

October 11, 2020

19th Sunday after Pentecost

GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: We confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

A: Lord, we confess that we forget that you are our Good Shepherd. We think we are self-made or that we have to handle everything alone. We forget the ways you have overflowed our cup with blessings and protected us from harm. Open our hearts and eyes to see your goodness and remember that you are with us.

P: We come together to celebrate God's promises and goodness. God never tires of forgiving our sins and makes us new each day. Amen.

GATHERING SONG *The King of Love My Shepherd Is* (ELW 502)

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of B-flat major and 4/4 time. The score consists of three systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are as follows:

1 The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness
2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my ran - somed
3 Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but yet in
4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear

fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if
he lead - er; and, where the ver - dant
love he sought me, and on his shoul - der
Lord, be - side me, thy rod and staff my

I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.
pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feed - eth.
gent - ly laid, and home, re - joic - ing, brought me.
com - fort still; thy cross be - fore to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thine unction grace bestoweth;
and, oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

1 The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine forever.

2 Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth
and, where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.

3 Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
with thee, dear Lord, beside me,
thy rod and staff my comfort still;
thy cross before to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thine unction grace bestoweth;
and, oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never.
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.

GREETING (ELW p. 120)

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 (ELW p. 124)

Let us pray. **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.**

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 25:1-9

A reading from Isaiah.

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death—which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone—will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

1 O Lord, you are my God;
I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

2 For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more,
it will never be rebuilt.

3 Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

4 For you have been a refuge to the poor,
a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
5 the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,
you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
the song of the ruthless was stilled.

6 On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

7 And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
8 he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

9 It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

You prepare a table before me, and my cup is running over. (*Ps. 23:5*)

1 The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

2 **The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

3 You restore my soul, O Lord,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

4 **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall | fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

6 **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:1-9

A reading from Philippians.

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

1My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

2I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:1-14

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

1Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 2‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ 5But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, 6while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. 7The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ 10Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless.

13Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14For many are called, but few are chosen."

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

SERMON (ELW p. 125)

I was talking to the Laffrenzens a few weeks ago and they were talking about their camping experience up north near Bemidji. They relayed the story that they were crossing a bridge and heard a familiar voice and, lo behold, it was Mary and Casey Ingenthron right around the bend.

We've all been there. You are off someplace completely different and, out of no where, someone you never would have expected to have been there is there. For me, my most extreme example of this is when I went to Nicaragua. I was eating at a small beach house with my synod group and I heard a familiar voice. The doctor from my internship town in Washington happened to be eating in the very same restaurant.

Repeatedly throughout my life I've heard to always be on your best behavior because you will always know someone wherever you are. You never know who is going to be where, and, if anything, you can pretty much guarantee that you will be surprised by who you find wherever you are.

Today's parable is a problematic and surprising one. The hard thing about parables is that we don't hear who is what in the parables usually. It doesn't say who is God, who we are supposed to be, etc. We have to try to infer and, usually, there is more than one way to infer the situation. It would seem, to me, that God probably is the host of the banquet, just as God is the host of the heavenly banquet we are all awaiting. I struggle to see God being like this host, so angry and violent when his invitation is rejected, but, perhaps this is my own desire to make God into a soft, cuddly being that God simply isn't.

But, there are many parts of this parable that ring very true for me. First, as we so quickly forget, the host of the banquet pours out the best of the best-food, a great celebration, etc. on his guests. Likewise, God blesses us with great things in life. We are surrounded by blessings of food, house, friends, work, a beautiful church building, financial reserves, health care, schools, and it's easy to just take it all for granted. In this way, we so often act like the ungrateful invitees who don't understand the riches that have been laid out in front of them. In the same way, we also often act like the invitees who are too busy with other things to partake in the celebration the host has for them. In the Biblical text, the invitees were busy with their farms and businesses. How easy it is for us to be so busy with our work, families, hobbies and tasks that we don't take the time to rest, relax and enjoy and enjoy the goodness God places in front of us. How easy it is to make our own excuses of why we can't come to church, can't find the time to help our neighbor and more. More than any of us want to admit, coming up with excuses to not attend... even things pertaining to our faith and Christian life...is something most of us can relate to.

