



WELCOME TO WORSHIP
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 20, 2026
8:00 AM Traditional Worship

Pastor: Paula Geister-Jones **Lay Ministry Administrator:** Jenny Hoffman
Organist/Pianist: Linda Kunz
Lector: Colby Smith **Acolyte:** Ella Pavolonis
Ushers: Jeffrey Morgan, Jerry Graffin, Jerry Buskager & Mark Holzhuter
Technical Support: Thomas Lehr, Roger Slack

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

CALL TO WORSHIP: "Lord of Light" Taylor/Patterson

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

C: Amen.

P: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: We confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

P: Hear this good news: We have peace with God through ✠ Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

Stand

HYMN: “All Are Welcome” #641 ELW vss. 1, 3 & 4

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

KYRIE: page 120 ELW (*front of the hymnal*)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE: page 121 ELW (*front of hymnal*)

SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: 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.

Sit

READING: Jonah 3:10—4:11

¹⁰ God saw what they had done, that they had turned away from their evil lives. He *did* change his mind about them. What he said he would do to them he

didn't do. ^{4 1-2} Jonah was furious. He lost his temper. He yelled at God, "God! I knew it—when I was back home, I knew this was going to happen! That's why I ran off to Tarshish! I knew you were sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness!" ³ "So, God, if you won't kill them, kill *me*! I'm better off dead!" ⁴ God said, "What do you have to be angry about?" ⁵ But Jonah just left. He went out of the city to the east and sat down in a sulk. He put together a makeshift shelter of leafy branches and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ God arranged for a broad-leaved tree to spring up. It grew over Jonah to cool him off and get him out of his angry sulk. Jonah was pleased and enjoyed the shade. Life was looking up. ⁷⁻⁸ But then God sent a worm. By dawn of the next day, the worm had bored into the shade tree and it withered away. The sun came up and God sent a hot, blistering wind from the east. The sun beat down on Jonah's head and he started to faint. He prayed to die: "I'm better off dead!" ⁹ Then God said to Jonah, "What right do you have to get angry about this shade tree?" Jonah said, "Plenty of right. It's made me angry enough to die!" ¹⁰⁻¹¹ God said, "What's this? How is it that you can change your feelings from pleasure to anger overnight about a mere shade tree that you did nothing to get? You neither planted nor watered it. It grew up one night and died the next night. So, why can't I likewise change what I feel about Nineveh from anger to pleasure, this big city of more than 120,000 childlike people who don't yet know right from wrong, to say nothing of all the innocent animals?"

P: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "Alleluia!" page 124 ELW

**Alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia**

The Gospel is announced...

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 20th Chapter

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 20:1-16

¹⁻² "God's kingdom is like an estate manager who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. They agreed on a wage of a dollar a day, and went to work. ³⁻⁵ "Later, about nine o'clock, the manager saw some

other men hanging around the town square unemployed. He told them to go to work in his vineyard and he would pay them a fair wage. They went.

⁵⁻⁶ “He did the same thing at noon, and again at three o’clock. At five o’clock he went back and found still others standing around. He said, ‘Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?’ ⁷ “They said, ‘Because no one hired us.’ “He told them to go to work in his vineyard. ⁸ “When the day’s work was over, the owner of the vineyard instructed his foreman, ‘Call the workers in and pay them their wages. Start with the last hired and go on to the first.’

⁹⁻¹² “Those hired at five o’clock came up and were each given a dollar. When those who were hired first saw that, they assumed they would get far more. But they got the same, each of them one dollar. Taking the dollar, they groused angrily to the manager, ‘These last workers put in only one easy hour, and you just made them equal to us, who slaved all day under a scorching sun.’ ¹³⁻¹⁵ “He replied to the one speaking for the rest, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair. We agreed on the wage of a dollar, didn’t we? So take it and go. I decided to give to the one who came last the same as you. Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Are you going to get stingy because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ “Here it is again, the Great Reversal: many of the first ending up last, and the last first.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Stand

HYMN: “Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak” #676 ELW

APOSTLE’S CREED

**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

P: Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers,
confident that God hears us.

A brief silence

P: Hold your church accountable for our unwillingness to share your good
news and our anger at your generosity to others. Nourish us by your grace
to be witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to the climate crisis
so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great
goodness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their
employees. Reconcile conflicts between employees. Fill places of
employment with camaraderie and bring an end to employment disparity.
Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Encourage any who cannot work or who cannot work a full day with the
truth that their value comes from your everlasting love for them. Provide for
those who are injured, ill, and for all in any need. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Strengthen all those in this congregation whose labor serves the needs of
others in the community. Inspire all in this congregation to support
community endeavors with our time and talents. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Comfort us with the promise of the resurrection as we remember all our loved ones whose desire to be with Jesus is fulfilled. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Sit

OFFERTORY: "All Who Love and Serve Your City" Weber/Cherwien

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: God of creation,

C: you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come! The body of Christ given for you. The blood of Christ shed for you.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Music is played as those who wish to come forward for communion come forward and kneel at the communion rail. Others are invited to commune in your pew. ELW #471 Let Us Break Bread Together; ELW #477 I Received the Living God; ELW #481 Come to the Table

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace till life everlasting.

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Sustaining God,

C: with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stand

BLESSING

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace ✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

C: Thanks be to God.

SENDING HYMN: “To Be Your Presence” #546 ELW

POSTLUDE: “Voices Raised to You” Jennings/Farlee