

## **Worship Plan for Sunday, October 4, 2020**

Lectionary 27

Proper 22

18th Sunday after Pentecost

ELW Holy Communion Setting Four

Sunday, October 4, 2020

### **Introduction to the day**

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

### **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

### **GREETING**

Welcome to worship today, we are glad to have you with our Faith Lutheran Church community. I'm Pr. John Barton and I will be leading our service today.

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! Praise Christ, no cloudy day, no isolation, no fear can darken the light which Jesus shines in our lives!

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.**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Monday:

Tuesday: Outreach 2 pm

Wednesday: Worship and Music 2pm

Thursday: WELCA Leaders at 9am, Bible Study 2pm

Other:

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office. Thank you!

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

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

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING:**

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>1</sup>Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.

<sup>2</sup>He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

<sup>3</sup>And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and people of Judah,  
judge between me  
and my vineyard.

<sup>4</sup>What more was there to do for my vineyard  
that I have not done in it?  
When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

<sup>5</sup>And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.

<sup>6</sup>I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.

<sup>7</sup>For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah

are his pleasant planting;  
he expected justice,  
but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness,  
but heard a cry!  
The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING:**

A reading from Philippians.

[Paul writes:] <sup>4b</sup>If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

<sup>7</sup>Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup>More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL:**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

33 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.

34 When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. 35 But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.

37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." 39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" 41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?" 43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that

produces the fruits of the kingdom. 44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. 46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus  
Christ

In our gospel lesson, we hear about a vineyard- again. We've heard a lot about vineyards in our recent scripture reading. When the gospels were written, and in the centuries surrounding Jesus' time on earth, vineyards were incredibly important. They were sources of income for surrounding areas, they created important products and not just wine. Other types of alcohol could be produced such as Grappa, vinegar, grape seed oil, as well as table grapes and preserves can all come from vineyards. As we saw in the lesson two weeks ago, vineyards provided a place of employment for the surrounding area allowing the town or villages to provide for their families with their wages. We even live relatively close to Temecula's wine country and the industry created there. All of this is to say that vineyards

were a known quantity by Jesus' listeners and would continue to be a place people could connect with for sometime.

In today's lesson, the vineyard is a stand in for God's Creation- the earth, the stars, loud boiling test tubes and all. God gives us this creation, all of nature for us to live in with the understanding if we take care of it, it will take care of us. More than that even, as George Washington Carver said, "I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in." However, the gospel goes on to tell the parable story of how the tenants who were hired to steward the vineyard creation. They did not tune into God or the vineyard of nature, instead denying the creator of the vineyard any produce from it. The tenants only wanted to take from the vineyard and only for themselves, going so far as to beat and kill the servants and son of the vineyard owner to keep everything for themselves.

In contrast to the tenants in the gospel there two people in particular who lean into their love and care for God's creation. The first person is well known by the name of Johnny Appleseed. Johnny's given name was John Chapman and he was born in 1774, two years before the US declared its independence from Great Britain. Johnny went west ahead of settlers, planting apple seeds to have ready to sell to settlers as they followed him

westerward. But this real person didn't become the stuff of beloved legend for just throwing seeds on the ground or selling a couple of seedlings, anyone could do that. John Chapman became Johnny Appleseed because he didn't care about accumulating wealth for himself, he did what he did to provide and care for others too. To quote a biographical plaque near his burial place, "material things meant little to Johnny except when they could make a child smile, give a pioneer family the means to improve their diet, or increase their cash income from apples... Johnny lived a life of service in harmony with nature that impressed native Americans as well as his fellow European Americans."

Perhaps John Chapman took a page out of the book of this second individual, in the process becoming Johnny Appleseed. Today is the saint day of St. Francis of Assisi, who is known to be associated with patronage of animals in the natural environment, and his same day has been marked with the ceremony of blessing of animals for some time now. Francis was born in Assisi, Italy to a prosperous silk merchant father and Noble woman mother. He is described as living the high life as a Young Man, obviously spending money on whims. But he became disillusioned with this life of possessions, eventually coming to embrace a lifestyle of asceticism and giving whatever he had to the poor in the name of repairing Christ's

Church. He took up Christ's work and found more worth in helping the animals and people around him than in any money had ever spent. He is quoted as saying "God is of your flesh, he lives in your nearest neighbor, in every person" and that he considered himself no friend of Christ if he did not cherish those for whom Christ died.

