



**At Home Worship  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Sundays in October 2020**

*In the month of October, we continue reading from the 21st and 22nd chapter of Matthew. We are faced with challenging parables that Jesus shares in response to the questions of the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees in the temple of Jerusalem. The stakes are high for Jesus, as it is Holy Week, and his trial and crucifixion are not far off. In these encounters, Matthew tries to convince his Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah for whom they have waited and that they can still answer Jesus' call to follow him into radical discipleship. Thanks to Pastor Sarah Lyon Hess from Redeemer, Bristol for contributing to this month's reflections.*

*On the final Sunday of the month, we celebrate Reformation Sunday. I encourage you to wear something red, the liturgical color of the day, as you worship on October 25. Or perhaps set out a red candle, red table cloth, or other red item to mark the occasion in your home.*

*Though not included in this packet, the first Sunday of November is All Saint Sunday. This falls on November 1st this year. You may want to take some time this month to get a special candle to light or gather photos of your beloved to include in your At Home Worship that day.*

*Before starting each service, you will need to get your bible. If you are worshipping with another person/people, take turns being the leader. All read the bold together. If you are worshipping alone, read all parts out loud. Or better still, call a friend or family member and invite them to worship with you. If you would like to share an offering with the church, the information on how to do so is below.*

*In Christ,  
Pastor Colleen Montgomery  
Holy Trinity, Wytheville*

*Any offering you wish to share during our time of physical distance can be shared by mail to our congregation or by using our congregation's option for online giving. See that information below:*

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

*Mail offering to: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 405 W Main Street, Wytheville, VA 24382*

*Online giving option: <http://www.holytrinitywytheville.org/> Link at the bottom of the page*

# October Worship 2020

*Take three centering breaths as you prepare your heart, mind, and body for worship.*

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.*

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.

*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.**

## **Sunday, October 4, 2020**

### **Prayer of the Day**

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.**

**Isaiah 5:1-7** *The song of the vineyard*

**Psalm 80:7-15**

**Philippians 3:4b-14** *Nothing surpasses the value of knowing Christ*

**Gospel Acclamation** Alleluia. Jesus says, I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will last. Alleluia.

**Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46** *The parable of the vineyard owner's son*

Reflection from Pastor Sarah Lyon Hess (Redeemer, Bristol):

Today's gospel reading continues with the sharing of another parable told by Jesus. This parable takes place in a vineyard and as Christians, we often see the vineyard as an image of God's love. This love is shared with us through the blood of Christ, poured out in forgiveness of sins. But have you ever been in a vineyard?

Twisted vines grow together to yield grapes. Those who tend and care for the vineyard prune in the winter so that in the spring, sap will rise, and the buds will swell where successful cuts along the vine have been made. In early summer, the vine clusters flower and set fruit for the coming harvest. Ultimately, ripe fruit will appear on the vines. Bearing fruit can be a lot harder than we think, especially when we hear this parable and hear of the relationships between the landowner, the tenants, the slaves, and the vineyard owner's son. Yet, Jesus calls us to his banqueting table, to share in the harvest from the vineyard.

In verse 43, Jesus shares that the kingdom of God will be "*given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom*". This reminds me of a song we would sing at summer camp about those twisted vines in the vineyard. We would stretch our arms up and over our heads and then reach out to each side as we sang the words... "*He is the vine and we are the branches, His banner over me is love*". We would sing this verse, over and over again, reminding us that we are grafted into Christ, the vine. We are then nourished with wine and bread in communion, so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection. May we forever see and feel the vines of the vineyard, as a banner over our shoulders that drapes us in God's never-ending love. Amen!

**Sunday, October 11, 2020**

**Prayer of the Day**

Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Isaiah 25:1-9** *The feast of victory*

**Psalm 23**

**Philippians 4:1-9** *Rejoice in the Lord always*

**Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in God's salvation. Alleluia. (Isa. 25:9)

**Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14** *The parable of the unwelcome guest at the wedding feast*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

Though this is the first of the reflections you are reading from me this month, it is the one that I wrote last because it is the most difficult of the texts of the month. A silly song from a kids TV show, *The Wonder Pets*, comes to mind. Three voices sing. The first voice explains that a baby penguin is stuck on an iceberg. The second voice sings, "Oh!" then echoes the phrase, seemingly understanding it. But then the second voice chimes in again asking: What's a penguin? And the third: What's an iceberg? They didn't actually understand it.

