

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

P. O. Box 267, 201 Veterans Dr., Columbus, TX 78934

PH# (979) 732-2423 Fax (979) 733-0489

E-mail: admin@splctx.org www.splctx.com **Pastor:** pastor.akethan@gmail.com

October 8, 2023 Contemporary 11:05 AM

Nineteenth Sunday of Pentecost

Senior Pastor	Alan Kethan	<u>Home:</u> (979)-942-9060	<u>Cell:</u> (830)-708-1200
Youth & Family Specialist			Stephanie Polasek
Congregational Chair			Donna Maas
St. Paul Christian Learning Academy Director			Briana Bedford
Secretary			Elena Holub
Custodian			Tomasa Rosales
Parish Nurse Program Coordinator			DyAnn Lauzon

MISSION STATEMENT: Love God, Love Neighbor (*Luke 10:27*)

VISION STATEMENT: We will work to strengthen and grow closer in relationship to God and to one another.

- *As we enter into a sacred time and space, a friendly reminder to please set your cell phone to vibrate.*
- ***We want to welcome all of our guests today and thank you for worshipping with us. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding our services, programs, day care, or preschool programs at St. Paul, please visit our Welcome Center in the narthex immediately following our service, and an attendant will be more than happy to assist you. If this is your first time at St. Paul, we hope you will take a gift along with you. We also have a gift bag for children.***
- Hearing Assist devices are available for those who need assistance in hearing worship service better. Please see a person in the Sound Room (Usher Room) to request the use of a device during worship.

* This symbol indicates that the congregation is invited to stand physically or in spirit.

INTRODUCTION

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.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIGNING OF ATTENDANCE PADS

(Ushers will be handing out Attendance Pads during the announcements. Please be sure to sign your name and contact information.)

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P God of faithfulness, we come to you in our faithlessness. We confess that we approach our lives and our world more in fear than in hope. At times, we grow weary with well-doing and despair of your promises. We allow disappointment to blind us and set-backs to embitter us. We become tired of the struggle for love, justice and peace, and we give up. We are in need of fresh energy and renewed hope, new beginnings and new ideas. What change are we able to effect by our words, our actions, our prayer? We need your grace to unsettle and redirect our hearts. We need your power to rekindle and sustain our passion for justice and peace. We need your love to reveal to us the ever-present possibility for change and conversion and growth. We believe your Spirit is at work in our world. Give us eyes of faith that we may discern the signs and wonders in our midst, and give us the courage to live in hope. O God, we believe; help our unbelief! Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silence for private confession.)

- P Hear, oh people of God, who loves you and walks with you. Through the power of the Holy Spirit come to know, experience and believe in the power of forgiveness in your life as you worship and walk in faith.
- C Amen.

GOSPEL SONG: COME YE SINNERS, POOR AND NEEDY

**Come ye sinners poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love, and pow'r.**

**CHORUS: I will arise and go to Jesus. He will embrace me in His arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior, oh, there are ten thousand charms.**

**Come ye thirsty come and welcome. God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance, every grace that brings you nigh.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

A The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 21, verses 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.

GOSPEL SONG: COME YE SINNERS, POOR AND NEEDY
Come ye weary heavy laden, lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry 'til you're better, you will never come at all.

CHORUS: *I will arise and go to Jesus. He will embrace me in His arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior, oh, there are ten thousand charms.*

View him prostrate in the garden. On the ground your Maker lies!
On the bloody tree behold him! Sinner, will this not suffice?

Lo the incarnate God ascended pleads the merit of His blood.
Venture on him, venture wholly. Let no other trust intrude.

LAST CHORUS: *I will arise and go to Jesus. He will embrace me in His arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior. . . in the arms of my dear Savior,
In the arms of my dear Savior. . . Oh, there are ten thousand charms!*

CCLI Song #3472266 Words: Public Domain. Music: ©2002 Word Music, LLC (a div. of Word Music Group, Inc.)
John Andrew Schreiner Music (Admin. by Lori Kelly Rights & Licenses) DeJamesolo Music (Admin. by Word Music Group, Inc.) CCLI License #1729377

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

* SERMON SONG: FOR THE CROSS

I will love You for the cross. And I will love You for the cost.
Man of Sufferings, bringer of my peace.
You came into a world of shame, and paid the price we could not pay.
Death that brought me life, blood that brought me home.
Death that brought me life, blood that brought me home.