Francis moved out from society but always emphasized his responsibility to the people around him as part of Christ's work. And though he is a Roman Catholic saint, he is a loved theologian for many denominations, Lutherans included. His consideration for those around him, especially animals, has become his legacy and his challenge for us to follow.

One blogger for WELCA said this“ it does make me think about how our animal companions bless us. I’m glad they get a day to be blessed in return.” and

“I firmly believe that our call to preach the Gospel extends beyond the people in our pews in a typical week. A blessing of the animals is a wonderful way to share love with our neighbors, the furred and feathered ones, and the loving families who bring them.”

For us as Lutherans, we remember and study figures such as St. Francis, Johnny Appleseed, or even Martin Luther, not because they God

like figures, but because of the way they point to the one true God. . They had important things they said or did but they humbled themselves and did not become wide societal heroes in their lifetime. In fact, at one point or another, each of those men were societal outcasts at one point or another. Francis forsook his family's wealth, giving up status and wealthy friends for animals and the poor, because he found them to be worth more than the riches he could have had. Johnny Appleseed was a wanderer who did not take a normal path through life which society might have expected him too, choosing instead to live off the lands he walked and giving back to it, more than which he took. And Luther, well, while not as quiet as the other two, his works to reform and create a better church environment did not please the church superiors, sort of like the officials we heard of in the gospel. And like those officials who Jesus ticked off, the officials of the Catholic Church would have liked to have Luther killed too for upsetting their power game. All of these men persevered, not caring if they did not do what society expected, not caring if they were rejected in the process. Their care for true purpose opposed to tainted popularity is at least one thing they shared with Jesus. As our gospel says, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes" As those men prove we all have the capability to channel Jesus'

example to do amazing things. And, with Luther especially, we also confess our simultaneous capabilities to be like the greedy, murderous tenants in the gospel lesson. Like those tenants, we can let our selfishness get away from us without even thinking about it. We let our desires for newer, bigger, shinier possessions or experiences outweigh our call to steward God's creation, abusing our relationship with the earth, the animals, and even our fellow human beings, alienating ourselves from our surroundings and neighbors in the process. We would remain alienated, drifting aimlessly untethered to anything if it weren't for the stone which was rejected who ties us to him. Jesus, the cornerstone, anchors us, gives us purpose, and inspires us how to better follow God's call, the call to care for creation set forth in Genesis, reminding us through his own words or through people who were previously rejected and drifting too, like Francis, Johnny, or Luther. We are tied together to our cornerstone who, in his great power, wisdom, mercy, and grace, breaks our old selfish selves to pieces, replacing them by creating in us new hearts, a new creation.

We have been talking a lot about creation today. This week also happens to coincide with the anniversary of the Creation of Faith Lutheran Church of Sun City on Oct. 6 1963. Perhaps this is no mere coincidence though, perhaps it gives us some important reminders. It gives us a chance

to look back at where our congregation has come from since its inception. But it allows us to look broader and farther back too. We can remember the rest of God's church in our own congregation's anniversary. We can look back at our ancestors in faith and remember the lessons they have taught us. Jesus taught us to care for God's creation including the earth and plants and the environment. Francis of Assisi reminds us to bless and care for our fellow creatures and animals. And finally, Johnny Appleseed gave a very good reminder through his living example on this earth. Interestingly though, we receive that reminder through the marker of him leaving this earth. John Chapman's tombstone in Fort Wayne, Indiana is a simple one. Amid the appropriately placed apples and apple wreath from onlookers, the grave marker tells those onlookers that he "lived for others."

So as we mark our "church-iversary" this week we too pray to God to help us- help us to care for creation, to bless those around us- including animals, and to help us "live for others."

Amen

Our service continues with:

**Blessing of the Animals and Creation**

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, who in your self-emptying love gathered up and reconciled all creation to the Father. Innumerable galaxies of the heavens worship you. Creatures that grace the earth rejoice in you. All those in the deepest seas bow to you in adoration. As with them we give you praise, grant that we may cherish the earth, our home, and live in harmony with this good creation.

