



## St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

"A Legacy of Worship and Outreach in San Antonio since 1857"

502 East Nueva, San Antonio, Texas 78205  
www.StJohnsSA.org ◇ info@StJohnsSA.org  
Phone 210-223-2611

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A  
September 20, 2020

*Welcome! Today's Gospel Reading includes a rather interesting parable pointing to God's abundant grace in which Jesus says that the Reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays all his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. In the First Reading, when God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah becomes bitter and angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In Holy Baptism we receive the overflowing grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy, we are all beggars.*



### Prelude and Bells

### Chorale Prelude on *Schmuecke dich* by J. S. Bach

### Welcome and Announcements

### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the † Holy Trinity, the Source of life, the Word of salvation, the Spirit of promise.  
**Amen.**

Confident of God's mercy and grace, let us confess our sins to God and one another.

*(A brief silence for personal reflection)*

God of compassion:

**We confess that we have failed to reflect your image upon us.  
We have thought ill of those who differ from us.  
Our love for others has not been genuine.  
We have neglected opportunities to welcome the stranger,  
to feed the hungry, and to mend broken relationships.  
Forgive our sins, O God,  
that our hearts may burn with love for you and for all in need,  
that our lives may point to your never-failing love for all the world.  
Amen.**

Brothers and sisters, buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, your sins are forgiven. The death Christ died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are dead to sin and alive to God in † Christ Jesus.  
**Amen.**

### Choir

### *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

### 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.**

## Kyrie

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and Eternal God:

You show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants.

Because we cannot rely on our own abilities,

grant us your merciful judgment,

and train us to embody the generosity of your Son,

Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

### Jonah 3:10—4:11

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. <sup>4:1</sup>But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup>He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. <sup>3</sup>And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." <sup>4</sup>And the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" <sup>5</sup>Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

<sup>6</sup>The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. <sup>7</sup>But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

<sup>9</sup>But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." <sup>10</sup>Then the Lord said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup>And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Second Reading

## Philippians 1:21-30

<sup>21</sup>For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. <sup>23</sup>I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; <sup>24</sup>but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. <sup>25</sup>Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, <sup>26</sup>so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

<sup>27</sup>Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup>and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. <sup>29</sup>For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—<sup>30</sup>since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Holy Gospel

## Matthew 20:1-16

The good news of Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew:

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. <sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' <sup>7</sup>They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

<sup>8</sup>When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' <sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

<sup>13</sup>But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

<sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord:

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Sermon

**Pastor James Dew**

## Anthem

**Psalm 145 by Christian Stevens**

## **Apostles' Creed**

With the whole Church in heaven and on earth, we confess our faith...

**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**

God calls us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers as dear to us as our own needs. Loving our neighbors as ourselves, we lift our prayers on behalf of the Church and the world which surrounds us:

Holy God, we pray for your Church, as you gather us for worship and then send us out into your world to serve, that we may bring Christ's living presence wherever we go throughout the entire week ahead. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray, O God, for a deepening awareness of the many ways in which you are indeed with us, that we may be given eyes to see the movement of your hand in the people and events in our lives, and in the life we share. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of all, we pray that you would open wide our hearts to invite, to welcome, to give, and to share with all around us the abundance of gifts you offer. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Mighty God, we continue to pray for all whose lives have been struck by recent storms and fires, as well as those who labor to assist them, that you will renew their strength, keep them safe, and lead them toward new days of hope. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift up to you, O God, the well-being of so many, including *Bob Cauble, Chris Gates, Danny Myers, Janice Williams, Ralph Detwiler, Claudine Michalek, Kim Friesenhahn, Kenny and Cherie Knippa, Frances Franz, Alwin Schaefer, Bill Brewer, Paul Mason, Albert and Deleyce Tietze, Paul and Gloria Boenisch, Bill Witte, Beth Knox, Tom Bartholomew, Don Vogt, Lee and Karen Iredale, Mary Jane Schessenhagen, Dean Olson, Steve Wendel, Joe Reiner, Jonathan Sulaica*, as well as those whom we also name, that you would bring new strength to their bodies and their spirits. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy, O God, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*(Please verbally greet those nearest you these or similar words: "Peace be with you.")*

## Great Thanksgiving

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.**

Holy, Mighty, and Merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
In great love for us and for all your creation, you sent to us Jesus, your Son,  
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,  
who preached good news to the poor,  
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

For on 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, as often as you drink of it, for the remembrance of me.

