

PENTECOST XVI
LECTIONARY XXV
SEPTEMBER 20, 2020 + 10:30AM



First Lutheran Church and School

a caring community of Christian faith for all people

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✠ *GATHERING* ✠

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.

Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Most merciful God,
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. May Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul;
Worship his holy name.**

**Sing like never before, O my soul;
I'll worship your holy name.**

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning,
Its time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes. *Refrain*

You're rich in love and you're slow to anger.
Your name is great and your heart is kind.
For all your goodness, I will keep on singing:
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. *Refrain*

And on that day, when my strength is failing,
the end draws near, and my time has come;
Still, my soul will sing your praise unending;
ten thousand years and the forever more *Refrain*

Apostolic Greeting

Song of Praise

We Bow Down

You are Lord of cre - a - tion and Lord of my life,
Lord of the land and the sea. You were Lord of the heav - ens be -
fore there was time, and Lord of all lords you will be.
We bow down and we wor - ship you, Lord; we bow
down and we wor - ship you. Lord; we bow down and we
wor - ship you, Lord; Lord of all lords you will be.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**



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?

¹⁰When God saw what the people of Ninevah 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.

^{4:1}But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He 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. ³And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵Then 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.

⁶The 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. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸When 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."

⁹But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰Then 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. ¹¹And 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?"

Word of God, Word of Life **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 145

Congregation reads the bold verses

- ¹I will exalt you, my God and king,
and bless your name forever and ever.
- ²**Every day will I bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.**
- ³Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!
There is no end to your greatness.
- ⁴**One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.**
- ⁵I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.
- ⁶**They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will recount your greatness.**
- ⁷They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.
- ⁸**The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

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.

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, 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, ²⁸and 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. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God, Word of life. . . . **Thanks be to God!**

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Matthew 20:1-16

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, O Lord!**

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And 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?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’

⁸When 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.’ ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, ‘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.’

¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, O Christ!**

Sermon Vicar Libby Denton

Word in Song

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.

Text: Richard Gillard, b. 1953

Music: THE SERVANT SONG, Richard Gillard

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Profession of Faith Apostles' Creed

**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

Gathered in the Spirit and strengthened in faith, we pray for the church, the world, and for the peace of God to rest upon all creation. *(A brief silence.)*

O God, call your Church to renewal. Guide all who lead and all who serve, that they may embrace your justice and pursue your mission. Open our lips and our lives to witness to the transforming love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, call the nations to peace. Strike down evil and corruption wherever they may hold sway. Inspire and protect all who seek and keep peace, including those in the armed services and in public office. Guide this world in your path of caring justice, human dignity, and lasting peace for all your children.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, call to healing all who are sick, suffering or in need. Crush the sinful spirits of arrogance, division and hate. Mend the broken, tend the wounded, comfort the grieving, and embrace your cherished poor. Hear us as we speak the needs and names on our hearts this day...

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, call to courage this household of faith, its schools and ministries. Surround all of us with your protection in this new school year, and guide us as we set plans for ministry in uncertain times. Turn our wills to your wonder, our hearts to your grace, and our deeds to your Reign. Lead and guide us always -- as companions, citizens, servants and saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, call to hope your saints of every time and place. Grant comfort to all who bear your mark, and cradle in mercy all who hope in you, till the Risen One heals and unites the whole creation in your endless love.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear these prayers, gracious God, and all that is in our hearts this day. We ask in the name of Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

Special Music

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

✘ *TABLE* ✘

Brief Order for Virtual Communion

The Lord's Prayer

Lord, Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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

✘ ***SENDING*** ✘

Pastoral Blessing

Sending Hymn

You Are the Vine

**You Are the Vine, we are the branches, keep us abiding in you.
You are vine, we are the branches, keep us abiding in you.**

**And we'll go in your love, and we'll god in yoru nmae.
That the world will surely know tha tyou have power to heal and to save.**

You are the vine, we are the branches, keep us abiding in you.

Dismissal