

*16th Sunday After Pentecost*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*  
*September 20, 2020*



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Welcome! 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.

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](http://GraceCLW.com)

## ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

### 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: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### FIRST READING

#### Jonah 3:10--4:11

Introduction to the Lesson: *After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?*

Reader: 10 God saw what they did; he saw that they had given up their wicked behavior. So he changed his mind and did not punish them as he had said he would. 4:1 Jonah was very unhappy about this and became angry. 2 So he prayed, "Lord, didn't I say before I left home that this is just what you would do? That's why I did my best to run away to Spain! I knew that you are a loving and merciful God, always patient, always kind, and always ready to change your mind and not punish. 3 Now then, Lord, let me die. I am better off dead than alive."

4 The Lord answered, "What right do you have to be angry?"

5 Jonah went out east of the city and sat down. He made a shelter for himself and sat in its shade, waiting to see what would happen to Nineveh. 6 Then the Lord God made a plant grow up over Jonah to give him some shade, so that he would be more comfortable. Jonah was extremely pleased with the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day, at God's command, a worm attacked the plant, and it died. 8 After the sun had risen, God sent a hot east wind, and Jonah was about to faint from the heat of the sun beating down on his head. So he wished he were dead.[a] "I am better off dead than alive," he said. 9 But God said to him, "What right do you have to be angry about the plant?" Jonah replied, "I have every right to be angry—angry enough to die!" 10 The Lord said to him, "This plant grew up in one night and disappeared the next; you didn't do anything for it and you didn't make it grow—yet you feel sorry for it! 11 How much more, then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals!"

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

### **Matthew 20:1-16**

Introduction to the Gospel: *When Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 20th chapter.

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

Worship Leader: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a man who went out early in the morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard. 2 He agreed to pay them the regular wage, a silver coin a day, and sent them to work in his vineyard. 3 He went out again to the marketplace at nine o'clock and saw some men standing there doing nothing, 4 so he told them, 'You also go and work in the vineyard, and I will pay you a fair wage.' 5 So they went. Then at twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock he did the same thing. 6 It was nearly five o'clock when he went to the marketplace and saw some other men still standing there. 'Why are you wasting the whole day here doing nothing?' he asked them. 7 'No one hired us,' they answered. 'Well, then, you go and work in the vineyard,' he told them.

8 "When evening came, the owner told his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with those who were hired last and ending with those who were hired first.' 9 The men who had begun to work at five o'clock were paid a silver coin each. 10 So when the men who were the first to be hired came to be paid, they thought they would get more; but they too were given a silver coin each. 11 They took their

money and started grumbling against the employer. 12 ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘while we put up with a whole day's work in the hot sun—yet you paid them the same as you paid us!’ 13 ‘Listen, friend,’ the owner answered one of them, ‘I have not cheated you. After all, you agreed to do a day's work for one silver coin. 14 Now take your pay and go home. I want to give this man who was hired last as much as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do as I wish with my own money? Or are you jealous because I am generous?’”

16 And Jesus concluded, “So those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last.”

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

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

**GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **Leftovers**

The last laborers to join the vineyard had spent their day being picked over. They were the hiring process leftovers. Like the last kids remaining in a gym class team selection, these laborers were for one reason or another deemed less valuable workers by the other landowners. Perhaps they were less physically capable than others. Maybe their strengths were not easily visible. Not being hired for work that day, they were standing around with no purpose or potential for growth.

But we have a generous landowner who does not overlook anyone. This landowner spends his entire day scouring the market for those who have been left behind and securing a place for them in his vineyard. He gives them value and meaning. Jesus will not rest until every lost and idle bystander has a place in the kingdom of heaven.

This radical generosity scandalizes the system that rewards people based on their merits and outputs. But Jesus rewards people of all abilities and work ethics equally. In God's commonwealth, the leftover workers have as much value as those chosen first.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver was keenly aware of how people with intellectual disabilities were defined by what they couldn't do. She wanted to provide opportunities for them to develop physical fitness, display courage, and find joy on the playing field. Her vision grew into the Special Olympics movement. This inclusive and expansive glimpse into the kingdom of heaven celebrates the athletic achievements of those who are often excluded from the vineyard.

In worship, we practice leaning into Jesus' vision as we gather around the table. Regardless of our status or position, we are all on equal footing at Christ's meal. We are given the same portions of bread. We drink from the same cup. It does not matter if we arrived late or early, young or old, grateful or ungrateful. Jesus has invited each of us here. We have not been overlooked. We have been given our work for this day.

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY

### *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*

vs. 1 & 2



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: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: 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,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: 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,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. Grant life, health, and courage to all who are in need (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, 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, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez & family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including COVID-19, Hurricane Laura, and California wildfires], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 190,000+ people in the US & the 893,000+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19, including the family and friends of Larry Sekel). 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.**

### **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://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.**

### **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.**

## 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.**

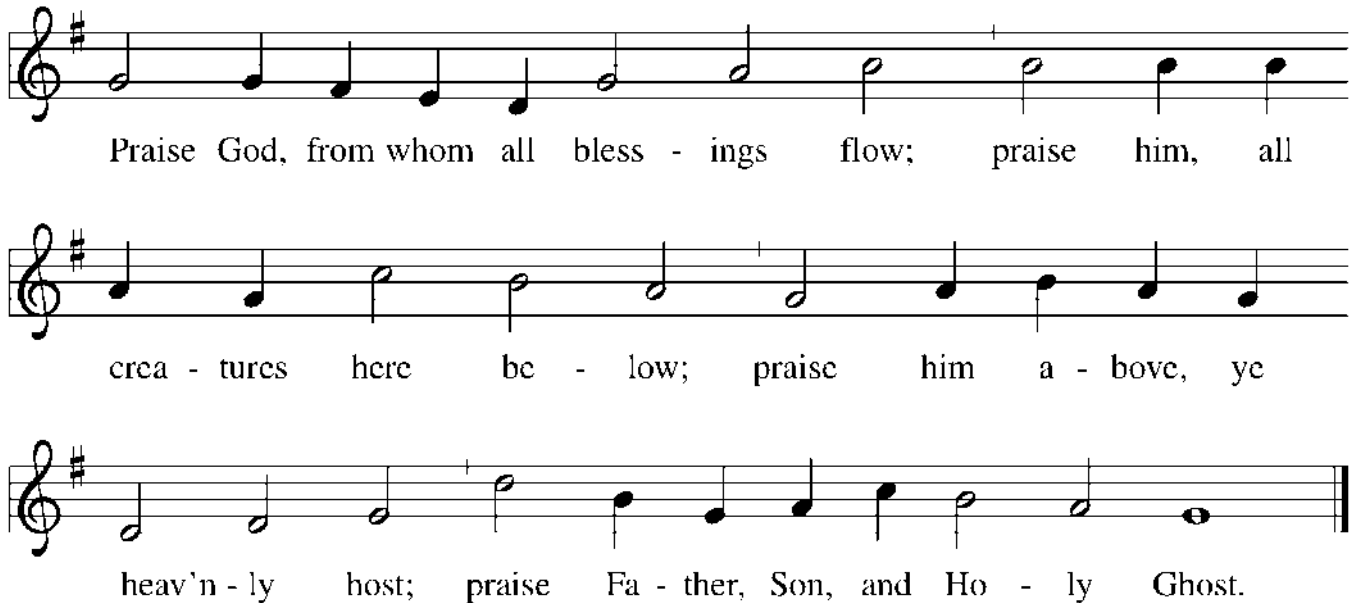
## BLESSING

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

### *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. Christ is with you.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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