

Church of the Divine Love

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – PROPER 12

JULY 30, 2023 9:00 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **1 Kings 3:5-12**

Psalm 119:129-136

Second Lesson: **Romans 8:26-39**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
Hymn during Consecration – on insert	
The Lord’s Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn –	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday July 30, 2023

Genesis 29:15-28; Psalm 105:1-11,45b; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33,44-52.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

This week we continue to go through Jesus’ parables as recorded in the gospel according Matthew, chapter thirteen. Today in our Gospel reading we had five parables of the Kingdom of heaven, or the Kingdom parables as they are usually called. The parable of a mustard seed, the parable of leaven, the parable of a man who bought the field, and the parable of a merchant who bought a pearl, and the parable of a net. Today we’ll focus on first four of these parables.

Let’s begin with ‘mustard seed’ and ‘leaven’. What are they about? Of course, it’s easy – about the Kingdom of heaven. But, wait, what is this Kingdom of heaven? Parables won’t help us to understand what Jesus is trying to tell us about this Kingdom, if we don’t even know what this Kingdom is. This is important. Language can be and often is confusing. And we want to communicate our message as clearly as possible. So, what is this Kingdom of God? It is us. The Kingdom of God is all God’s chosen people, chosen before the creation of the world, called and gathered together under one King, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is the everlasting Kingdom that was prophesized already in the Old Testament times by Samuel, Daniel and others. This is the Kingdom which will surpass all kingdoms, and which will remain forever. So where is this Kingdom of God? Good question. Where his chosen people live according to the

laws of His Kingdom? Where we live having Jesus as the highest authority. How is that? When we live not using others for our benefit, but serving others with all our gifts and resources. When we turn greed into generosity, self-promotion and arrogance into humility and forgiveness. When instead of restlessness we live in peace.

Now, back to the parables. It is important to notice how Jesus began these parables. The kingdom of heaven IS like. IS like. Not will be like, but is like. What Jesus is telling us is what His Kingdom, His reign looks like these days. And, honestly, it looks embarrassing. Would you agree? Do you see much of splendor of His so-called reign? Is His Kingdom really superior that all others? Can you see that this Kingdom in the ultimate Kingdom, that this King, Jesus Christ, is the one to whom all knees will bow? I don't know about you, but I don't see it. I can't see it. And people in Jesus' time couldn't see it either. They had been waiting for this Kingdom to be established for centuries and millennia. Now, this man, Jesus Christ, He claimed to be the promised Messiah. OK, but when are you going to establish your Kingdom? When will we receive our seats of honor in your Kingdom? When will you drive away all our enemies? When will finally our cause triumph? Jesus disciples were confused, as were many hundreds and thousands of those who witnessed miracles done by Jesus. When are you going to establish your Kingdom, so that we can see it? First two parables contain Jesus answers to our questions.

What happens when life does not work out the way we want? What do we do when we are surprised by the unexpected or devastated by the unwanted? All of us probably have experienced those moments. For some it is the breakup of a relationship. For others it may be the breakdown of physical or mental health. The unexpected may show up as the loss of a job or the failure of a business. There are all sorts of ways in which, no matter how hard we work, how good we are, or what we do, life just does not give us what we want. The problem is that life doesn't always work that way. In fact, Jesus says that is not even how the kingdom of heaven works. Sometimes real life, kingdom life, is like a net dragged through the sea. It pulls up both the good and the bad. Other times it is like a field that you see day after day. It's always there. Not much changes. It's just an ordinary field like any other field except that it is not. Deep within that ordinary dirt is unseen treasure waiting to be discovered.

Most of us have lived long enough to know that, despite our desires and hopes, we do not always get what we want. The good and the bad, the dirt and the treasure, are never far from each other. Nothing is as it seems. What you see is not always what you get. Sometimes you choose Rachel and you wake up with Leah. That's when we have to make a decision about our faith and how, or even whether, we will move forward. Can we trust that there is more happening in life than we can see or understand? Can we look at a mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, and see contained within it the greatest of shrubs, a tree in which birds' nest? Or is our faith limited to what we see here and now, what can be verified by facts and logic, to what fits our desires and expectations? That is the dilemma we are facing in our world today as we receive what we did not choose. Those are the questions many in this country must answer as they look for a job, go without healthcare, or struggle to make ends meet. That faith question is the challenge for everyone who has ever thought life was one way and discovered it was another. That's where Jacob is today.

We each have stories of family dysfunction, sorrow, loss, despair, and brokenness; stories of how things did not work out for us, sometimes through our own fault and other times simply by chance or the circumstances of life. Those stories are probably not the first place we turn to when we are looking for God. That's not generally where we expect to find God. What you see, however, is not always what you

get. God is always somehow mixed into our stories of dysfunction, brokenness, sorrow, and despair like yeast mixed in with three measures of flour. You can't see it or separate it out but it is there, working, leavening, and transforming the flour into something new and alive.

Even when we choose Rachel and we get Leah the leaven of God's life, the leaven of God's love, the leaven of God's presence, the leaven of God's healing is working within us to transform and make new our lives. The leavening power of God within us can do more than we can ask or imagine. What we see is not all we get. Hear, then, another parable. The kingdom of heaven is like a man who chose Rachel, the younger daughter, the beautiful and graceful one, to be his wife and after the wedding he awoke in the morning with Leah, the older daughter. What Jesus is telling is that when the Kingdom of heaven will be revealed in its glory, it will be such a surprise for us, for it will be much, much better, much, much greater than we could ever imagine. This is where we are heading. To the reality that exceeds all our dreams.

Sometimes we don't know what to do with the portion of God's Kingdom that we've been given. Even right now, we are in flux, we don't know what the future holds for the church. But even in that unknowing, we have an advocate, the Holy Spirit that helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. As Paul says in today's reading from his letter to the Romans, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." It might not look like what we think it should look like, but God knows better. We must trust God. The God that uses what others think is unusable. The God that calls us to love others with reckless abandon. The God that sees in us what others cannot see. By living this way, we become of what the Kingdom of Heaven is made. **Amen.**

9 PENTECOST	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING	
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
THE TRANSFIGURATION	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
	10:15	VESTRY MEETING	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Roe Prosser

SUPPORT FRED'S PANTRY CHOPP ! Drop donation in the Kitchen of the Carriage House.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Lourdes S.	Kaylee
Bob Curley	Arlene Goodenough	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Bethany
Michael & Family	Warren	Dennis
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Phil Ryder	Carolyn
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Robert Sweat	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Carol K.
Mary & Family	Christopher	Amy
Nathan Treadwell	Vincent	Judy
Ciara	Celeste	

All people and countries suffering from violence and hatred.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,
Lay my life before you,
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions and glory, now and for ever. Amen

