

St. John's Lutheran Church — Walhalla, SC
16th Sunday after Pentecost — September 20, 2020
Worship at Biggerstaff Retreat (also on Facebook) — 9:30 AM

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.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONGS - "Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord"

see next page

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Brief Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God, have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

Amen.

OPENING HYMN — "Be Thou My Vision"

see next page

THE APOSTOLIC 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.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: Let us pray . . . 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.

People: Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

see next page

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Rachel L. Connelly

HYMN OF RESPONSE — "Give Me Jesus"

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

SONG OF PRAYER— “Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying”

see next page

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Generous God, you make the last first, and the first last. Where this gospel challenges the church, equip it for its works of service. Strengthen those who suffer for Christ.

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

Sun and wind, bushes and worms, cattle and great cities—nothing in creation is outside your concern, mighty God. In your mercy, tend to it all. Give us a spirit of generosity toward all you have made.

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

Where we find envy and create enemies, you provide enough for all. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence. Inspire leaders with creativity and wisdom. Bless the work of negotiators, peacekeepers, and development workers.

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

Reveal yourself to all in need as you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, ready to relent from punishing. Accompany judges and lawyers, victims of crime and those serving sentences. Give fruitful labor and a livelihood to those seeking work.

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

Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. Grant life, health, and courage to all who are in need, *especially...*

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

We praise you for the generations that have declared your power to us. Give us faithfulness to follow them, living for Christ, until you call us to join them in the joyful song around his throne.

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

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION / WORDS OF DISTRIBUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE BLESSING

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.
Amen.

SENDING SONG — “God Be With You Till We Meet Again”

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DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Remember the poor. **C** Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Jonah 3:10--4:11

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?"

PSALM 145:1-8

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.**

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Philippians 1:21-30

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.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 20:1-16

[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."

SONGS FOR WORSHIP

Open the Eyes of My Heart

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.
Open the eyes of my heart,
I want to see you, I want to see You. *(Repeat)*

To see you high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of Your glory;
Pour out Your pow'r and love,
As we sing, "holy, holy, holy... *(Repeat from beginning)*

Last Time

holy, holy, holy;
holy, holy, holy...
holy, holy, holy ...
I want to see You. *(Repeat)*

Be Thou My Vision

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father, I thy true one,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
3. Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Text: Irish, 8th-10th cent.; tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1880-1931;
vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1860-1935, alt.*

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

*Text: Ken Medema, b. 1943
Text © 1973 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188.*

Give Me Jesus

- 1 In the morning when I rise,
in the morning when I rise,
in the morning when I rise,
give me Jesus.

Refrain

*Give me Jesus, give me Jesus.
You may have all the rest, give me Jesus.*

- 2 Dark midnight was my cry,
dark midnight was my cry,
dark midnight was my cry,
give me Jesus. *Refrain*
- 3 Just about the break of day,
just about the break of day,
just about the break of day,
give me Jesus. *Refrain*
- 4 Oh, when I come to die,
oh, when I come to die,
oh, when I come to die,
give me Jesus. *Refrain*
- 5 And when I want to sing,
and when I want to sing,
and when I want to sing,
give me Jesus. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual

God Be with You Till We Meet Again

- 1 God be with you till we meet again;
by good counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain

*Till we meet, (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet again,)
till we meet at Jesus' feet; (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet again.)
God be with you till we meet again.*

- 2 God be with you till we meet again;
holy wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again. *Refrain*
- 3 God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again. *Refrain*

Text: Jeremiah E. Rankin, 1828-1904, alt.