Even after reading this parable from Matthew several times over, my inner voices sing to one another (though not as succinctly as *The Wonder Pets*). This a parable about the kingdom of God, criticizing those who haven't recognized Jesus as God's son. They are the ones who have refused the king's invitation to the wedding banquet. Instead, the king invites all these other people to the banquet. The good get to stay, and the bad, who don't have on their wedding robes, are thrown out. Part of me goes, "Oh!" seemingly understanding. Then other voices go, "What's a penguin? What's an iceberg?" because I can't make sense of this. Even the note in the Lutheran Study Bible on this text says, "Many interpretations have been offered, but none has a clear basis in the text. It is best left as a warning without explanation" (pg. 1643).

So what's the good news for today? The parables of Jesus are sometimes beyond our understanding, but Paul reminds us that God's peace is with us, even when we don't understand. We continue to hope, pray, read, and trust that God is with us even as we wrestle with the bible, knowing that someday all will be made clear.

**Sunday, October 18, 2020**

**Prayer of the Day**

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Isaiah 45:1-7** *An earthly ruler as the instrument of God's will*

**Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]**

**1 Thessalonians 1:1-10** *Thanksgiving for the church at Thessalonica*

**Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia. Shine like stars in the world, holding fast to the word of life. Alleluia. (Phil. 2:15, 16)

**Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22**

*A teaching on giving to the emperor and to God*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

We often spend time in the month of October reflecting on our stewardship practices. Our individual stewardship practices and those of the church as well. My understanding of stewardship, nurturing that which has been entrusted to me from God, has developed significantly over the past several years. This text, and its parallels in the other gospels, are one of the biblical stories of understanding of stewardship.

Jesus is still in the temple of Jerusalem when the Pharisees come at him with another plot to trap him. It is still Holy Week, and the cross is not far off. In today's reading, they ask him about taxes. Is it lawful for Jewish people to pay taxes to the Roman empire? Jesus responds with the well-known phrase, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (v. 21).

Jesus is seemingly saying, give the taxes to the emperor because the emperor's face is on the coin. But upon further reflection, we realize this. Everything actually belongs to God. The earth and all its resources. Our bodies, our skills, our minds. The time we use to earn money. Everything belongs to God. Some theologians go so far as to avoid language of saying that God gives us gifts because that implies a shift of ownership, which is not true. Even as we live in our bodies, drive cars that we have purchased, eat food that we (okay, you, y'all know I can't grow anything) have grown, all of these things still belong to God. We are just taking care of them. We are just nurturing them. We are just stewarding them. Your pastor says, yes, pay your taxes, but don't forget that it all comes from God and is returning to God.

## **Sunday, October 25, 2020 - Reformation Sunday**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Jeremiah 31:31-34** *I will write my law in their hearts, says the Lord*

**Psalm 46**

**Romans 3:19-28** *Justified by God's grace as a gift*

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia. If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. Alleluia. (John 8:31-32)

**Gospel: John 8:31-36** *Jesus says, Continue in my word and you will know the truth*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

Today we celebrate Reformation Sunday. An important festival in the life of the Lutheran church, where we both remember our history and also look towards the future. It is marked on the Sunday before October 31, the day on which Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses on the front door of the Lutheran church in Wittenberg in 1517. This year, in 2020, we have a lot to give thanks for, a lot to repent of, and a lot to hope for.

One of the greatest contributions of Luther to Christianity was the translation of the bible into the common language of the people and encouraging its use in both corporate worship and personal devotion. By placing the bible literally into the hands of the people, God's word was opened up for a whole new generation, so that they could learn, live, and grow in it. However, Luther was far from a perfect person. His hateful criticisms of his Jewish and Islamic contemporaries are harsh. In fact, his words were used by Hitler to justify many of the atrocities of the Holocaust, that resulted in the death of more than 6 million Jews.

Now in the 21st century, we continue to wrestle with our faith history that has both blessed us with incredible grace-filled theology and also includes the sins of racism and other exclusionary sins. Another example is that the Lutheran church in America has only been ordaining women for fifty years. Yet, we continue to confess, to reform, and to hope. Our hope is in God who forgives us and calls us into the holy work of loving as we have first been loved. Amen.

## **APOSTLES 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.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*We pray together, knowing that the Spirit knits our prayers together. You may complete each phrase with who or what you wish to pray for.*

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

For the church universal, its ministry, and the mission of the gospel....

For the well-being of creation...

For peace and justice in the world, the nations and those in authority, the community...

For the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved, lonely, and those listed below....

For all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, and especially those who suffer from COVID-19 and those listed below...

For our congregation, all members and friends of the congregation and their families...

*(Additional prayers may be added.)*

With thanksgiving for the faithful departed, especially those listed below....

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

#### **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**BLESSING**

Mothering God,  
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.  
**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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