Hear our prayers, O God, for our friends, the animals. We ask for them your providing care; and for those who deal with them, we ask a heart of compassion, gentle hands, and kind words. We give thanks to you, O God, for animals that live in our homes, on farms, in the wild, and in havens of refuge. Make us ever aware of our responsibility to these, your creatures. Help us to be faithful in caring for them, through the one in whom all creation is made new, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

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\*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Holy God, you call us to work for peace and justice in your vineyard. Refresh the church with your life, that we may bear fruit through work and service. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Thank you for the abundant harvest of the earth. Bless and care for those whose hands bring the fruits of the earth to the tables of all who hunger. May we be inspired by your servants who cared deeply for your creation (*especially Francis of Assisi, whom we commemorate today*). Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Curb the impulses of greed and pride that lead us to take advantage of others. Grant that world leaders (*especially*) seek the fruits of the kingdom for the good and welfare of all people. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Sustain all who suffer with the promise of new life. Assured of your presence, heal our pain and suffering, and equip us to embrace all bodies aching for wholeness of mind, body, and soul. We call to mind those who are struggling today (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

We pray for all managers in our community and for all who seek employment. Give hope and a future to those who lack meaningful work, those who have been marginalized or abused in the workplace, and those who desire new opportunities. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Thank you for the saints who teach us to live faithfully in your vineyard (*especially Theodor Fliedner, renewer of society*). May our chorus join theirs until our labor is complete. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **PRAYER LIST**

Gloria Anderson; Nancy Blackmer; Julie Chevraux; Vicki Crow; Bob Eury; Sonja Gautsche; Jim & Joni Gray; Francis Key; Iver & Lois Linge; Pat Myers; Ron Neumen; Tina Peteroski & Peggy Wharton & family; Jan Simon; Amy Sinclair; Earlean Wagner; Mary Yturralde; the homebound; the Emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests. If you would like your name added to our prayer list, please contact the church office.

### **PRAYER IN PANDEMIC**

Merciful God, you give us the grace that helps in time of need. Almighty God, your love never fails. Help us to receive your word with believing hearts, so that, confident in your promises, we may have hope and be lifted out of sorrow into the joy and peace of your presence.

God of health and healing, surround us with your steadfast love and lighten our burden. We especially pray for those affected by COVID-19 and those who have lost loved ones.

We also hold in prayer our healthcare providers, first responders, essential workers, and all who continue to serve so that others can maintain safety. By the power of your Spirit, free us from distress and give us a new mind and a heart made whole in the name of the risen Christ.

Amen

### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **OFFERING**

At this time, we remember that the giving of our offering is an authentic part of worship.

In this time of the offering, in place of passing around the offering plate, we ask that you continue to mail your offerings to the church or to drop them off during office hours. We will emphasize this time of offering as a time for us to also give thanks for God's gifts. One of those gifts is our community of Faith Lutheran Church and the gift of keeping us together through the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of our Faith family. So thank you for the

phone calls to each other, for your prayers for each other, for all the ways you have been giving your gifts to God's church and one another.  
Thank you so much!

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **INSTRUCTING OF COMMUNION AT HOME**

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care:

As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread,

be present with those who partake and share your word and sacrament

at home. We remember you in the celebration of the sacrament and

remember that you unite us as the body of Christ whether we are together in-person or together while apart.

In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament,

and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence

through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

At this point in the service, please bring bread and drink for communion, preferably wine or grape juice but it can also be water. If you have communion elements gathered, I'd invite you to share with anyone present, and if you do not, know that the restoration and healing found in this sacrament still reaches you wherever you are. During our time of worshiping apart, we will be instituting communion at home. These Words of Institution bless the eucharistic elements where you are, trusting in the all-reaching power and grace of God to provide the complete and total sacrament to us in these extraordinary times where we are unable to come to Christ's table together in-person. Once you have your eucharistic elements of bread and drink, and after the words of institution, you may commune yourself along with anyone else in your household saying:

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

And so,

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.

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.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

### **COMMUNION**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **MUSIC REMINDER**

Be sure to watch our separate prelude and postlude music selections if you haven't already. Those videos can be found above and below this worship video on our website.

### **BLESSING**

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.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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