CHORUS:

And I love You for the cross! I'm overwhelmed by the mystery.
I love You for the cost; that Jesus, You would do this for me.
When You were broken, You were beaten, You were punished... I go free.
When You were wounded and rejected, in Your mercy... I am healed.

Jesus Christ, the sinner's friend, does this kindness know no bounds?
With Your precious blood, You have purchased me.
Oh, the myst'ry of the cross! You were punished, You were crushed.
But that punishment has become my peace.

Yes, that punishment has become my peace. CHORUS TWICE

CCLI Song #2454845 Words and Music by Matt Redman and Beth Redman ©1998 Thankyou Music CCLI Lic #1729377

* APOSTLES' CREED

A With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C **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.

(The congregation may be seated during the prayers.)

PRAYERS

A Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A God of all creation, you plant and nourish the earth as your own precious vineyard. Bless fields and orchards and the hands of those who labor in them, that your people are fed with an abundant harvest of good fruit.

A brief silence.

A God of all steadfastness, you set Christ as the cornerstone and foundation of the church. Build up this congregation as living stones, that it stands in the community as a witness to your enduring faithfulness and love.

A brief silence.

A We pray for peace in all the world, especially in war-torn areas of Ukraine, Sudan and Niger. Bring an end to wars and the destruction of lives and your creation.

A brief silence.

A We pray for the family and friends of Julian Flores III who passed away recently. Be with them and comfort them during this difficult time.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those in need of healing and whose needs are diverse and known to you including:
Clara Thraen; Sharon Johnson; those on our Prayer Team's list; and those we name in our hearts before you.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those battling cancer that they may know comfort and strength. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*
Zachary Schulke; Herbie Kollatschny; Darrell Pagel; Sylvia McLelland Teykl; Tom Russell, Jr.; Melda Coleman; Al Gene Canik; Larry Bookout; Mike Wostarek; Elizabeth Frisby; Virginia Fritsch; Kristina Acevedo; George Krenek; Anne Dimas; Carl Geisler; Laura Walla; Dorothy Wicke; Randy Wendt; Heather Deviney; Lydia Rojas; Paul Casinger; Dr. Tom Hancher; Leonard Kahlden; and Bob Loy.

A We pray for all expectant mothers and especially for:
Cassidy Zajicek Parks; Courtney Busselman; Nancy Gorman; Camille Stancik; Kyndall Beettner; and Jamee Albert that they have healthy terms and deliveries, and if not, may they find comfort and peace.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all those who reside in care facilities and the homebound and especially for:
Joey Denby; Edwin Oevermann; Paul Minar, Sr.; Adrian Fritsch; Coy Dell Schindler; Madeline Menke; Doris Horndt; Helen Perrard; Jane Booker; Pat Brasher; Dolores Hoelscher; Jesse Grabow; Joyce Dehmer; Donna Dehmer; Cherie Moore; Lauren Lamb; and Lydia Rojas that they receive your caring and compassion.

A brief silence.

A We pray for all law enforcement officers, fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, and active duty military personnel that they are protected and kept safe. *(Pause for those we are praying for.)*

Law Enforcement Officers: Charles Jobb; Joseph Smith; Todd Jacobs; Troy Neisner; Jacob Gorman; Nancy Gorman; Johnny Kovar; Abbigail Weido; Dustin Lattimore; Zane Weido; Josh Jones; as well as Donnie Templeton and Jason Templeton who are also fire fighters. For all fire fighters, first responders, healthcare workers and 9-1-1 dispatchers, especially Brent Gorman, Sr.; Brent Gorman, Jr.; Reid Brasher; Dusty Dittmar; John Maertz; Ron Luedke; Pastor Alan Kethan; Kristi Weyand; Eric Weyand; Bradley Berger; Jon Berger; James Chollett; Edward Thraen, Jr.; Kyle Burris; Dylan Walcik; Travis Neuendorff; Nathan Bookout; Brenda Henkes; Jan Willette; and Terri Neunendorff, as well as those active duty military members including Kyle Appelt; Montana Appelt; Douglas Neuendorff; Scott Cherniss; Kameron Page; Dalton Kapel; Kevin Gonzalez; and Evelyn Rojas.