As often as we eat of this bread and share this cup, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Creator God, send your Spirit of peace upon us  
and upon these simple gifts of your Table.  
As we share the bread, we share the presence of Christ,  
strengthened to go out with forgiveness in our hearts.  
As we receive the cup, we share Christ's Spirit with our neighbors,  
and are called to reach out to all as our sisters and brothers,  
especially those held captive by the brokenness of the world.

As you once gathered your children to lead them to that promised land,  
so you will bring all your people from the very ends of time itself,  
to seat us around your heart, where we will feast on your grace,  
lifting our hearts to praise you forever and ever. **Amen.**

Remember us, Lord, in your kingdom, and help 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.**

## **Holy Communion**

*We believe that Christ is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine and we welcome all who wish to receive the Holy Sacrament. During this time of pandemic, individual servings of the Eucharist are being offered in the pews at the direction of the Pastor.*

## **Communion Prayer**

God of abounding grace:  
In these gifts of bread and wine  
you give us, weak and tired as we are,  
your Son as our companion.  
We open ourselves to his strength and love.  
May he help us in the heat of the day  
to bear the burdens of our struggles  
and to seek your will in all we do.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Benediction**

Go out in the strength of God's gracious gifts.  
Live lives worthy of the gospel of Christ.  
Stand firm in one spirit.  
Strive with one mind for the faith of the gospel.  
And may the power and the presence of God go with you.  
May the call of † Christ lead you into fruitful labor.  
And may the Holy Spirit fill you with the joy of grace. **Amen.**

## **Choir**

***On Our Way Rejoicing***

## **Dismissal**

Let us go in peace and seek the ways of the Lord.  
**In the Name of Christ. Amen.**

## **Postlude**

***Prelude in G Major by J. S. Bach***

*Worship is central to who we are as a people of God. Every time we gather to hear and respond to the Word, to offer up our prayers for the needs of many, and to receive Christ's living presence in the consecrated bread and wine, we seek to "become what we receive", namely, the Body of Christ for the sake of the life of the world. As we are gathered, fed, and then sent back out in mission, God empowers us to be bearers of blessing and vessels of grace, commissioning us to intentionally live out the reign of God throughout the course of our weekly living.*

## This Week at St. John's

Today, September 20 @ 8:30am  
Today, September 20 @ 10:00am  
Wednesday, Sept 23 @ 12:15pm

Pastor's Class  
Worship  
Word, Silence, and Prayer - Online  
(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81036067946>)

*Please see our online calendar at [www.stjohnssa.org](http://www.stjohnssa.org) for other events.  
For prayer requests, please contact the church office  
(210) 223-2611 or [info@StJohnsSA.org](mailto:info@StJohnsSA.org)*

## Opportunities to Make a Positive Difference

**CAM Clothing Needs** CAM is currently accepting gently-used clothing items for both adult men and women; casual wear, jeans, khakis, t-shirts, tennis shoes, and athletic shoes. (They are not accepting at this time any slacks, suits, heels, men's dress shoes, prom dresses, or business wear.) Contact Sarah Kory at [skory@cam-sa.org](mailto:skory@cam-sa.org) or call 210-223-4099 with any questions.

**CAM Sandwiches** Every other Tuesday, we deliver sandwiches to CAM to help feed others. If you would like more information about this ministry and how you can lend support, please contact Bea Imken at 210-887-2217.

**Lutheran Disaster Response** The ELCA is often the first on the scene to provide emergency help and continued assistance whenever trouble strikes. Right now, the Lutheran Disaster Response is in need of your generous donations to speed aid to those whose lives have been impacted by recent hurricanes, wildfires, and other calamities. You can donate at <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response>

**Synodical Ministries** Closer to home, you can donate to any number of our own synodical ministries at <https://www.swtsynod.org/give>



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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