But, in positive ways, too, today's passage rings true.... In what I fear the kingdom of God is like and what I hope the kingdom of God is like. The passage alludes that some people we really think should not be in the kingdom of heaven are going to be there. Like so often is in our lives, at the great kingdom banquet we will be and are shocked by who is around us. People we don't expect to be there will probably be there. The Gospel says the host of the banquet noted, "Go therefore into the main

streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' 10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests." This is hard for me, because I really like having the certainty that I know who gets in and who doesn't. I like assuming that God thinks the people I think are good and worthy are the ones who are actually good and worthy. And, I like picturing the heavenly banquet as a sort of reunion of all of those who have given me compliments, encouragement and warm fuzzies in my life.

But today's Gospel takes away that power. It rips out of my hand the metaphorical pencil where I draw the line of who is in and who is out and reminds me that only the host, only God gets to do this task.

Today's Gospel also is one that gives me hope. Like most of you, I have people in my life who are, at various degrees, unchurched. They left the church due to mistreatment or feeling like they just weren't on the same page as most of the people. They have decided that if the church has determined they are worse sinners than everyone else, maybe they don't want to do anything with the church. They have questions and doubts that lead them away or their doubts were met with derision when they tried to express them. They practice another religion and, in some cases, don't see Christians acting very Christlike. They just don't like getting out of bed on Sunday morning and can't find the time at other points in the week. Their lives have other commitments. The list goes on and on, and admittedly, some excuses are better than others. But I often cringe when reading parts of the Bible because I think about those people and I wonder what this all means for them. Today's Gospel, I believe, rings in our ears as doom and gloom, but, if we stop and pause, maybe we realize that it shouldn't. Because what we are looking at is a feast of mismatched people- the good, bad and ugly. We are looking at a great feast that includes a bunch of people who never should have been on the invite list. We are looking at a feast where the host was relentless. He didn't just lick his wounds when his invitations were snubbed. The host was relentless, sending out more and more invitations unless the party was full.

Does this mean we stop sharing the good news, showing grace, opening our doors to the church, going out in love and proclaiming that Jesus brings new life to the world? No, of course not. But maybe it gives us some peace as we share the good news that the greatest of hosts is up to things we don't even know about.

A whole bunch of people who shouldn't have been included in the feast were included. I think when we think about the kingdom of heaven.. which starts here on earth and will be completed in perfection in eternity... I think we are going to look around.... And already do look around and think, "I never would've thought that person should be here." That gives me hope for the people I love. It also stops me in my tracks when I think about those who I'd do just about anything to avoid being in a party with. I don't get to decide. I only get to attend the lavish celebration of a generous host. And, when you put it that way, my anger and judgement just seems silly doesn't it? My prayer and hope is that, as we think and reflect on the kingdom of heaven, and the mismatched bunch we will undoubtedly encounter, that our churches start to be reflections of that and we start to trust that that is who we are and who we should strive to be. Nadia Boltz Weber, a Lutheran pastor who, herself, is completely covered in tattoos, describes her church, "The House for All Sinners and Saints" as an eclectic bunch... those covered with tattoos, those in recovery, GLBT individuals, doubters, and people who look like suburban moms. In her writings, she notes the importance of having all of these types of individuals together, loving and supporting each other in ways that some of them hadn't experienced before and is rarely found in our greater world. I think that's what the kingdom of heaven is like... at least it's what it sounds like from our passage today. And, we know that the kingdom of God isn't just

something we wait for when we die, but, as we pray in the prayer our Lord taught us, the kingdom of heaven comes to us daily, right here and now. We pray, as Luther reminds us, that the kingdom of heaven might come to us also... that we would be a part of it and a reflection of it in the world. May we, as we pray the Lord's prayer today, remember to pray that the kingdom of heaven come to us. May pray to be a reflection of it. May we pray that we are a spitting image of the crazy, mismatched heavenly banquet we hear about today.

How will we ever manage such a task? Well, maybe that brings us to the last part of the parable. To me, this is about the oddest element of this already odd parable. The guy who gets kicked out because he's not wearing a wedding robe. So, is this a Biblical version of "What not to wear?" What is going on? In our context, this doesn't make sense because we are used to going out and shopping for a new wedding dress. In Jesus' day, the host provided the gown. The gowns would be simple and nondescript robes given to all who attended. Everyone looked the same, and all would interact clothed as equals.¹

This crazy, mismatched, kingdom of heaven is possible for us now and in eternity because the great host is clothing us with love, forgiveness, joy and hope. The great host is reminding us that we are, in the end, equals, brothers and sisters, guests of the greatest of feasts.

