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Saint James Lutheran Church



A Parish of the North Carolina Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



"Growing in Christ Through Worship, Learning, Fellowship, and Service"

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST SEPTEMBER 20, 2020



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.

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✝ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

Amen.

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.

FIRST READING: *Jonah 3:10—4:11*

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?

A reading from Jonah, the third chapter.

When God saw what [the people of Nineveh] 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. ⁴1But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He 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 God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. ³And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵Then 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. ⁶The 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. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸When 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." ⁹But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰Then 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. ¹¹And 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?"

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: *Psalms 145:1-8*

The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Ps. 145:8)

A reading from Psalm one hundred forty-five.

¹I will exalt you, my God and king,
 and bless your name forever and ever.
²Every day will I bless you
 and praise your name forever and ever.
³Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!
 There is no end to your greatness.
⁴One generation shall praise your works to another
 and shall declare your power.
⁵I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
 and all your marvelous works.
⁶They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
 and I will recount your greatness.
⁷They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
 they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.
⁸The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: *Philippians 1:21-30*

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

A reading from Philippians, the first chapter.

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. ²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 20:1-16*

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

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the twentieth chapter.

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN

Great is Thy Faithfulness
Nancy Sloop, Organist / Beth Downs, vocalist



1 Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther; there is no
2 Sum - mer and win - ter and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon, and
3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thine own dear



shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
pres - ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright



pas - sions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for - ev - er wilt be.
man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Refrain



Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Morn - ing by



morn - ing new mer - cies I see; all I have need - ed thy



hand hath pro - vid - ed; great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me.

APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we profess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary,

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

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,

hear our prayer.

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,

hear our prayer.

Where we find envy and create enemies, you provide enough for all. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence. Inspire leaders with creativity and wisdom. Bless the work of negotiators, peacekeepers, and development workers. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Reveal yourself to all in need as you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, ready to relent from punishing. Accompany judges and lawyers, victims of crime and those serving sentences. Give fruitful labor and a livelihood to those seeking work. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. Grant life, health, and courage to coronavirus patients and their doctors and nurses. Protect students and their teachers, police and peaceful demonstrators, firefighters and those whose lives and homes are in danger, those in the way of impending storms, and all in need of your grace. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We praise you for the generations that have declared your power to us. Give us faithfulness to follow them, living for Christ, until you call us to join them in the joyful song around his throne. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

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

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

God in peace, to love and serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Amazing Grace

NEW BRITAIN

The Liturgy Has Ended; The Service Begins!

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please e-mail all information to the church office at keith@sjnc.net

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PRAYER LIST

Terri Fleck

All health care professionals and first responders including:

Deb Bradshaw

Lauri Fowler

DeeDee Gilbert

Annette Propst

Meagan Lambert

Alison Monk

Jason and Stephanie Matthews

Dr Bradley Propst, son of

Kenny and Annette Propst

Sam Hurley, son of Elizabeth

Hurley

Lisa Snyder, friend of Debbie

Wilkinson

Julie Greathouse, friend of

Lois Marlow

Betsy Waselovich, sister of

Golda Jay

Lauren, daughter of Angie

Buchanan

Dr. Stephanie Garrison,

daughter-in-law of Margaret Garrison

Dr. Kevin Burns, son-in-law of

Margaret Garrison.

If you have someone you would like to add to the prayer list, please contact Keith. 704-786-0166 and leave a message or email at keith@sjnc.net

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

20-Sept Peter Muniz

20-Sept Cameron Trott

20-Sept Carson Trott

22-Sept John Patterson

22-Sept Patricia Propst

23-Sept Annette Propst

24-Sept Lois Marlow

24-Sept Andy Yoos

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Contributions and Receipts

for September 6 & 13, 2020

\$10,282.00

(\$8,414.00 needed for weekly)

ASSISTING IN TODAY'S WORSHIP

Lector/Intercessor:

Michael Bestler

SALVATION ARMY MEALS

St. James will be providing meals to the Salvation Army Center of Hope the week of September 20 - 26. The meal would be for 25-30 clients. Volunteers should arrive by 6:30 p.m. with meal prepared or if ordered, to be delivered at that time. The meals will only need to be dropped off and the staff will serve the meals. You can contact either Juanita Fitts or Keith Sutton in the Church Office. It is important to let us know so that we do not have duplicate meals.

EMAIL SCAMS

Have you recently received requests from Pastor Tony asking you to buy gift cards or call quickly? Rest assured, those emails are NOT coming from him. His account has not been hacked, rather, his account is being spoofed. (Emails look like they're coming from him but they're not.) Pastor Tony **will not** email you asking you to purchase gift cards or send money! So please don't reply to these emails. **When in doubt, call the church office: 704-786-0166.**

COMMUNION SERVICE

Next Wednesday, September 23 at our Drive-In Worship service, we will be celebrating Holy Communion. More details to follow.

Join Saint James Lutheran Church Facebook and Instagram groups—send Jeremy Jay any pictures and/or articles you would like to have posted at jeremy@pbnjay.com

St. James YouTube Channel
Search for [St. James Lutheran Church Concord NC](#) and subscribe.

DIRECTORY

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The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton...Presiding Bishop
The Rev. Dr. Timothy M. Smith.....Bishop

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Al Pieschel
Jodi Ramirez



@stjamesnc

OFFICE HOURS

M-Th 8:30-4:00, F 8:30-1:00

Closed for lunch 12:30 - 1:00