

MY BELOVED  
HAD A  
VINEYARD

ISAIAH 5:1

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

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[www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

[www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com](http://www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com)

Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George

YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York

**WELCOME** Thank you for being with us.

**We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition** (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 187 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

**Offerings** Offerings are received during the liturgy. They are presented along with gifts of bread and wine at the altar. You may also donate via our website at [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

**Postlude** It is our tradition to remain seated for the postlude. If you need to leave we ask that you do so reverently. This tradition developed as a result of our livestream. We want anyone viewing to be able to listen to the postlude without unnecessary distraction. Thank you.

**Restrooms** are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery.

**The Nursery** is accessed through the front right double doors. The liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Parents are asked to stay with their children. Quiet activities are also available in the Narthex for infant through preschool children to use with an adult.

**Please be aware** that there is a rise in individuals loitering at church buildings and asking for money. This is panhandling and it is illegal. Please do not give money. Simply direct them to contact the Pastor at a time other than during worship. Thank you.

**Parents**, please do accompany your child to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.



The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God by Linda Turner and in honor of Sophia Zart's 19th birthday by Jill Striebig and family.

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	<a href="mailto:prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net">prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net</a>
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**Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Sunday, October 8, 2023**  
**Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM**

**PRELUDE**

*I Am Trusting You Lord Jesus*

J. Wayne Kerr

*Stand*

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*The assembly stands turning to face the Baptismal Font. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Let us pray. Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, 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.**

## ENTRANCE HYMN

### *Let the Whole Creation Cry (ELW 876)*



1 Let the whole cre - a - tion cry, "Glo - ry to the Lord on high!"  
2 Ser - vants striv - ing for the Lord, proph - ets burn - ing with the word.  
3 Men and wom - en, young and old, raise the an - them loud and bold.



Heav'n and earth, a - wake and sing, "Praise to our al - might - y king!"  
those to whom the arts be - long add their voic - es to the song,  
and let chil - dren's hap - py hearts in this wor - ship take their parts;



Praise God, an - gel hosts a - bove, ev - er bright and fair in love;  
Pow'rs of knowl - edge and of law, to the glo - rious cir - cle draw;  
from the north to south - ern pole let the might - y cho - rus roll:



sun and moon, lift up your voice; night and stars, in God re - jice,  
all who work and all who wait, sing, "The Lord is good and great!"  
"Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly One; glo - ry be to God a - lone!"

## APOSTOLIC 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

God of love, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them; keep us from those things that harm us; and guide us in the way of salvation; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

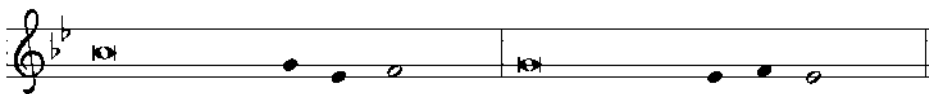
*Sit*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

**FIRST READING**

Isaiah 5:1-7

- <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!

**PSALM** Psalm 80:7-15*The organ introduces the tone, then it is sung unaccompanied by all.*

- <sup>7</sup> Restore us, O | God of hosts;\*  
show the light of your countenance, and we | shall be saved.
- <sup>8</sup> You have brought a vine | out of Egypt;\*  
you cast out the nations and | planted it.
- <sup>9</sup> You prepared the | ground for it;\*  
it took root and | filled the land.
- <sup>10</sup> The mountains were covered | by its shadow\*  
and the towering cedar trees | by its boughs.
- <sup>11</sup> You stretched out its tendrils | to the sea\*  
and its branches | to the river.
- <sup>12</sup> Why have you broken | down its wall,\*  
so that all who pass by pluck | off its grapes?
- <sup>13</sup> The wild boar of the forest has | ravaged it,\*  
and the beasts of the field have | grazed upon it.
- <sup>14</sup> Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven; behold and | tend this vine;\*  
preserve what your right | hand has planted.
- <sup>15</sup> They burn it with | fire like rubbish;\*  
at the rebuke of your countenance | let them perish.

