**Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

639 Elm St Cheney WA 99004 509-235-6300

[www.emmanuelcheney.org](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Carian%5CDocuments%5CEMMANUEL%5CWorship%5CLent%202020%5Cwww.emmanuelcheney.org) secretary@emmanuelcheney.org

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**At Home Worship October 18, 2020**

**WE GATHER**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

**Amen.**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *(silence for reflection)*

Faithful God,

**Have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our won ways. We pass judgement on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of +Jesus Christ. Let by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God’s work in the world. **Amen**.

**HYMN**: Lift Every Voice and Sing

<https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/10/Lift-Every-Voice-and-Sing.pdf>

<https://youtu.be/WPxMlhIbZpU>

**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, Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**WE HEAR THE WORD**

**First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7**

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him— and the gates shall not be closed:
I will go before you and level the mountains,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron,
I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me.
I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god.
   I arm you, though you do not know me,
so that they may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
   I am the Lord, and there is no other.
I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe;
   I the Lord do all these things.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

**Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters\* beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of people we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place where your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. For the people of those regions\* report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.

**Gospel**: **Matthew 22:15-22**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, ‘Whose head is this, and whose title?’ They answered, ‘The emperor’s.’ Then he said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

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

**SERMON:** *(see last page)*

**WE RESPOND**

**HYMN:** ELW 686, “We Give Thee But Thine Own”

<https://youtu.be/IHR1PQ5YwLo>

**APOSTLE’S CREED:**

We confess our shared faith with the words of the 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 THE PEOPLE**

With confidence in God’s grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need, responding to each petition with the words “In mercy, receive our prayers.”

We pray for the church around the world: that church leaders be supported in their ministries, hat national and local churches receive the necessary funding to accomplish their tasks; and that, hearing you call us by name, we join with all the baptized to give you praise, even in this time of great trouble.
You are great, O God, our Redeemer:
**in mercy, receive our prayers.**

We pray for the earth, the lands, the waters, the animals: that what has been destroyed or harmed be renewed; that the wildness of both storms and viruses be tamed; and that all people become faithful stewards of your good creation.
You are great, O God, our Creator:
**in mercy, receive our prayers.**

We pray for the nations of the world: that violence between and within nations cease; that ELCA World Hunger, the World Food Programme of the United Nations, and other relief agencies be enabled to feed those who face starvation; that elections in the world’s democracies be conducted fairly; and that the people of our country shun acts of hostility and sedition.
You are great, O God, our Sovereign:
**in mercy, receive our prayers.**

We pray for a right use of taxation: that laws concerning taxes reflect justice for all; that tax monies be directed to worthy uses; and that citizens honestly pay what is fairly charged, so that our nation may be maintained.
You are great, O God, our Judge:
**in mercy, receive our prayers.**

On this day commemorating St. Luke, we pray for all ministries of healing: that hospitals and clinics receive adequate resources; that medical care be improved in neighborhoods of poverty, in prisons, and in refugee camps; that physicians and nurses be upheld; and that kindly hospice care be available to the dying.
You are great, O God, our Healer:
**in mercy, receive our prayers.**

We pray for all in need: for all who suffer from the coronavirus; for all who are living with  high anxiety; for those who are unemployed; for those evicted from their housing; for all who experience prejudice based on skin color, ethnicity, or economic status; for those we name here before you. .  .  .
You are great, O God, our Comforter:
**in mercy, receive our prayers.**

Hear us when we call upon you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
**Amen.**

**OFFERING:** *Part of our worship of God is giving of our talents, our passions, our gifts, our possessions, our time. Please take a moment to commit to healthy ways give back to God through service or financial gifts.*

Let us pray; **Blessed are you, O God, make of all things, You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Bless our offerings that they may be a sign of your love in the world. Amen.**

**LORD’S SUPPER**

*We not only remember, but we proclaim, we preach to each other and ourselves, Christ is present for us in, with, and under this simple bread and wine. You are invited to use any bread, juice or wine you choose and proclaim that Christ is for you!*

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.”

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

**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.**

*Knowing you are in spirit with all the company of saints and Christians around the globe, share the bread and cup with these words:*

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**Post Communion Prayer:**

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this time nourished and forgiven, to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of Jesus Christ and let by the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**HYMN:** God of Grace and God of Glory

<https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/10/God-of-Grace-and-God-of-Glory.pdf>

<https://youtu.be/KcFDuUDLsHo>

**WE ARE SENT**

**Benediction**

God in unity and trinity, showing diversity and harmony,

Bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

**Amen.**

Parts of our Worship Service are curated from the following sources:

Reflection material: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Sermon: “It’s Not About the Taxes” Preacher: Rev Steve Brauer-Rieke

*(outdoors, outside a business*) My name is Steve Brauer-Rieke, and I am the coordinator for the ELCA Region 1 disaster preparedness program. I'm pinch hitting for Bishop Kuempel today who usually prepares a sermon - she or one of her staff - for those of you in the Northwest Intermountain Synod. But they're all busy getting ready for the Bishop’s Convocation which takes place tomorrow. So I thought we fun today to come to my tax accountant office this is Wicker Leisy Accountants, who do my taxes, because the text seems to be about taxes. But you know what? As I read the text I find out that's wrong. The story is not about taxes. It's about this. (holds up coin). Silver. So we're in the wrong place. Get ready, we need to move.

