

THE NOON SERVICE

17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2020

Community responses are in bold



WELCOME

GATHERING SONG

*We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yes they'll know that we are Christians by our love*

*We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yes they'll know that we are Christians by our love*

*We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each person's dignity and guard each person's pride
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yes they'll know that we are Christians by our love*

Blessed be the God of our salvation.
Who bears our burdens and forgives our sins.

God be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

OPENING PRAYER

Beloved God, as we approach your Presence, guide and stir us with your Holy Spirit, that we may become one body, one spirit in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

THE LESSONS

A Reading from the book of Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the Lord came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and

commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

A Reading from Phillipians 2:1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death--
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

A Reading from the book of Matthew 21:23-32

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you

this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

All are welcome to share but please be respectful and appropriate. Please speak for yourself with awareness of the impact your words have on others. What is often shared in this community is vulnerable—we ask that you be respectful of not sharing other people's stories. Examine your own assumptions and perceptions. Be sensitive to differences in communication and cultural styles. And remember: listening is a spiritual act.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Officiant: Hear O my people, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

Officiant: This is the first and great commandment.

The second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

THE PEACE

Officiant: The Peace of the risen Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy God, in this season we come before you mindful of your many servants surrounding us in heaven and on earth. Give us eyes to see your messengers in every place we go and every stranger we meet.

We ask your blessings upon the Church and upon all who serve you within the community of the faithful. Just as your angels proclaim your love and mercy in heaven, so give to the Church the courage to proclaim your kingdom here on earth.

God of Saints & Angels, may we find your messengers at work within the Church.

At the birth of Jesus, your angels proclaimed Peace on Earth. May our nation and all nations of the earth pursue the holy work of peacemaking. May those in authority lead as you would choose, establishing justice and always pursuing the common good of all those entrusted to their care.

God of Saints & Angels, may we find your messengers at work in the nations.

God of wild places, your messengers surround us in the wonders of Creation. May we learn to listen closely and cherish the voices of birds, rivers, mountains and trees. Give us enduring wisdom to care for the fragile wonders of the earth and may we always prove careful stewards of your handiwork.

God of Saints & Angels, may we find your messengers at work in Creation.

God who calls us all to live in community with those different from ourselves. Let us learn to see Christ in every person with whom we live and work. May we learn to truly live as your saints, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

God of Saints & Angels, may we find your messengers at work in our neighbors.

God of the wounded, the friendless, and the forgotten. Comfort all who feel alone and guide us to care for them with deeds and not words alone. May we take courage from the example of your saints who befriended the hurting and confronted the powers of injustice, violence, and oppression.

God of Saints & Angels, may we find your messengers at work in those who suffer.

We commend to your mercy all who have died. We remember especially the victims of injustice and the martyrs and prophets of every generation who have gone before us, laying down their lives for the proclamation of your Word.

God of Saints & Angels, may we find your messengers at work in the communion of your saints.

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth: Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may always be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves to be surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom all our intercessions are acceptable through the Spirit, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

BLESSING

Christ has no body now on earth but yours,

No hands but yours, no feet but yours.

Yours are the eyes with which Christ looks with compassion on the hurting world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.

And the blessing of God—Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer—be with you today and always.

Amen.

Blessing attributed to St. Teresa of Avila

CLOSING SONG

Officiant: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**