

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 20, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.



*This Sunday, Jesus tells a controversial parable in which 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. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars. We'll also hear a **presentation from this summer's Appalachia Service Project "laborers"** who gladly gave of themselves because of God's grace!*

Pastor Christian McMullan
Daniel S. Bower, Music Director
Craig Miller, Director of Youth and Family Ministries

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WELCOME

Please stand

GREETING

P: The boundless grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

OPENING HYMN

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant ELW 659



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.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

C: Amen.

P: Confident that God restores us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

**C: we confess that we struggle to live out your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Nature groans from our overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Apathy keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions stop us from showing genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to you and one another.

Renew us to live as your holy people,

following the way of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

P: Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ☩ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

**C: 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.**

Please be seated

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FIRST READING

Jonah 3:10—4:11

A: A reading from the Book of Jonah, the third and fourth chapters.

¹⁰ When 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. ² 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 and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵ 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.

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

⁸ 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."

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

¹¹ 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?"

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Psalm 145:1-8

A: A reading from Psalm 145.

A: ¹ I will exalt you, my God and king,
and bless your name forever and ever.

C: ² Every day will I bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.

A: ³ Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!
There is no end to your greatness.

C: ⁴ One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.

A: ⁵ I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.

C: ⁶ They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will recount your greatness.

A: ⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.

C: ⁸ The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Please stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah ELW 172

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal -
- le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le -
lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

GOSPEL

Matthew 20:1-16

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twentieth chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[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. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ 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?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ 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.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² 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.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated

MESSAGE AND ASP PRESENTATION

HYMN

Take My Life, That I May Be ELW 583



- 1 Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
- 2 Take my hands and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;
- 3 Take my voice and let me sing al - ways, on - ly, for my King;
- 4 Take my sil - ver and my gold, not a mite would I with - hold;



take my mo - ments and my days; let them flow in cease - less praise.
take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
take my lips and let them be filled with mes - sag - es from thee.
take my in - tel - lect, and use ev - 'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

THE PRAYERS

P: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

P: ...Hear us, O God.

C: hear our prayer.

P: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please be seated

THE OFFERING

Please stand

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

In gratitude to God we give out of the abundance that God has given us.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: God of creation,
you send rain and the earth is abundantly fruitful.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
in service to you and in love to our neighbors,
today and always.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

P: Holy God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,
In the harmonious world of your creation the plants and animals
The seas and stars were whole and well in your praise.
When sin had scarred the world,
You sent your Son to call us to yourself,
to heal our ills, and to form us again into one.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life given for us and his rising from the grave,
We await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.
By your Holy Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:
Strengthen us to serve all who are hungry and in need,
And by this bread and cup form us into the body of your Son.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty God, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy church,
both now and forever.
C: Amen.

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

C: 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.

Please be seated

COMMUNION

This is God's table so all are welcome to join the feast.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.

P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Sustaining God,
with this bread and cup,
you nourish us with mercy and forgiving love.
By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.
Make us living signs of your freedom, healing, and love,
following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

C: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand

BLESSING

P: The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace
✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Rise Up, O Saints of God! ELW 669



- 1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;
- 2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulf's earth's frame;
- 3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;
- 4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;
- 5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;



Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se - quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.
stretch forth your hand of heal - ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

DISMISSAL

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: Thanks be to God.

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