

St. John's Lutheran Church — Walhalla, SC
18th Sunday after Pentecost — October 4, 2020
Worship at Biggerstaff Retreat (also on Facebook) — 9:30 AM

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on the Isaiah 5 text for the day)*

Leader: I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard.

People: **My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.**

Leader: He cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower and cut out a winepress as well.

People: **He looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. We are the garden of his delight.**

Leader: He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

People: **God of the vineyard, restore us. Help us to sing a new song for you. Help us to live in harmony with one another in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen!**

GATHERING SONG - "I Love You Lord"

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Restoring God, you take away the sins of the world.

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Pastor: You are loving and merciful; hear our prayers of confession.

People: **Have mercy on us.**

Pastor: All of creation is crying out in distress.

People: **The garden has become a desert. Have mercy on us.**

Pastor: The vineyard has been left unattended.

People: **We have not been faithful in our stewardship of all creation. Have mercy on us.**

Pastor: Where there was once harmony; there is now discord.

People: **The beautiful melody of your intentions is now out of tune. The rhythms of grace have been silenced. Forgive us Lord. Restore us.**

THE DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, we were once dead in our sin but now we are alive in Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. You are the restored, reconciled, renewed living witnesses to the transforming love of God in Jesus Christ.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

OPENING HYMN — "God of Grace and God of Glory"

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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 . . . Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

People: **Amen.**

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Robert Miles

HYMN OF RESPONSE — "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

see next page

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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 — “Sanctuary/I Exalt Thee”

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With confidence in God’s grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, you call us to work for peace and justice in your vineyard. Refresh the church with your life, that we may bear fruit through work and service.

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

Thank you for the abundant harvest of the earth. Bless and care for those whose hands bring the fruits of the earth to the tables of all who hunger. May we be inspired by your servants who cared deeply for your creation.

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

Curb the impulses of greed and pride that lead us to take advantage of others. Grant that world leaders seek the fruits of the kingdom for the good and welfare of all people.

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

We pray for all managers in our community and for all who seek employment. Give hope and a future to those who lack meaningful work, those who have been marginalized or abused in the workplace, and those who desire new opportunities.

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

Holy God we pray for our new Bishop of the SC Synod, the Reverend Virginia Aebischer as she is installed today in this call. Sustain her as a shepherd who tends the flock of Christ with love and gentleness, and oversees the ministries of the church with vision and wisdom.

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

Sustain all who suffer and struggle with disease or addictions. Assured of your presence, heal our pain and suffering, and equip us to embrace all bodies aching for wholeness of mind, body, and soul. We call to mind those who are in need of your healing today, *especially...*

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

Thank you for the saints who teach us to live faithfully in your vineyard. May our chorus join theirs until our labor is complete.

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

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION / WORDS OF DISTRIBUTION

THE COMMUNION BLESSING

THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE BENEDICTION

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

SENDING SONG — “Thy Word”

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DISMISSAL P Go in peace. Christ goes with you. C **Thanks be to God.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

PSALM 80:7-15

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁸**You have brought a vine out of Egypt; you cast out the nations and planted it.**

⁹You cleared the ground for it; it took root and filled the land.

¹⁰**The mountains were covered by its shadow and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**

¹¹You stretched out its tendrils to the sea and its branches to the river.

¹²**Why have you broken down its wall, so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**

¹³The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it, and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.

¹⁴**Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven;**

¹⁵behold and tend this vine; preserve what your right hand has planted.

NEW TESTAMENT READING: **Philippians 3:4b-14**

[Paul writes:] ^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL READING: **Matthew 21:33-46**

[Jesus said to the people:] ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?”

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” ⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

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

Today we welcome the **Reverend Robert Miles** as our guest preacher and presider. Pastor Miles received his Masters of Divinity from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and this past June celebrated his 40th anniversary of ordination. Pastor Miles served Lutheran churches in South Carolina and retired in August 2019 having served St. Michael’s Lutheran in Greenville for 29 years. He was also Dean of the Foothills conference for many years and installed Pastor Rachel as Pastor of St. John’s in January 2018. Pastor Miles and his wife, Debbie, live in Clemson, SC.

SONGS FOR WORSHIP

I Love You, Lord

I love you, Lord
And I lift my voice
To worship You
Oh, my soul rejoice!

Take joy my King
In what You hear
Let it be a sweet,
sweet sound in Your ear. *Repeat*

God of Grace and God of Glory

- 1 God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.
- 2 Lo! The hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days,
- 3 Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
let us miss your kingdom's goal.
- 4 Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

Text: Harry E. Fosdick, 1878-1969

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

- 1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.
- 2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me;
lo, it glows with peace and joy.
- 3 When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.
- 4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872

Sanctuary / I Exalt Thee

Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary
Pure and Holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You.

I Exalt Thee, I Exalt Thee
I Exalt Thee, O Lord.
I Exalt Thee, I Exalt Thee
I Exalt Thee, O Lord.

Thy Word

Refrain

***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.***

When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way
still you're there right beside me,
and nothing will I fear
as long as you are near.
Please be near me to the end.

Refrain

I will not forget your love for me,
and yet my heart forever is wandering.
Jesus, be my guide and hold me to your side,
and I will love you to the end.

Refrain

Text: Psalm 119:105, Amy Grant. /Music: Michael Smith