**SECOND READING**Philippians 3:4b-14 *(back cover)**Stand***VERSE***Sung by all*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.  
*Repeat alleluia*  
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

**HOLY GOSPEL**

Matthew 21:23-32

*(back cover)*

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord.***At the conclusion of the Gospel.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.***Sit***SERMON**

Rev. Stan Reep

*Stand***APOSTLE'S CREED****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 INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

Heavenly Father, you are the source of life and joy. Strengthen the resolve of the church throughout the world (*global mission partners may be named*), that together we may press on toward the goal of your heavenly call in Christ Jesus. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Bless fields and orchards and the hands of those who labor in them so that your people are fed with an abundant harvest of good fruit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Guide leaders of nations, states, provinces, and cities so that they may faithfully govern your people with wisdom, integrity, and compassion. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Have mercy on all who mourn, who struggle with their mental health, who cry out for justice, who hunger, and all in any need (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Build up our congregation so that it stands in the community as a witness to your enduring faithfulness and love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give you thanks for the saints who came before us and for their faithful witness. Keep us firm in our faith as we wait with hope for the great day when we join our voices in your praise. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

*The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

*Sit*

**OFFERING** 8:00 AM *O Savior, Precious Savior* Gerhard Krapf  
10:30 AM Chancel Choir *Behold Now, Praise the Lord* Everett Titcomb

*Stand*

**OFFERTORY HYMN**      *Come to the Table (ELW 481)*



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

*The gifts of bread and wine and monetary gifts are presented at the altar.*

**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray. Merciful God,

**as grains of wheat scattered upon the hills were gathered together to become one bread, so let your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, for yours is the glory through Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.**

**DIALOGUE**

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.**

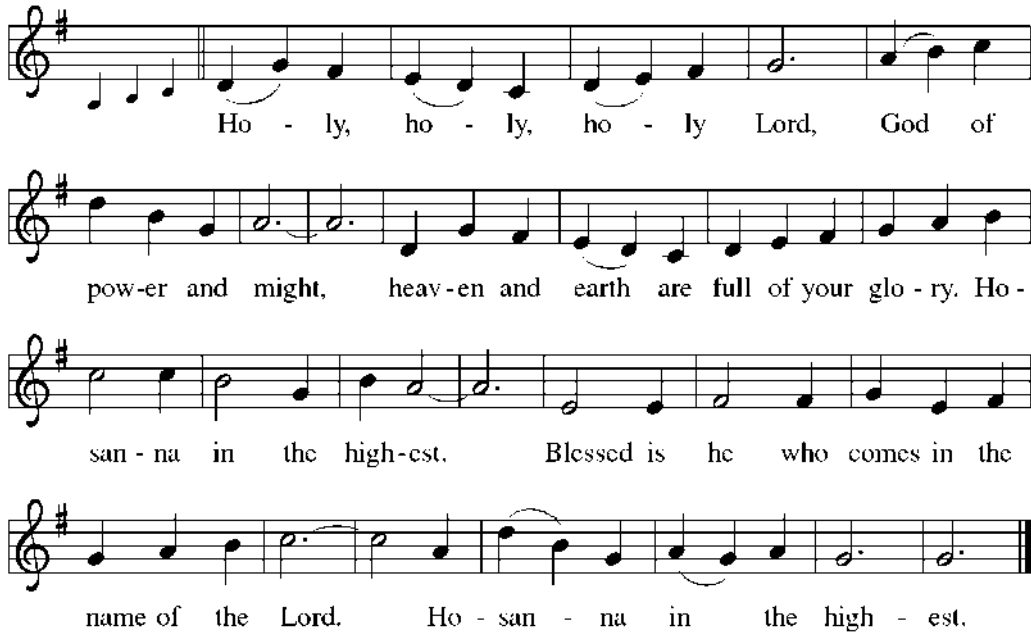
**PREFACE**      *The preface appropriate to the day is said.*

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 and join their unending hymn:



## SANCTUS

*Sung by all.*



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, Ho -  
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the  
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,

that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you

for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts,

that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death

until he comes.

**Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.**

*Continued on next page...*

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place,  
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest  
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

**Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory  
is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen**

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

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

**FRACTION RITE** *A brief silence is kept*

**AGNUS DEI** *Sung by all.*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -  
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## *Sit*

*The pastor cleanses hands and prepares for the distribution of Holy Communion.*

## **COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL**

Holy Communion at St. Paul's Church is "open" to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

*Procedure for receiving Communion:*

- 1. Come to communion using the center aisle.*
- 2. Communion glasses are placed on credence tables at the front pews (left and right side).*
- 3. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.*
- 4. Take your place along the chancel step. The ministers will bring the bread and wine to you.*
- 5. Extend your hands to receive the communion host.*
- 6. Consume the communion host.*
- 7. Hold the communion glass with both hands at chest height so that the communion assistant can easily pour the wine into the glass.*
- 8. Consume the wine before you leave the chancel edge.*
- 9. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.*
- 10. Return to your pew using the side aisle.*

## **COMMUNION HYMN      *By Your Hand You Feed Your People (ELW 469)***



- 1 By your hand you feed your peo - ple, food of an - gels, heav-en's bread.
- 2 In this meal we taste your sweet-ness, bread for hun - ger, wine of peace.
- 3 Send us now with faith and cour - age to the hun - gry, lost, be - reaved.