A We pray for the church throughout the world. May we all proclaim the good news of your love effectively. We ask, especially, that you would bless the ministry of our sister congregations Cristo Rey and their Pastor Armando Capcha and Iglesia Cristiana Camino de Santidad and their leaders Pastors Gumer and Naomi Anton in Peru, all Missionaries, especially St. Paul's supported missionary, Dina Anton de Espinoza, and our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic.

A brief silence.

A Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C Amen.

*** PEACE**

P As Jesus shared peace, let us also share His peace with one another. *(Share the "Peace of the Lord" with your neighbors.)*

(We will be collecting offerings before and after worship each week. This includes Power of One dollars.)

OFFERING and POWER OF ONE

"Power of One" is a ministry sponsored by your Stewardship Team. We are asking each and every one of our members to give \$1.00 above what your normal giving would be. We are asking each member to place this \$1.00 bill or change in the offering plate each week. The team is also inviting all children to participate to develop the habit of giving as part of their worship experience. Parents, a penny, nickel, dime, quarter, or dollar bill, any of these will do to help your children develop a habit of giving. These "Power of One" dollars will be used to support local ministries and ministries abroad. The purpose of this ministry is to demonstrate that something as small as one dollar can be used to make a difference in the lives of others.

* **OFFERING PRAYER**

P God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C Amen.

* **REMEMBERING JESUS' WORDS, PROMISES, AND COMMANDS**

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to sing.

**C Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

* **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P Jesus invites you to this table. Come and receive the fruits of the kingdom.

C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION (Continuous with Individual Cups)

{Distribution will be continuous. All are welcome for communion. Please come down the center aisle starting from the front. Follow directions of the ushers, coming up one side at a time. Pastor will hand you the bread. If you wish to have a gluten-free wafer, please tell Pastor "Gluten-free, please." Afterward, you will choose either wine or white grape juice from the individual cups in the tray – white grape juice in the center with wine surrounding. Place the empty cups in the baskets located off to the side. Although communion is continuous, you are welcome to kneel at the rail in prayer after receiving communion. Please return to your seat by the side aisles.}

* **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

C Amen.

* **BLESSING**

P The God of glory, ☩ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

* **CLOSING SONG: HOLDING NOTHING BACK**

**I am chosen, I am free. I am living for eternity. Free now, forever.
You pick me up, turn me around. You set my feet on solid ground.
Yours, now, forever.**

PRE-CHORUS:

**And nothin's gonna hold me back.
Nothin's gonna hold me back.
Nothin's gonna hold me back...**

CHORUS:

**My chains fell off, my heart was free!
I'm alive to live for You! I'm alive to live for You!
Amazing love, how can it be?
You gave everything for me. You gave everything for me – everything.**

You've washed my sin, and shame away.

The slate is clean, a brand new day. Free now, forever.

Now boldly I approach Your throne,

To claim this crown through Christ my own. Yours now, forever.

(SING PRE-CHORUS and CHORUS again)

BRIDGE:

**And I'm free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You.
Free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You.
Free to live, free to give. Free to be, I'm free to love You. Lord....**

CHORUS

CCLI Song #4879277 Words and Music by Tim Hughes and Martin Smith
©2007 Thankyou Music | Curious? Music UK CCLI Lic #1729377

* **DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Love God, love neighbor.

C Thanks be to God, and we will.

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS006327.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress.

Used by permission.

USHERS: Kevin & Wendy Page; Ryan Thomas

LAY READER: Heather Thomas

STREAMING: Kay Wesson

SOUND: Sydney Eaton and Todd Jacobs

ALTAR GUILD: Edna Bergfeld and Ashlyn Pugh

ACOLYTE: Hudson Muir

POWER POINT: Dinah Jacobs

WELCOME: Welcome to worship in the name of God, the maker of all; Jesus, the Savior; and the Holy Spirit, divine guide of our lives. Amen.

ALTAR WALL FLOWERS are placed by Doris Horndt and family in thanks for God's many blessings.

ADDITIONAL FLOWERS are placed by Harvey & Shirley Frers in celebration of their 20th wedding anniversary on October 4.

We extend our Christian sympathy to Arthur Flores and family for the loss of his brother Julian Flores III who passed away recently. May God comfort them during their time of loss.

