

Worship in the Home: September 27, 2020

Posted on September 22, 2020 by ELCA Worship



Worship in the Home

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary 26

September 27, 2020

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle near where you pray. One person may lead in this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

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

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

God of love, giver of life, 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 Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What 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"? ³As I live, says the LORD God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know

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.

²⁵Yet 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? ²⁶When 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. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet 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?

³⁰Therefore 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. ³¹Cast 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? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the LORD God. Turn, then, and live.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 25:1-9

¹To | you, O LORD,
I lift | up my soul.

²My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.

³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

⁴Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths.

⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

⁶Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness, O LORD.

⁸You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.

⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although being in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but relinquished it all, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God, the Father.

¹²Therefore, 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; ¹³for it is
God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God's good pleasure.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

²³When 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?" ²⁴Jesus 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. ²⁵Did 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?' ²⁶But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷So 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.

²⁸"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹Which 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 dominion of God ahead of you. ³²For 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."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think of this:

Though the Ten Commandments say that punishment for the iniquity of parents will go on to the third and fourth generation, the prophet Ezekiel says otherwise. We shall be punished for only our own sins. Then the prophet counsels us to get a new heart. This prophetic word is still very hard: our own sins are way enough for serious punishment. Like the sons in the parable, we are often the ones who boldly say yes to the will of God and then do nothing. And how shall we get a new heart? But the Gospel according to Matthew has begun to turn toward the story of the cross, and in this Sunday's narrative Jesus stands in the temple, mysterious in his authority, warning the world's authorities, and showing mercy to serious outsiders and sinners. Paul shows

us where that mystery goes: through Christ's death and resurrection, God is at work in us. For a new heart, we are together given the mind of Christ. There is indeed much consolation, compassion and sharing of the Spirit in this word. Starting again, in humility, we may look to the needs of others in a profoundly needy world.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 517), "Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 712). Links to hymns in the public domain are provided below.
[Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need, responding to each petition with the words "Hear our laments, and receive our prayers."

A brief silence.

Throughout the globe is the church: many assemblies are postponed by the virus, our songs quieted, our leaders searching for new ways forward. *A brief silence.* That you will continue to inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ, we pray to you, faithful God.

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Around us nature is strained: polar ice is melting, excessive rains ravage the land, fires consume forests, fields, and homes, and animals are deprived of habitat. *A brief silence.* That you will preserve and protect the earth, we pray to you, mighty God:

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Around us is a needy world: governments allow injustice, violence threatens stability, people experience prejudice, reforms are thwarted, workers are unemployed, medical facilities are strained, children are abused. *A brief silence.* That you will save the people in all the nations of the world, we pray to you, compassionate God:

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

In our nation's courts, we see justice delayed and justice denied. Yet we thank you for the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and for her passion for equality under the law. *A brief silence.* That you will uphold honest judges and insightful juries throughout our criminal justice system, and that you will assist our nation in its task of filling the Supreme Court, we pray to you, righteous God:

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Around us are the sick: there is starvation, the virus continues, many persons receive no medical attention, our neighbors and dear ones are ill. *A brief silence.* That you will bless all ministries of care and will relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit, we pray to you, merciful God.

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Nearby are needs of which we are unaware. *A brief silence.* That you will send your holy angels to uphold all who face personal troubles, we pray to you, benevolent God:

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Inside many hearts there is both joy and sorrow. We pray now for ourselves:

A longer period of silence.

That you will give us new hearts and a new spirit, we pray to you, loving God.

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Before us lived countless of the faithful — the famous and the forgotten, our relatives and strangers. We lament their deaths, and we praise their witness. *A brief silence.* That we may confess Jesus Christ as Lord through our life and at our death, we pray to you, eternal God.

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

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

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you might now sing or read; "Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 814); "O God, My Faithful God" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 806). Links to hymns in the public domain are provided below.

[O God, My Faithful God](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, rich in love, we bless your name and give you thanks. In our need, you make haste to help us. You plant us beside streams of your wisdom, teach us in pastures greening with truth, and guide us on the path of your promise. By your Spirit awaken our faith, that, feasting on your Word, we may love you more fully and serve our neighbor more faithfully; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

Offering Prayer

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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

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.

Then speak the Blessing:

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

Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[Enviado: The Lord Now Sends Us Forth](#)"; "[Jesus, Feed Us](#)"; "[May Your Unfailing Love Be with Us](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 28. **Tuesday** (Michael and All Angels) Revelation 12:7-

12. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Jerome, translator, teacher, died 420) Judges 16:23-

31. **Thursday** Psalm 80:7-15. **Friday** Philippians 2:14-18; 3:1-4a. **Saturday** Jeremiah 6:1-

10. **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church, died 1226; Theodor Fliedner, renewer of society, died 1864) Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:7-15; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase a copy of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw
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Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg
(Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole
Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard,
Judy Wings.

- ✓ **Flu Shots will be given here at Grace on October 22, 9:00 – 11:00. They are requesting a sign-up sheet, just to enable us to spread time to enable to keep the 6' distance. Also asking for participants to wear mask.**
- ✓ **Thank you to those who clean the Church following Worship.**

Mid-week message for September 23, 2020:

You may have heard my aunt died recently in Missouri. Now all six of my aunts and uncles are deceased. This one, Mildred (Dierker) Kirchhoff lived to be 101 years, one month, and one day. She was in quite good mental and physical health until right after she turned 100. My wife Susan and I had a nice visit with her last summer, but were not able to do so this year because she was quarantined after recent surgery. We did leave some fresh orchard peaches for a niece on her side of the family to prepare, and then leave every so often at the nursing home for her. Mildred always appreciated the peaches from us each year.

On the subject of food, in 2019 she shared a heart-warming story from her childhood. Her mother often made an extra sandwich for Mildred to take to school and share with someone who had no food. Those were poor days indeed.

If the fellow student would decline the offer, Mildred would say, "My mother will not be happy if I take this sandwich home so you might as well eat it, so I don't get in trouble." Wow. I'm still impressed how Mildred and her Mom cared that much when they also had so little.

As a strong believer in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I'm 100% certain my aunt has re-joined her husband Lilburn, often known as "Libby" when he was younger. He was my Mom's brother, who died in 2003, the day after his 84th birthday.

Now here is the rest of the story, as Paul Harvey would report on the radio. Only the reporter in this case was my Mom, about sixty years ago when I was a younger boy. She related that Lilburn was almost killed in a knife attack when he was a young man. He was about bled out at a Kansas City hospital. A doctor gave up on saving his life, but a nurse insisted they try to save him. They did, of course. Do you sense a theme here? Consider how each one of us can be an agent for God in helping others. We must be prepared to help however we can. An extra sandwich, perhaps; or faith a life can be saved. Or maybe even a soul led to the Lord.

Peace;

Pastor Bill Sass