus
Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the
right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a -

lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High,

Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of

God the Fa - ther. A - - men.

Glo - ry to God in the high -

est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY



God speaks to us in scripture readings, preaching, and song

FIRST READING

Jonah 3:10-4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord GOD appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 145

The psalms were the original prayer book of God's people and capture the full gamut of human emotion.

The cantors sing the refrain, which is repeated by the assembly. The choir sings the verses.

The Lord is near to all who call up -
on him, the Lord is
near, the Lord is near.

1. I will bless you day after day, and praise your name forever and ever. The Lord is great and highly to be praised; his greatness cannot be measured.
2. The Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in mercy. How good is the Lord to all, compassionate to all his creatures.
3. The Lord is just in all his ways, and holy in all his deeds. The Lord is close to all who call him, who call on him in truth.

SECOND READING

Philippians 1:21-30

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

We stand to welcome Christ, the living word of God, in the gospel reading.

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



Verse: Open our hearts, O Lord,
to give heed to what is said by your Son.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant



1 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as
2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - 'lers
3 I will hold the Christ - light for you in the night - time
4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you laugh I'll
5 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as



Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to
on the road; we are here to help each oth - er
of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you,
laugh with you. I will share your joy and sor - row
Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to



let you be my ser - vant, too.
walk the mile and bear the load.
speak the peace you long to hear.
till we've seen this jour - ney through.
let you be my ser - vant, too.

APOSTLES CREED

The word "creed" comes from the Latin credo which simply means "I believe."

By professing our faith with these ecumenical words, we are one with Christians all around the world, no matter what else might divide us.

With the whole church let us confess our faith:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**PRAYERS OF
INTERCESSION and
THE LORD'S
PRAYER**

Throughout our prayer we sing this refrain:

Deep peace of the run - ning waves, deep peace of the
flow - ing air, deep peace of the shin - ing stars to
you, deep peace of the qui - et earth. earth.

To repeat *Last time*

PEACE

After each petition:

O God, you are full of compassion;
graciously hear our prayer.

OFFERTORY

*You are invited to
make your offering
online at
www.flc-lynn.org/give
or by mail. Please
continue to give during
this time to support the
ongoing ministry of our
congregation.*

Bist Du Bei Mir
J.S. Bach

If thou art near, then I with gladness will go to my final rest.
That blessed hour, free from all sorrow, when I shall sleep on the morrow
Shall wake within thy loving breast.
If thou art near, then I with gladness will go to my final rest.

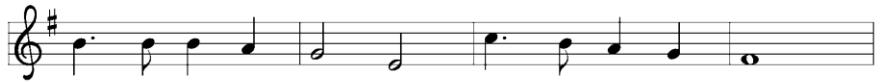
SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission for the world

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

On Our Way Rejoicing



1 On our way re - joic - ing glad - ly let us go.
2 Un - to God the Fa - ther joy - ful songs we sing;



Christ our Lord has con - quered; van - quished is the foe.
un - to God the Sav - ior thank - ful hearts we bring;



Christ with - out, our safe - ty; Christ with - in, our joy;
un - to God the Spir - it bow we and a - dore,



who, if we be faith - ful, can our hope de - stroy?
on our way re - joic - ing now and ev - er - more.

Refrain



On our way re - joic - ing; as we for - ward move,



hear - ken to our prais - es, O blest God of love!

DISMISSAL

Be at peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Meditation
Mark Sedio

Join us for virtual coffee hour!

Following worship at 11:30 AM, you are invited to grab a cup of coffee and a snack and join us on Zoom for a virtual coffee hour! If your computer has a camera and you'd like to use video chat, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88484060366> and follow the instructions. You may need to install a free piece of software. If you would like to call in on your phone, dial **(929) 205-6099** and enter meeting ID **884 8406 0366**. It won't be as good as the Fireside Room, but it will allow us to check in!

Music notes

Today's prelude is based on the melody of our gathering hymn, *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. This hymn tune was composed by William Runyan (1870 – 1957), an American Methodist minister, specifically for this text written by Thomas Chisholm (1866 – 1960), also an American Methodist minister. These two friends collaborated on as many as 30 different hymns, though this is the one that is most well-known. The hymn eventually became the unofficial school hymn of the Moody Bible Institute (where Runyan served as a musician for a time) and was also used by the Billy Graham crusades in England. Because of its popularity, Runyan's heirs were able to endow a scholarship funded by the royalties from the hymn. The postlude is a composition by the contemporary American composer Mark Sedio.

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***We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation,
welcoming and serving all people.***

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