Thank you for all the power point pictures! A big thank you to all of you who shared your amazing pictures for use on the 11:05 AM service PowerPoint. I have used several and am in the process of moving all songs to these pictures. If you would still like to send pictures, please do. Send to peggeisler@gmail.com. *Just a note:* Horizontal pictures work better as they fit the slide format. – *Peggy Geisler*

COLLECTION OF OFFERING: Offering for the worship services is collected before and after worship. Offering bowls are placed in the back entrance and inside the side sanctuary door for you to place your offering in. This includes "Power of One" dollars.

Amount needed for average weekly budgeted expenses: \$8,405.00

Attendance: Sept. 30 & Oct. 1, 2023 – 182 **Contributions:** Sept. 30 & Oct. 1 – \$7,450.51
Power of One: Sept. 30 & Oct. 1, 2023 – \$39.00 **Building Fund:** Sept. 30 & Oct. 1 – \$548.23

Thank you to those who contributed to last week's offerings. Loving God/Loving Neighbor.

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Sept. 27 – **88 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 70 **Support Staff:** 18

Wednesday Night Attendance: – Wed., Oct. 4 – **95 Total**
BLAST/Confirmation: 76 **Support Staff:** 19

ATTENTION: Names on the prayer list in the bulletin will be printed for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, the names will be removed from the bulletin unless the church office has been notified to keep them.

► **Children's Activity Bags** are available for use by our young members and guests! You can find them on the coat hooks in the coat area of the narthex. After worship, **please place the used activity bags and their contents in the receptacle in the narthex.**
Thank you! ☺

♥♥ Our next **Marriage Course** will be every Sunday, **September 17-October 29, 2023**. On these Sunday nights from **6:00-8:00 PM** in the Lighthouse this seven-week course will take place. We realize that strong marriages make strong families, and strong families make strong communities. The Marriage Course is relevant for any couple wanting to invest in their relationship and make it stronger. Whether you have been married four months, 40 years or cohabitating and not married; you feel your marriage is fine, good, great, struggling or stuck; this course is for you. The course is more like a date night. There will be dinner and dessert mixed in with video presentations and discussion questions for you and your partner. You will not be asked to share anything about your relationship with anyone but your partner. **Cost is \$150** – this includes meals, workbooks and video materials. If you need childcare, the cost is an additional \$35 for the seven weeks. This course is limited to 11 couples. Sign up in the office or call Elena Monday-Friday during business hours to get your name on the list. When you sign up, please indicate if you will need childcare.



GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS: St. Paul will once again participate in the annual God's Work Our Hands day! This year we will work this event **Sunday, October 22, 2023**. The time will be **12:15-3:00 PM**. This is an opportunity for all ages to work together to bring about positive changes in our community. Please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the narthex (foyer). T-shirts are \$10 if you would like one. The deadline to order T-shirts is Wednesday, October 11, 2023.

Peru Team: Our next Peru Team meeting is **Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 6:30 PM** in the church library. *Please bring fundraising ideas.* We will be discussing our 2024 plans to visit our sister congregations in Peru. Hope to see you there!
Please contact Terri Brasher at 979-732-1127 if you have any questions.

★ **You're Invited to the Stop Bullying Art Contest Awards Ceremony & Reception** sponsored by The Health & Behavioral Wellness Council of Greater Colorado Valley! It will be **Thursday, October 12, 2023 from 6:00-7:30 PM at the Live Oak Art Center** in downtown Columbus. Wine, hordeuvre's and dessert will be served. Already on display in the Upper Gallery are over 300 art creations from children in Colorado County Schools (K-12). These insightful creations are thought provoking and reflect views of our children on what a bully looks like, how bullying makes you feel and to Stand Up, Speak Out! Hope to see you there! ★



COLUMBUS FOOD PANTRY: It is time for our church to help at the Columbus Food Pantry! The dates are **October 19 & 20, 2023**. The Food Pantry is located at the First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 419 Washington Street. On **Thursday, October 19** the food delivery truck will arrive and grocery bags will be prepared; **please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help. **On Friday, October 20 the food will be distributed 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. Please arrive at 8:30 AM** to help with the food distribution. Please mark your

calendars to help with this important community service! If you have any questions, please call Kathy Fleming at 979-732-4930 or Tom Fleming at 979-732-4107.

