

15th Sunday After Pentecost

September 18, 2022

Online Bulletin for the Mark 2:4 Adaptive Worship Service



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026

office@GraceCLW.com

Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2022 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #27824. Scriptures and additional materials quoted are from the Good News Bible © 1994 published by the Bible Societies/HarperCollins Publishers Ltd UK, Good News Bible© American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992. Used with permission. Hymns used with permission under ONE LICENSE

#738836-A. All rights reserved.

Welcome! As we are invited today to consider what it means to be managers (rather than owners) of all that we have, it is crucial to recognize that we are bought with a price. “Christ Jesus, himself human, . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” Apart from the generosity of God we have nothing—we are nothing. By God’s gracious favor we have everything we need.

There are a few things to know about this service: you are not required to stand at any point though you can move around anytime you want or need, prayer slips are available for your prayers to be included in Prayer Time, and Holy Communion is served with gluten-free bread and grape juice.

GATHERING SONG

All Are Welcome

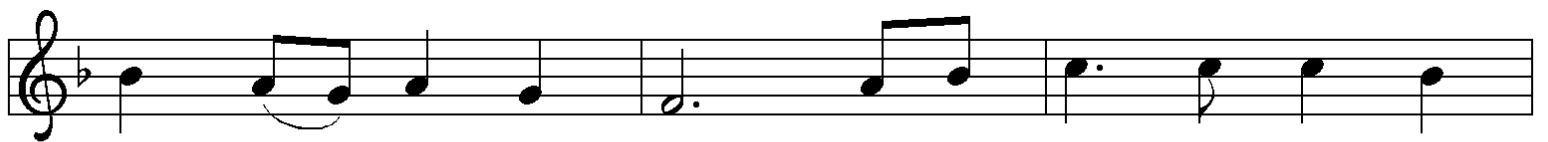
Verses 1 & 4



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



Christ shall end di - vi - sions: All are wel - come,



all are wel - come, all are wel - come in this place.

4 Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: TWO OAKS, Marty Haugen

Text and music © 1994 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

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. God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Amos 8:4-7

Introduction to the Lesson: Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.

Reader: 4 Listen to this, you that trample on the needy and try to destroy the poor of the country. 5 You say to yourselves, “We can hardly wait for the holy days to be over so that we can sell our grain. When will the Sabbath end, so that we can start selling again? Then we can overcharge, use false measures, and fix the scales to cheat our customers. 6 We can sell worthless wheat at a high price. We'll find someone poor who can't pay his debts, not even the price of a pair of sandals, and we'll buy him as a slave.” 7 The Lord, the God of Israel, has sworn, “I will never forget their evil deeds.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Luke 16:1-13

Introduction to the Lesson: *Jesus tells the curious story of a dishonest manager who cheats his employer and then is commended by him for having acted so shrewdly. Jesus wonders why his own followers are less creative and diligent in their stewardship given that they are managers of a far more valuable household.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Luke in the 16th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: Jesus said to his disciples, “There was once a rich man who had a servant who managed his property. The rich man was told that the manager was wasting his master's money, 2 so he called him in and said, ‘What is this I hear about you? Turn in a complete account of your handling of my property, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ 3 The servant said to himself, ‘My master is going to dismiss me from my job. What shall I do? I am not strong enough to dig ditches, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 Now I know what I will do! Then when my job is gone, I shall have friends who will welcome me in their homes.’ 5 So he called in all the people who were in debt to his master. He asked the first one, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 ‘One hundred barrels of olive oil,’ he answered. ‘Here is your account,’ the manager told him; ‘sit down and write fifty.’ 7 Then he asked another one, ‘And you—how much do you owe?’ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he answered. ‘Here is your account,’ the manager told him; ‘write eight hundred.’ 8 As a result the master of this dishonest manager praised him for doing such a shrewd thing; because the people of this world are much more shrewd in handling their affairs than the people who belong to the light.” 9 And Jesus went on to say, “And so I tell you: make friends for yourselves with worldly wealth, so that when it gives out, you will be welcomed in the eternal home. 10 Whoever is faithful in small matters will be faithful in large ones; whoever is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in large ones. 11 If, then, you have not been faithful in handling worldly wealth, how can you be trusted with true wealth? 12 And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you what belongs to you? 13 “No servant can be the slave of two masters; such a slave will hate one and love the other or will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord. **Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

The Grace of Confusion

In today's gospel, Jesus tells a challenging parable about a dishonest steward that ends with an unsettling moral: “And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes” (Luke 16:9).