For these gifts we did not la - bor, by your grace have we been fed:  
Ho - ly word and ho - ly wis - dom sat - is - fy our deep - est needs.  
In our liv - ing and our dy - ing, we be - come what we re - ceive:



Christ's own bod - y, blessed and bro - ken, cup o'er - flow - ing, life out - poured,



giv - en as a liv - ing to - ken of your world re - deemed, re - stored.

*Stand*

**POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

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; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**HYMN**

*O God beyond All Praising (ELW 880) next page*

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Once to Every Man and Nation*

Gordon Young

*Serving the Lord with Gladness*

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Clean-up
10/8	8:00 AM	Bob Reed	Jennifer Ports	John Monk		John & Kathy Monk, Kathleen Lemke,	Alex Bastian, Michael Poster	Kathleen Lemke, Ann Anstadt
	10:30 AM	Tristan Ericson	Janet Fitch	Leah McComas	Sandy Dickensheets	Pat Rudacille & Jerry Briggs, Sandy Dickensheets, Tonya Cave	Kem Vaught, Larry Becker, Steve Heistand, Dan Garber	Deb Becker, Isabelle Lehr

**This Week—Youth Fellowship grades 7 through 12**

11:45am following the 10:30am Liturgy

Sunday, October 8 Youth Room

Following the Liturgy the Youth will fill their lunch plates during 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Sandwiches and come to the Youth Room for a time of fellowship, prayer, and fun group icebreakers.



Altar Flower sponsors are needed! You may sponsor 1 or 2 vases. Each vase is \$35.

10/15—2 vases

11/5—2 vases

# O God beyond All Praising



1 O God be-yond all prais-ing, we wor-ship you to-day  
2 The flow'r of earth-ly splen-dor in time must sure-ly die,  
3 Then hear, O gra-cious Sav-ior, ac-cept the love we bring,



and sing the love a-maz-ing that songs can-not re-pay;  
its frag-ile bloom sur-ren-der to you, the Lord most high;  
that we who know your fa-vor may serve you as our King;



for we can on-ly won-der at ev-'ry gift you send,  
but hid-den from all na-ture the e-ter-nal seed is sown-  
and wheth-er our to-mor-rows be filled with good or ill,



at bless-ings with-out num-ber and mer-cies with-out end:  
though small in mor-tal stat-ure, to heav-en's gar-den grown:  
we'll tri-umph through our sor-rows and rise to bless you still:



we lift our hearts be-fore you and wait up-on your word,  
for Christ, your gift from heav-en, from death has set us free,  
to mar-vel at your beau-ty and glo-ry in your ways,



we hon-or and a-dore you, our great and might-y Lord.  
and we through him are giv-en the fi-nal vic-to-ry.  
and make a joy-ful du-ty our sac-ri-fice of praise.

Text: Michael Perry, 1942-1996

Music: THAXTED, Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

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**This Week at St. Paul's**  
Church Office hours Mon-Thurs 8am-4pm

**Sunday, October 8**

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for All  
9:15 AM Confirmation Class  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

**Monday, October 9**

Preschool Fall Break  
Office Closed  
7:00 PM Council Meeting—Christ Hall

**Tuesday, October 10**

Preschool Fall Break  
9:30 AM Food Pantry  
6:00 PM CREATE—Preschool thru Grade 6

**Wednesday, October 11**

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave  
10:30 AM Bible Study—Christ Hall

**Thursday, October 12**

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave  
6:30 PM Handbell Choir—Christ Hall  
7:30 PM Chancel Choir—Music Room

**Sunday, October 15—Newsletter Deadline**

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for All  
9:15 AM Confirmation Class  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream  
10:30 AM Handbell Choir rings during liturgy  
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm



Aligning with our current lectionary scriptures using the gospel of Matthew, our Sunday Adult Christian Education class will begin with a five-week study of the book of Matthew. Several scriptures will be featured throughout the gospel narrative, and we will use a Book of Faith Series publication from Augsburg Fortress. Please join us starting September 17th for this deeper look into Matthew! Tristan Ericson will facilitate and the class will meet in Christ Hall located on the main level.