♪♪ **SENIOR EXPLORERS:** Senior Explorers are heading to La Grange to “Czech” out the **Czech Heritage Fest and Muziky**. We will **depart St. Paul at 3:30 PM on Friday, October 20, 2023**. We will have time to browse in the Heritage Center before heading out to the main deck for the beginning of the festival. Chicken and dumplings will be served at 5:30 PM with Dujka Brothers playing at 6:00 PM. We plan to return to St. Paul by 7:00 PM – just in time for the Columbus football game. Lawn chairs are welcome, but no coolers. Please sign up by Sunday, October 15, 2023 in the narthex. For more information, please contact Kevin Page at 979-732-0845.

♥ **Grief Support Group:** The Grief Support Group is for anyone who has lost a loved one, either recently or a few years ago. We share and support each other. Come join us and get support from others walking this journey. We meet at **5:30 PM** in the youth room (formerly the choir room) the **third Thursday of the month**. Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 19, 2023. **NOTE:** You do not have to share or talk until you are ready! If you have questions, please contact Peggy Geisler at 979-732-0350.

♪♪♪ St. Paul will be celebrating Reformation during Reformation Weekend with *regular holy communion worship on Saturday, October 28, 2022 at 7:00 PM* and an **“Oktoberfest” on Sunday, October 29, 2023 at 10:00 AM**. Be sure to wear red for Reformation at each service! On **Sunday** for the “Oktoberfest”, participate in singing hymns to the tunes of Polkas. Guest musicians will be joining us again this year to add that “something extra” to the service. Following the service on Sunday, join the youth in the parking lot for Trunk-or-Treat, either as a youth collecting the treats or as the one with the trunk of treats. There will be a German-style lunch including sausage and sauerkraut in The Lighthouse for all to enjoy after worship and all of the trunk-or-treating! The main course will be provided, and everyone is asked to bring either a side dish or dessert to accompany the main course. **Please sign the sign-up sheet in the narthex if you plan to attend the meal and indicate what you will bring (side dish and/or dessert).** Come join us! It will be wunderbar!!

SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK:

Today (Oct. 8) – 6:00-8:00 PM – The Gathering
6:00-8:00 PM – Marriage Course (Lighthouse)
Mon., Oct. 9 – **Office Closed! (Columbus Day)**
Tues., Oct. 10 – 9:00 AM – Staff Meeting
9:00 AM-12:00 PM – Quilters (Lighthouse)
10:30 AM – Pastor Alan to TLC
12:00 PM – Noon Bible Study (library)
5:30 PM – Stewardship Team (library)

Wed., Oct. 11 – 8:30 AM-12:00 PM – Garden Club (Lighthouse)
9:00 AM – CLA Chapel
10:00 AM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to Columbus Oaks
2:00 PM – Nursing Home Team & Pastor Alan to The Oaks
5:00 PM – Meal
5:30 PM – BLAST, Confirmation and HS Youth
Thurs., Oct. 12 – 10:00-11:30 AM – Manna for Moms (Lighthouse)
5:00 PM – Worship Team (library)
6:30 PM – Peru Team Meeting (library)
Fri., Oct. 13 – 10:30 AM – Adult Bible Study (library)
Sat., Oct. 14 – 7:00 PM – Holy Communion Worship
Next Sun., Oct. 15 – 9:00 AM – Holy Communion Worship
10:00 AM – Adult Sunday School and Confirmation
11:05 AM – Holy Communion Contemporary Worship
6:00-8:00 PM – Marriage Course (Lighthouse)

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 **Massie L. Kennard, renewer of the church, died 1996 (TFF)**
A native of Chicago, Kennard was a major figure in supporting and working toward ethnic and racial inclusiveness in the former Lutheran Church in America. Ordained in 1958, he served in positions including Director for Minority Concerns of the Division for Mission in North America. From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS006327.

OTHER READINGS: Isaiah 5:1-7

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth “wild grapes” of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

The reading begins:

¹Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. ²He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. ³And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? ⁵And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

PSALM: Psalm 80:7-15

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. ⁸You 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. ¹⁰The 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. ¹²Why 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. ¹⁴Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven; ¹⁵behold and tend this vine; preserve what your right hand has planted.