MUSIC

HYMN OF THE DAY *My Shepherd, You Supply My Need* (ELW 782)

Words

My Shepherd, You Supply My Need

1 My Shepherd, you supply my need;
most holy is your name.
In pastures fresh you make me feed,
beside the living stream.
You bring my wand'ring spirit back
when I forsake your ways,
and lead me, for your mercy's sake,
in paths of truth and grace.

2 When I walk through the shades of death,
your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes,
does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows,
your oil anoints my head.

¹ John O. Reed. What the Bible says about Providing Wedding Garments for Guests (From *Forerunner Commentary*) <https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/21206/Providing-Wedding-Garments-for-Guests.htm>.

3 The sure provisions of my God
 attend me all my days;
 oh, may your house be my abode
 and all my work be praise.
 Here would I find a settled rest,
 while others go and come;
 no more a stranger or a guest,
 but like a child at home.

My Shepherd, You Supply My Need



1 My Shep - herd, you sup - ply my need; most ho - ly is your name.
 2 When I walk through the shades of death, your pres - ence is my stay;
 3 The sure pro - vi - sions of my God at - tend me all my days;



In pas - tures fresh you make me feed, be - side the liv - ing stream.
 one word of your sup - port - ing breath drives all my fears a - way.
 oh, may your house be my a - bode and all my work be praise.



You bring my wan - d'ring spir - it back when I for - sake your ways,
 Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my ta - ble spread;
 Here would I find a set - tled rest, while oth - ers go and come;



and lead me, for your mer - cy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.
 my cup with bless - ings o - ver - flows, your oil a - noints my head.
 no more a strang - er or a guest, but like a child at home.

CREED (ELW p. 126)

**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.**

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

BIBLE BLESSING

A Blessing for Learners Young and Old:

Gracious God: As we gather today, we remember our role as learners and seekers of the faith. We give thanks for all those — present or away — who support the teaching and learning that takes place through our congregation. Be with all — children, youth, and adults — who will be participating this year in our Sunday school and Christian formation groups. Bless our times of study so that we may grow in faith. Bless our times of fellowship so that we may truly live as brothers and sisters in Christ. Bless our times of prayer and worship so that we may be enriched in our spirits. Bless these Bibles and those who read them. Help these youth to make time for Your Word. Help them to have confidence to ask questions. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

Gracious host, fill your church with a spirit of joyous hospitality. We pray for bishops, teachers, church leaders, and all children of God as they invite others to your table of boundless grace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those who will receive our farmer meals today. Bless those who are delivering them and keep them safe. Bless us with a good and safe harvest. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious host, as creation waits with eager longing for redemption, protect your creatures that are mistreated. Restore valleys, mountains and pastures, and still and running waters. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious host, as you set a table in the presence of enemies, so bless the efforts of diplomats, international peace workers, and world leaders who navigate conflict. May they proceed with dialogue and understanding, so that justice and peace prevails. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Gracious host, let your gentleness be known among those who are weary or ill especially...

Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson **Members in Nursing Homes:** Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh **Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Adeline Larson, Jean Bender **Family Members & Friends:** Lois Gruis, Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son) **Our service men and women Our Missionaries:** Chuck & Sybil Rounds in Costa Rica and Love INC. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Strengthen doctors, medical care workers, and caretakers who see to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Gracious host, when we are quick to judge outward appearance, remind us how you clothe all in your mercy. We pray for ministries that provide needed clothing and other personal care assistance in this community (*local ministries can be named*). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Gracious host, as we remember those who have died and are gathered at the heavenly banquet, comfort us with your presence. Assure us of your peace at all times. 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.

OFFERING AND CGC MOMENT

OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 129)

Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 134)

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

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.

BLESSING (ELW p. 136)

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.

SENDING SONG *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* (ELW 742)

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1 What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 2 Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?
 3 Are we weak and heav - y - lad - en, cum - bered with a load of care?

What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged— take it to the Lord in prayer.
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge— take it to the Lord in prayer.

Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit; oh, what need - less pain we bear—
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor - rows share?
 Do your friends de - spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

all be - cause we do not car - ry ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness— take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In his arms he'll take and shield you; you will find a so - lace there.

Words

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
oh, what needless pain we bear--
all because we do not carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged--
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness--
take it to the Lord in prayer.

3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 137)

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.