Is Jesus being ironic or sincere? Do the characters in the story somehow represent our relationship with God? Are we supposed to emulate the dishonest steward? This text is filled with questions. If you find Jesus' words today perplexing, even baffling, don't worry—you are in good company. Both the details of the parable itself and the lesson Jesus is drawing from it have vexed and puzzled generations of the best interpreters, theologians, and preachers.

There are many plausible ways to explain what is happening and what it means for our lives as Christians that might be explored in your assembly today. At the same time, scriptures like this are a reminder that the life of discipleship does not always come with easy answers and neatly packaged meanings. The gospels frequently report moments when Jesus' disciples simply could not understand what he was saying to them or profoundly misinterpreted his meaning.

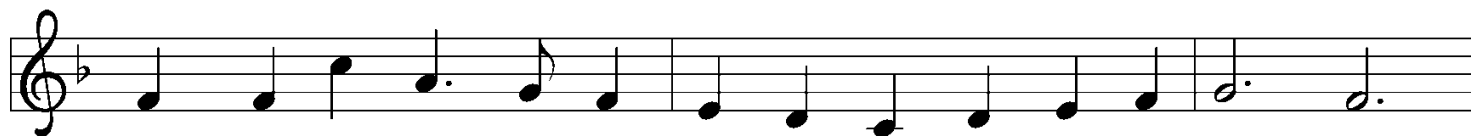
The value of the community you join today does not come from the perfect understandings of either the assembly or its leaders. It comes from the one who continues to speak even when we do not understand, who daily affirms God's love for us through the waters of baptism, who offers his own body and blood at the table each week for those who are still struggling and learning what it means to be his disciples—and that includes all of us. In short, the value of the community you join today comes from a Lord committed to leading us as disciples, even when we are unclear of the way.

SERMON

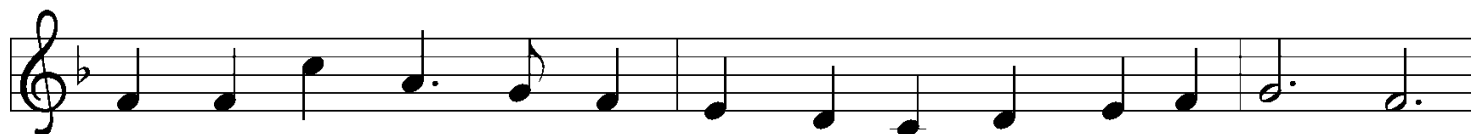
HYMN OF THE DAY

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

verses 1 & 2



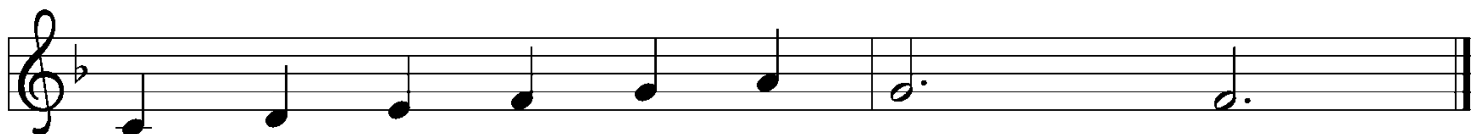
1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre - a - tion!
 2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won-drous-ly reign - ing



O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and sal - va - tion!
 and, as on wings of an ea - gle, up - lift - ing, sus - tain - ing.



Let all who hear now to his tem - ple draw near,
 Have you not seen all that is need - ful has been



join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion!
 sent by his gra - cious or - dain - ing?