**Mission Trip to Tanzania**—Our delegation has been assembled. We are blessed to have a group of 13 households comprised of 26 persons representing St. Paul's as we travel to our sister congregation next June. If you would like to help defray the cost of our delegation please use a special envelope located in the pew rack and mark it "Tanzania Trip Donation". Please remember that this is not a vacation, it is a mission trip. We do

need help defraying the cost for participants.



**Food Pantry—Fall**

**Items needed: Canned fruit, canned chicken, canned tuna & Peanut Butter.** We also need paper grocery bags with handles and plastic bags. Money donations are gratefully accepted. Please place cash or check in a "special" envelope marked "Pantry". **Volunteers are needed Tuesday mornings to help our neighbors shop. Call Teresa Rohrbaugh or**

**the church office (717-843-8155) to volunteer.**

Please be sure to check with the church secretary *before* you schedule your meetings at the church. Call or email the office with your request.



Worship is central to our lives of faith. **The Worship and Arts Committee** of our congregation is responsible for a vast array of visioning, planning, scheduling, training, and performing duties in support of a robust worship life. The committee plans and coordinates; holiday liturgies and any necessary decorating, Sunday weekly services, mid-week

worship most frequently held in Lent, oversees the care of sacramental vessels, vestments, and worship resources. It provides oversight for the up-keep and maintenance of our musical instruments. Additionally they seek to provide community groups and organizations the use of our beautiful facilities for recitals and concerts. Occasionally when there is a staff vacancy in the area of music, the Committee leads the candidate search and interview process in support of the Mutual Ministry Committee and Congregation Council. In addition to congregants signing up to serve in particular areas (ushers, greeters, communion assistants, assisting ministers, crucifers, acolytes, lectors, nursery attendants, altar guild) we are in need of two additional committee members and a sacristan. The committee members attend seasonal meetings and complete tasks between meeting dates. The Sacristan provides oversight of the sacristy. This position involves keeping track of supplies such as; communion hosts, communion wine, altar linens, baptismal towels and candles, as well as other candles throughout the year. It requires someone who pays attention to details, keeps things in good order, and works kindly with other volunteers and the pastor. Please do complete a Time and Ability form indicating areas in which you can support the worship life of the congregation. And do contact the church office if you are interested in serving as Sacristan or committee member. Thank you.

Serving on the **Altar Guild** is a rotational experience (2 weeks or 1 month at a time). Typically, volunteers are paired with one other person for set-up. Those serving for the 8:00 service are asked to set-up the altar, the communion glasses, refill the candles as necessary, and mark the Bible for scripture readings. At the end of the 8:00 service, volunteers clean-up and set-up for the 10:30 service. If you



choose to serve after the 10:30 service, the expectation is to clean-up and put items away safely. There is a book of directions to follow, and a placemat the outlines where items are placed. Generally, set-up takes roughly 30 minutes before service, 30-40 minutes to clean and set back up for the second service. If you are interested in serving and would like to shadow an Altar Guild Member, please contact Kat Lemke.

*From Bread and Wine to Bountiful Giving*, our stewardship theme, implicitly acknowledges that we are part of God's kingdom. We are fed and nourished at the table of the Lord. And it is through Baptism that we are invited to the table, to the Lord's Supper, to share in the Eucharistic feast.

The gospel readings these last few weeks have been opening to us something regarding life in God's kingdom. We have been following along with the disciples as they are in the presence of Jesus. We have been privy to stories and explanations, and living examples as Jesus makes reference to the kingdom of God. The parable this morning serves as another such example of God's kingdom. This time it is used in different way, not referring to some age yet to come, but to a special relationship to God's sovereign reign.

God has for whatever reason chosen you and me to be part of the kingdom. God has welcomed us into the kingdom through the Word and Water of Holy Baptism. With such election as God's people comes privilege and responsibility. We are to be "light to the Gentiles" we are to be light to the nations, we are to be illuminating things in such a way that God's divine love and purpose is what is shining forth and coming into focus. We are to be bearing fruit worthy of the kingdom. So there are both privileges and responsibilities - These two words are often used together;

A newly conferred degree from University

A newly acquired driving license

A newly issued credit card

A celebration of an eighteenth birthday and voter registration

With the joy of a new pet

With the birth of a child

Why even winning Power Ball!