OTHER READINGS: Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.

The reading begins:

[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.

SERVICE OVERVIEW: JESUS, CORNERSTONE OF OUR FAITH

God has showered humanity with gifts and blessings, but humanity continues to abuse those gifts. We pollute the earth and abuse the gift of our bodies. We have been given the ability to create and share so many wonderful things for the good of our world, yet we gather and keep as much as we can for ourselves.

This is nothing new. Even in the days of Isaiah it was clear the people turned away from God's gifts. God expected righteousness and justice. Instead the people responded with bloodshed and suffering, turning away from God. Even if you can think of all the ways you have not turned from God and all the ways you have been faithful, it does no good. As Paul reminds us, whatever gains we have, we regard as loss because of Christ. For Paul, and for us, all that matters is Jesus.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION:

Today's parable is about a vineyard, but the story is really about the call to accept and honor Christ as master. Divine judgment is balanced by Paul's emphasis on divine mercy. Christ, the Son of God, is the cornerstone who secures our lives. Welcome to worship! Come to the vineyard. Drink the wine of holy communion.

Self-image is important. Often we worry what others may think of us. Consciously or unconsciously, we all like to be perceived as good, kind, and warmhearted. It is not always easy to guess what a person is like, even if you have mutual friends or share common interests. Their goals may not be the same as yours. For example, not everyone who followed Jesus around was of the same mind. While some yearned to hear more of his teaching and preaching and wanted to be healed, the religious leaders felt their power over people was slipping away because of Jesus. They were upset. Jesus had just told them that tax collectors and prostitutes would enter the kingdom of God ahead of them! This made them angry because they thought themselves to be the only "righteous" and "chosen" people of God. How could Jesus deny them their right to privilege?

The parable hits where it hurts from many perspectives. First, the plan of God to send the Son to the world. Next, what happens when power-hungry human beings imagine they can thwart God's plan. God is still the owner of the vineyard, and of the whole creation. No one can claim privilege, priority, or power over God. The parable explains how Jesus responds to the question of use of authority and power (think about last week's parable about the two sons and the authority by which Jesus works) by showing that it has everything to do with enhancing the quality of life for all.

Even with its stark and violent imagery, today's story about stewardship. Stewardship is essentially about relationship. How might we view God's deep care for us as a way to approach how we care for what God has entrusted to us?

As Christ himself reminds us, he is our rock, our cornerstone. Jesus is the foundation for our faith and the foundation for our lives. Even as we turn from Jesus, even as we reject Jesus, he returns to us with love and forgiveness. This is the grace of God, the love of God coming into our world and into our lives. To our joy we discover the open arms of Jesus on the cross, bringing life into this world even where there is death; bringing hope where there is despair; and bringing resurrection to all creation.

KID STUDY:

Today, the owner of a vineyard sends messengers to the people who work the land, and the people behave badly! They destroy the messengers instead of listening to them. The owner of the vineyard in this story is God. God sends us messengers who share words about God's kingdom and teach us how to build our lives around our faith. Which people in your life have been messengers to you, telling you about God's kingdom? You can also be a messenger. When you are Jesus's hands and feet and serve other people like your friends, family, and community, you are bringing God's kingdom to other people who not only need to hear about it but need to

see it at work in their lives. When you serve others, you are being a good steward of your vineyard!

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

The vineyard should not be too hastily or too completely identified with the church. Matthew identifies it with the Kingdom of God. It would well be viewed as the world, or at least as God's method of dealing with everyone. Moreover, it is the tenants, not the vineyard, who stand at the center of the parable. If these tenants represented the faithless leaders of Israel, then the new tenants represent the leaders of the church. The threat under which the former renters stood remains doubly valid for the new renters. In other words, the allegory becomes a two-edged sword, with a message for every generation of tenants. - Paul S. Minear [Paul S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 44.]

+++++

Next Week's Theme (Oct. 14 & 15): Both Bad and Good are invited to the Marriage Feast

Next Week's Scriptures (Oct. 14 & 15):

First Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

"The feast of victory."

Psalm: Psalm 23

"You prepare a table before me, and my cup is running over." (Ps. 23:5)

Second Reading: Philippians 4:1-9

"Rejoice in the Lord always."

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

"The parable of the unwelcome guest at the wedding feast."