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: God our Savior, you keep your church in faith and truth. Be with those preparing for baptism or affirmation of baptism. Enlighten preachers, teachers, seminarians, and all those who share your good news with the world. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Sustainer and giver of life, you bless this congregation with abundance. Instruct us in the proper and faithful use of wealth and resources, that we share generously. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Helper of the needy, you lift up those who are oppressed. Breathe justice into economic and social systems that perpetuate poverty and hunger. Sustain food ministries, clothing banks, and emergency shelters. Provide for those in any need. We pray especially for all those on our prayer list, those suffering from violence and terror such as the people of Ukraine, Uvalde, Highland Park, and those suffering from natural disasters such as wildfires, floods, droughts and disease such as COVID-19, and these we name now..... and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts

Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

Congregation: Amen.

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.

HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.

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

Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name.

Pastor: 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.

Pastor: 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.

Pastor: Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in whichever language is 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.

PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

Prayer Leader: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another. **Amen.**

Pastor: Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, help those who go to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, or imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your everlasting presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Congregation: Amen.**

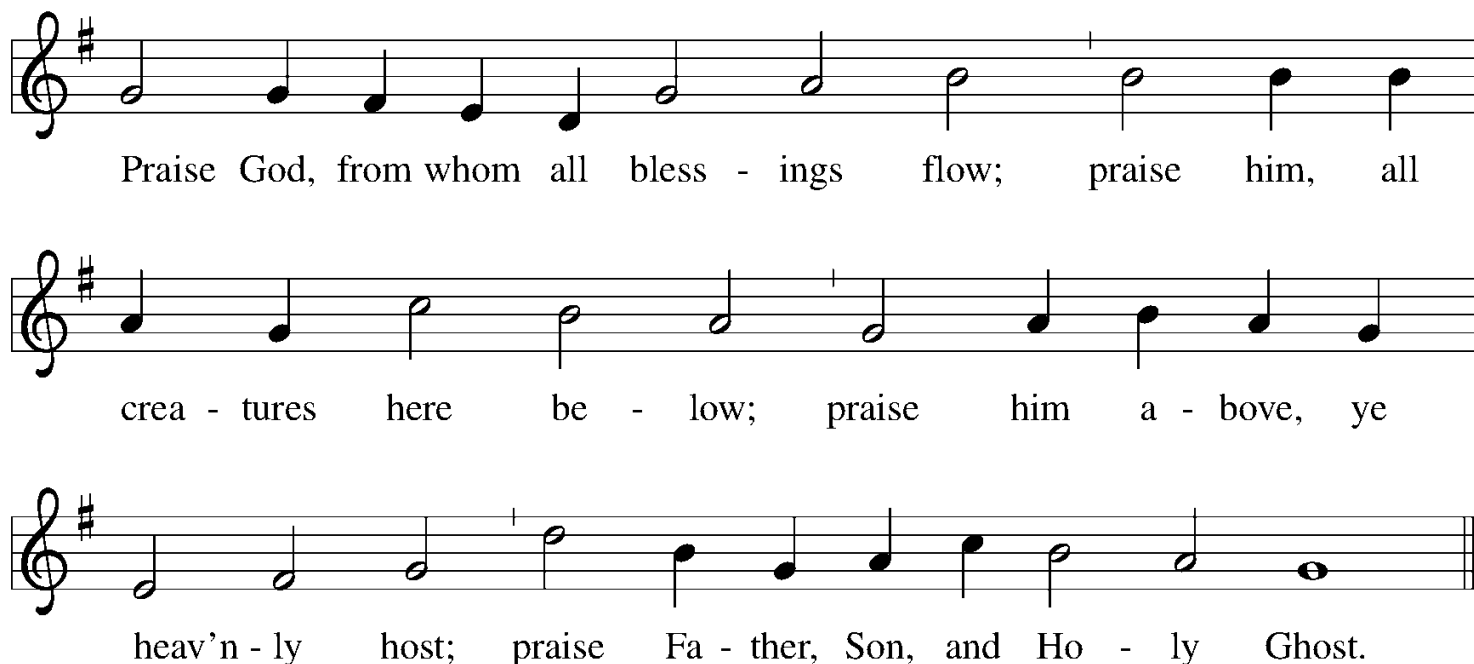
BLESSING

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

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 HUNDREDDTH, 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 as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. Tell what God has done.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!