You can most likely add to this list of privileges and responsibilities based on your life experience. Most of the time the privileges and responsibilities that go with; a new degree, driver's license, credit card, voter registration, pet, child, or winning power ball ticket are rarely talked about. They seem to go unnamed, unclarified, as though the recipient will either figure it out on his or her own, or it won't really matter. As you might expect, I am not a big fan of this approach. I think that with each one of those aforementioned situations, there really does need to be a conversation with someone who has some knowledge about what these privileges and responsibilities brings to bear. What part; the recipient, the conferred, the congratulated, the celebrated, what he or she honestly should know regarding the accompanying credential or the gift itself?

Being a child of God comes with privileges and responsibilities. And unlike modern society that seems to shy away from conversation about these important things, Jesus in telling the parable of the Wicked Tenants pushes a conversation to take place among the religious leaders, among the crowds, among his faithful followers. It was the religious leaders who at the conclusion of the parable realize Jesus is talking about them!



Who are these wicked tenants and why are they so full of hate? There is a starting point for us. The tenants begin to think that the vineyard and all of the production from it is theirs. At the core there is a stewardship issue. To whom does all of this belong? What part if any is theirs? Are the requirements too great, unrealistic, and completely unreasonable? Is aggression or violence called for in response to the landowner or his or her servants or his or her child? What is needed in order to operate a productive vineyard? (We alluded to that last week.) What is reasonable for the landowner to expect? What is reasonable for the tenant to expect? Perhaps the original contract needs to be reviewed clearly spelling out privileges and responsibilities of both tenant and landowner.

It would be nice to think that we aren't connected to those wicked tenants. I personally would like to distance myself from them. But I am not sure that I honestly can do that. What if we are those who think that all of the resources entrusted to us for a time are ours. That is what our North American up-bringing would lead us to believe. Or is our belief system shaped by another? Are they shaped by the One whose ways are not our ways and whose thoughts are not our thoughts? Are they shaped by the One who views everything from a different vantage point, the vantage point of the cross? This one is the Lord, Christ Jesus. He tells the story. This is the story of the one who gives everything, the heir, the Son, the one who ought to be honored, respected, recognized, why even thanked. He gives his life for all.

We who count ourselves among the elect, the chosen, the forgiven, the reconciled, we have been given great privilege and great responsibility. We take much for granted. We leave so much unspoken. None of this comes as a surprise to our Lord Jesus. He is well aware of our willingness to seize control and embrace the gift of life and salvation as if it was something that we have earned, or that it is our right. But through the outpoured love of God the Father, through Christ Jesus, we are given the kingdom, a vineyard of sorts, a garden in which to bear fruit. We are given the opportunity to let the light of Christ shine to illuminate the way for others to see a way forward, a way out of dark places of hopelessness. That is why though our time and ability and financial generosity St. Paul's:

operates a weekly food pantry,

supports the work of Lutheran World Relief,

sends aid where natural disasters strike,

supports early childhood education with a top notch preschool,

concerns itself with education so that young and old can intelligibly articulate the faith,

provides for a robust worship life celebrating the sacraments so God's forgiveness and grace is made known,

assumes debt for renovation "Building in faith for future generations"

offers Youth ministry, Confirmation, Music ministry, AA Fellowship and

funds Benevolence requests supporting people locally, nationally and globally.

When we listen to Jesus' parables we realize that he is speaking about and to us. His desire is that we bear fruit for the kingdom; work alongside our sisters and brothers, recognizing that the kingdom is God's, given and granted to us through his only Son, Christ Jesus, who claims us as his own. With such generosity comes privilege and responsibility. Amen.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 5:1-7** [not printed]

**Psalms 80:7-15**

**SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14**

[Paul writes:] 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.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 21:33-46**

[Jesus said to the people:] “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. <sup>34</sup>When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. <sup>35</sup>But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. <sup>37</sup>Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ <sup>38</sup>But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ <sup>39</sup>So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. <sup>40</sup>Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” <sup>41</sup>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.”

<sup>42</sup>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?’

<sup>43</sup>“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. <sup>44</sup>The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

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

**Next Sunday’s Readings:** Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14.

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