

19th Sunday After Pentecost
Adaptive Worship Service

October 3, 2021



1812 North Highland Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Welcome! Today's gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus' saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God's law. Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING SONG

All Are Welcome

Verses 1 & 2

1 Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly
live, a place where saints and chil - dren tell how
hearts learn to for - give. Built of hopes and dreams and
vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of
Refrain
Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,
all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen
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2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Let us pray. Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Genesis 2:18-24

Introduction to the Lesson: *Genesis 2 stresses that people are not meant to live in isolation but in relationship. Out of love for humanity, God creates them male and female, to provide companionship for each other and to become with each other "one flesh." The Hebrew words used here are ish (man) and ishshah (woman).*

Reader: 18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him." 19 So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. 20 So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

21 Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. 22 He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. 23 Then the man said,

"At last, here is one of my own kind—

Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh.

'Woman' is her name because she was taken out of man." 24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 10:2-16

Introduction to the Gospel: *Jesus announced and enacted in history the new reality of God's surprising activity. These two stories demonstrate this new reality: Women and children are accepted and valued, not dismissed as inferior to adult men.*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Mark in the 10th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

2 Some Pharisees came to him [Jesus] and tried to trap him. "Tell us," they asked, "does our Law allow a man to divorce his wife?"

3 Jesus answered with a question, "What law did Moses give you?"

4 Their answer was, "Moses gave permission for a man to write a divorce notice and send his wife away."

5 Jesus said to them, "Moses wrote this law for you because you are so hard to teach. 6 But in the beginning, at the time of creation, 'God made them male and female,' as the scripture says. 7 'And for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife,[a] 8 and the two will become one.' So they are no longer two, but one. 9 No human being must separate, then, what God has joined together."

10 When they went back into the house, the disciples asked Jesus about this matter. 11 He said to them, "A man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against his wife. 12 In the same way, a woman who divorces her husband and marries another man commits adultery."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

13 Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. 14 When Jesus noticed this, he was angry and said to his disciples, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." 16 Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them, and blessed them.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Softening Hearts

At first, the two episodes in today's gospel may seem disjointed: a challenging, even unsettling passage about divorce is followed by a much-loved image of Jesus telling his disciples to let little children come to him. Yet in both passages, Jesus puts rules and conventions aside to challenge his followers' hearts to greater openness and vulnerability.

When legal experts attempt to reduce the challenges of divorce to legal minutiae, Jesus reframes their questions in the context of our created need for human relationship. In a broken world, opening our hearts to others can bring some of our deepest pain, but if we don't take that risk, we can lose out on the human love and companionship for which God created us. These verses should never be used to judge those who have gone through the heartache of divorce, but rather as a caution for all of us against letting the pain of relationships harden our hearts to the care we were created to both give and receive.

Similarly, in the second passage, Jesus praises the openness of children's hearts to God's kingdom when the disciples attempt to shoo them away. As adults, we have accumulated a lot of knowledge about how the world works. Yet this confidence in what we know can also harden our hearts against perceiving a God who moves in mysterious ways and challenges our fixed ideas of how things are. Once again, Jesus calls us to risk our hearts with humility and openness to being taught the ways of God's kingdom by those we thought needed us to teach them.

Through the rhythms of worship and the cadence of liturgy, in the vibrations of music and the gifts of bread and wine, we invite one another to relax our hearts, drop our defenses, and leave behind what we thought we knew. Here, the Spirit of God comes to open our hearts, to heal our pain, and to draw us ever more deeply into relationship with God and one another.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

vs. 1-3



- 1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris-tian love;
- 2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
- 3 We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
- 4 From sor - row, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;



the u - ni - ty of heart and mind is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
and per - fect love and friend - ship reign through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740–1817, alt.
Music: DENNIS, Johann G. Nägeli, 1773–1836, adapt.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

Prayer Leader: Holy One, you have raised up faithful leaders throughout history. Empower those discerning a call to ministry and all seminarians (*especially Jennifer Grumbling of St. Mark Lutheran Church in Dunedin and Teresa Stewart of St. Paul's and St. Matthias Lutheran Churches in Clearwater*), that they continue to be formed for the sake of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You desire for us not to be alone and to live in community with one another. Strengthen relationships between nations and peoples, that we celebrate and support one human family. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You share in our experiences and struggles. Bless all who live with any mental or physical disability. Inspire creative communities, spaces, and environments that are accessible and hospitable. Bless all who are ill or in any other kind of need, *especially* those on the prayer list of Grace Lutheran Church, those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters, and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts. Provide them with peace and resilience for the days ahead. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

Prayers are requested for: Dale Willman, Jennifer Martinez, Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne Willan, Rosemarie & George Smith, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard,

Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Rose Marie Piff, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Jason Meadows, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Skylar Favos, April and David, Julianna, Riley, Carolyn & Drew, Kathy, Susie, and Terin, Jennifer Martinez, Diane Striley, Patricia Eunis, and all those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters (including all those impacted by COVID-19 & this hurricane season).

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

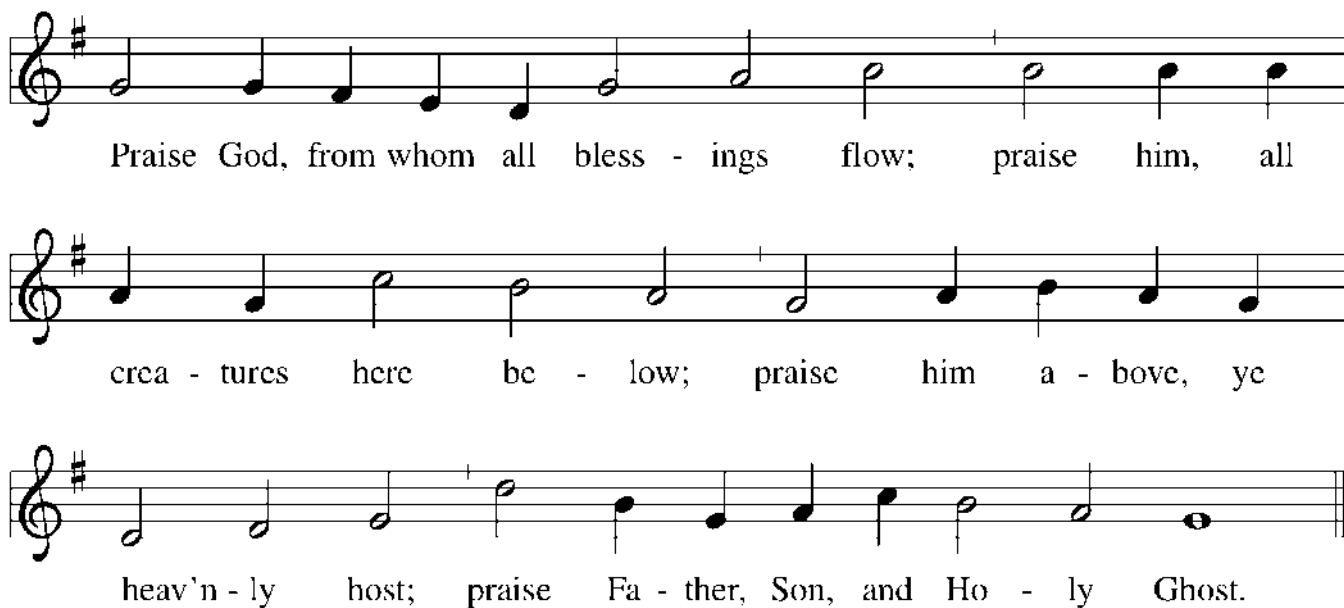
BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

The Doxology



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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