*(different location, wearing bicycling shirt)* Where we are now is the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office in Portland OR. I took my jacket off because my trip here was a little longer and sweatier than yours was. But I brought you here for a reason. I said that our text today is not about taxes. Whether it's about this- silver. It’s about symbols of abusive government authorities.

Now why have I brought you here? I know this place well a couple years ago and number of religious leaders and I came here a couple times because ICE officers had arrested and illegally or detained 30 some men. Most of them were Sihks. Some of them were a Latino workers. They were taken from their homes, from their livelihood, from their families, from their children, and were being held at Sheridan prison down the road.

We came here to knock on that door, which at that time was glass, to ask if we could see the director to ask about that. Because they were not allowed any legal representation nor were they allowed visits from religious support people. So we knocked on the door asked to see the director. we were told no, the doctor did not want to see us. So we asked if we could make an appointment. They said no we don't make appointments for that. So we called and our calls were never returned. So we came several times to knock at the door to ask if we could talk. At that time I was Bishop of the Oregon Synod, and it didn't make sense to me that public officials would not meet with citizens of this country.

Today this place is boarded up, because the discontent that we experience right now, today, has erupted in violence. And sometimes that violence has been directed at this building as a symbol of what *some* interpret as abusive government interference in our lives. What does that have to do with this? *(holds up coin)* With silver?

Here's our story today. What we read in our story from the gospel is that the Pharisees want to discredit Jesus and make him look like a fool. So they send some of their disciples, and end up with some of the Herodians, that's interesting. And they come to Jesus and they say, “Jesus we know you're wise and you’re fair. And you know the law and you’re partial to no one. We have a question for you: is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor? or not?” Now the text says that Jesus is well aware of their malice. And he says, “You hypocrites! Show me the coin used to pay the taxes.” And they show him the coin.

I gotta wonder who had it. I mean the Pharisees would never touch a Roman denarius. That was the coin *(referring to coin being displayed*) incidentally, the coin the realm, a silver denarius. You see Rome had been occupying the Jewish nation for over 60 years by the time that Jesus was born. And the people hated them. They were abusive. They had to pay taxes and the silver Roman denarius was the value of a soldier’s daily wage - the very people that the Jews were abused and put up on by. And they hated that.

But it was also a silver coin you see, because the Roman Empire had another rule, and that rule was that no occupied country could mint coins in silver. They could use copper, they could use brass, but no silver coins. Why was that? Silver is wealth. Silver is power. And the Roman Empire was built on power and privilege.

We know that the people in Jesus’ times had coins. In mark chapter 12 there's a story about the windows mite: that's a penny. We know there were money changers at the temple. Do you know why? The money changers were not at the temple that gives you a fair exchange rate on your Babylonian drachmas, they were there to make sure that none of these damn silver Roman denarius got into the offering plate. Because that surely would be an offense to God.

So who had the coin? It wasn't the Pharisees! They thought it was blasphemous. It had to be one of the Herodians who came with the Pharisees. You see the Herodians were functionaries in Herod’s court and people considered Herod to be in league with Rome. Who were also were untrustworthy abusive and unclean. So Jesus says, “Show me the coin.” Somebody brings it forward. Jesus does not take the coin but he looks over and says, “Interesting. Whose likeness and title is on the coin?” They say, “The emperor’s.” Yes, there was a graven image of the emperor on the coin. Jewish coins never had pictures of people on them. It was considered a violation of the commandment against making graven images in the image of God which humans were considered to be in. The only acceptable image of God. And the title! The title on the coin said “Flavius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus Caesar”. Another blasphemous indicator.

It’s not about the taxes what about taxes. It's about the silver. It's about the images that we interpret around power, privilege, lack of power. So this place is interpreted by many as a symbol of abusive power. And the reason it is boarded up now, is because as other symbols of abusive power layer themselves upon each other right now. With the Black Lives Matter movement and the imposition of federal troops that we've seen here in Portland, people are becoming violent. And that violence spilled out on this place - a symbol. The silver. People get hurt in such a world. People get killed in such a world.

So Jesus was murdered. Several black individuals have been in the news lately having been murdered, arrested, imprisoned. Harvey Milk was assassinated. All around the symbols of our discontent and our ability to navigate the world feeling. George Floyd was killed in such a cauldron of tension.

So Jesus? What do you think? Still lawful? Still in accordance with God's will? is it wholesome? is it holy? to pay taxes to the emperor?

Jesus is not fooled. Jesus knows the hypocrisy and intentions behind the question. And so he asked us to look at the symbol, and think about it. So that we too might understand the real question. And then he says, “We have a problem, don't we? Here’s what I think. You need to give to the government things that are owing the government. And you need to render to God, the things that faith demands.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

 A 100 years after the Roman Empire's murder of Jesus another “messiah” arose. His name was Simon bar Kokhba. Under his military leadership Jerusalem won freedom from Roman tyranny. The year was AD 132.

Upon freedom one of the first things Israel did was to overprint silver, Roman denarii, with images of the temple, cornucopias, or other natural images. They remembered about silver.

*(image of ancient coin)* This silver Jewish zuz, struck in AD 133 reads, “Year two of the Freedom of Israel.”

*(image of another ancient coin)* And this silver sela was struck in AD 134. It reads, “For the freedom of Jerusalem”.

In AD 135 Simon bar Kokhba and his followers were killed by Roman troops as the Empire once again claimed Israel as their own.