**Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

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**At Home Worship October 11, 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**.

**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. 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.

**HYMN: O God Our Help In Ages Past**

<https://youtu.be/yKP_XxCBDZY>

**WE HEAR THE WORD**

First Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

1O 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.
2For 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.
3Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
4For 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, 5the 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.

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.
7And the LORD will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
8the LORD will swallow up death forever.
Then the LORD GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of the chosen people God will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
9It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God, for whom we have waited; so that God might save us.
This is the LORD from whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in the salvation of the LORD.

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

**Psalm 23**

1The LORD | is my shepherd; I shall not | be in want.
2The LORD makes me lie down | in green pastures
and leads me be- | side still waters.
3You restore my | soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways | for your name’s sake.
4Though 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.
5You prepare a table before me in the presence | of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is | running over.
6Surely 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

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.

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

**Gospel**: Matthew 22:1-14

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

1Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 2“The dominion 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.’ 14“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

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

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

**WE RESPOND**

**HYMN: Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life**

<https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/10/Where-Cross-the-Crowded-Ways-of-Life.pdf>

**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**

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

*A brief silence.*

That even through global sorrows the church can rejoice in your salvation,
that bishops, pastors, deacons, and church leaders be sustained for their ministries,
that churches find strength in ecumenical and interracial collaboration,
that church members resolve their conflicts in peace,
and that all the baptized find ways in this difficult time to uphold what is honorable and just:
We pray for the church, O God our Shepherd:
**receive our prayers.**

That the damaged places on earth be restored to fruitfulness,
that animals in the wild be safeguarded,
and that we humans will be dedicated to a commendable use of your creation,
that harvests are safe and plentiful,

that we treat the earth in ways it may sustain our children and grandchildren,
We pray for the earth, O God our Creator:
**receive our prayers.**

That national conflicts be resolved without warfare and destruction,
that the work of diplomats and international peace workers be honored,
that leaders of nations attend to the needs of the poor,
that our country be preserved from discord, rancor, and violence,
that the election process will be just,
that prejudice based on ethnicity, skin color, and economic status be ended,
and that justice will prevail in our laws and through our courts,
We pray for peace and justice, O God our Ruler:
**receive our prayers.**

That the plague of the coronavirus will subside,
that all who are sick with the virus, from rulers to refugees, be healed,
that people living with fear be comforted,
that medical workers be supported and medical supplies be made everywhere available,
and that a vaccine be developed and fairly distributed,
We pray during this pandemic, O God our Healer:
**receive our prayers.**

That those who suffer from want be assisted,
that those without work find jobs,
that children be educated,
that ministries of care be strengthened to feed those who hunger and those without homes,
that extremism be lessened and a spirit of cooperation be nurtured,
and for all who are sick, whose names we call out here. . . (*see October Newsletter*)
We pray for all in need, O God our Guardian:
**receive our prayers.**

That you receive our thanks for all those who have died in the faith,
that when facing our own death, you give us hope,
and that you grant us your peace throughout our days,
We praise and pray to you, O God our Homeland:
**receive our prayers.**

Into your hands, merciful God our Father, we offer ourselves and all the world,
through 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**: Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

 <https://blogs.elca.org/worship/files/2020/09/Joyful-Joyful-We-Adore-Thee.pdf>

<https://youtu.be/A8udnFjf958>

**WE ARE SENT**

**Benediction**

The God of compassion, hope and joy,

Our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,

Bless your feet to carry you into places of need.

Bless your lips to proclaim love and mercy.

Bless your heart to love and listen to those you encounter.

Bless your hands to care for the needs of your neighbors.

Bless you to be a blessing to others.

Now and always.

**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:

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and redeemer. Amen.

For a fun book about parties and proper attire, please follow the YouTube Link in the comments:

<https://youtu.be/gSBgEiGoj54>

The most common human reactions when receiving an invitation: Do I want to go? Who else will be there? What should I wear?

And then there are the social implications: If I go will they expect me to invite them over to my place? How do I reciprocate this? Do I need to bring food? Wine? A gift? Can I bring a date or friend?

Human relationships are complicated.

But in my first reading of this parable, relationships with God are complicated! The kingdom of heaven is like. . .

A bunch of guests who won’t show up for a wedding celebration?

A bunch of guests who kill the host’s slaves because they’ve been invited to a banquet?

A host who sends out for the poor, lame, evil and good, all the people hanging out on street corners, to come to his son’s wedding feast?

A host who is so deeply offended by the poor clothing choice of his guest that he commands the guest to be tied up and thrown out?

I can imagine a multitude of social norms and expectations that Jesus is playing with here, that frankly we might not understand, given the fact we don’t live in the same time, place, culture, etc. But what if we focus on what Jesus is upset about, what is Jesus saying in this parable conversation? Always, always Jesus is against the forces that deal in death. They may be called the evils of human nature, societal issues of classism/racism/sexism/greed, or demonic influences. Jesus is against that which stands in the way of humanity and all creation having abundant life. If Jesus frees us, what is binding us, enslaving us?

Let me start by saying that equating the host / king in this story one to one with God is problematic to say the least! Yes, we have instances of God being violent and causing nation to rise up against nation, to ‘smite’ you might say. But if that is the image of God we present and hold up as the kingdom of heaven that then leaves us room to imitate that behavior as well. Colonial powers often used passages like this to keep indigenous peoples under their power and control. Dr Raj Nadella writes, “normalizing depictions of God as angry and violent ruler who ruthlessly punishes others has the effect of condoning imperial violence—past and present—that operates in arbitrary ways and dehumanizes people at the margins.”

What if instead we look at a king who longs to be in relationship with others? What if invitations are sent and refused. What if all the ones we would judge as unworthy are the ones invited? Would you choose to go to the wedding banquet filled with people who have no homes, struggle with addiction or mental illness, have chronic disfiguring diseases? Probably not if we are honest with ourselves.

What if the poor, the lame, the sick, the powerless do attend? Are they then perfect in every way because they came to the banquet? Because they are in relationship with the king?

Evidently not, if we look closely at the man cast out for wearing the wrong clothes. Or is that really the reason he was cast out? Robert Farrar Capon's interpretation in the book "Kingdom, Grace, Judgment" is based on the fact this guest doesn’t speak with the king, his host, when greeted as friend. He refuses relationship.

Or maybe it has more to do with the fact given the generous grace and gift of abundance, this man does not ‘bear fruit.” He takes the gift and hides it under a bushel, he doesn’t show he is clothed in Christ, he doesn’t live out the love he’s been given.

This is certainly one of the texts that I hope Jesus will explain to me face to face sometime. But as we are in conversation with the Holy Spirit breathing through (literally inspiring) the scripture. As we are in conversation with Jesus and those he was in conversation with in the parable. As we are in conversation with the characters of the parable itself. Let us also remember to be in conversation with one another.

David J. Lose, in Making Sense of Scripture, reminds us that the Bible “was written by lots of different people, usually with a community in mind. It’s been collected, hand­ed down, and interpreted by com­munities, and it tells a communal story, the story of what it means to be part of the family of God. When you read it with others you come closer … to realizing its intention—to build a community of faith around its confession of the God who is out to be in relationship with a community, the community we call ‘humanity’”.

Let us pray,

Holy and gracious God, open us to conversations with your Spirit, with scripture, with conversation partners who are different than us. May be learn, may we receive. Let us join you fully in relationship at the banquet where all tears will be wiped away. Amen.