

Church of the Divine Love
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
PROPER 20
SEPTEMBER 18, 2022
10:15 A.M.
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Amos 8:4-7**

Psalm 113

Second Lesson: **1 Timothy 2:1-7**

Gradual Hymn –#

Gospel: **Luke 16:1-13**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form IV page 388

The Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer C page 369

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 362

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 September 18, 2022

Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16: 1-13

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

“Give me an accounting of your management,” the master said to his manager. We’ve all heard those words. It may not have been those exact words but at some time in our life, probably many times, an accounting has been demanded.

The IRS invites us to bring our papers and account for the numbers on our tax return. Did you ever get called to the principal’s office? You sit down with a therapist or spiritual director and he or she says, so tell me about your life. What’s going on? The boss says he wants to see you in his office. You come home and your spouse speaks those four dreaded words, we need to talk.

Each Sunday we come to the place in the liturgy when the priest says, “Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor. “In all of those situations, an accounting of our management is being demanded. It’s not easy. Giving an accounting can be an uncomfortable and even a fearful time. We review our words and actions wondering, what have I done? What have I left undone? What will happen to me? What will I do? No one likes to have to give an accounting. We’re pretty private about our books. Not only do we not want others to see the balance, sometimes we do not want to see the balance. We do not want to face and deal with that reality. But that’s what this accounting asks of us.

You see the accounting demanded of this manager, just like the ones demanded of us, is really an accounting of his life. It asks us to open the books of our life and examine, audit, what we are doing with our life and who we are serving. It raises important questions. What are we doing with the resources, assets, and gifts entrusted to us? Think about all we have. Time. Money. Ideas, dreams, and hopes. Passions and concerns. People and relationships. Love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy. Talents and abilities. Questions and curiosities. What if we were to give an accounting of our management of these? What would our books look like? What do they reveal about us? Where, how, in what ways, on whom are we spending and investing these assets?

These aren't just questions to be answered individually. There is also a communal or corporate accounting of our management to be given. What would it look like for America to account for its management? Would do the books and balances say about our national life? What about globally and internationally? What do the world's books say about humanity? At every level people are trying to serve two masters. Today's gospel calls us to account for our management of all that we are and all that we have. The demand for an accounting often sounds like someone is in trouble. That's how today's parable begins. The manager has been charged with squandering his master's property. He going to be fired. He will lose his job, income, reputation, and status. A part of him is dying. At some level he will lose his life as he now knows it.

Whether we've lived it, heard it from a friend or colleague, or read it in the news, it's a familiar story. Somebody has been bad. They've been caught. Now they're going to get what they deserve. That's how the world works. That's what we expect. But that's not how the kingdom of God works, and parables rarely give us what we expect. So, we ought not be too quick to come to a final or definitive interpretation of this parable. We cannot with ease or confidence declare who, if any one in particular, each character represents: God, Jesus, or us. The parable offers ambiguity and tension not a neat resolution and that feels a lot like real life.

Maybe this story in general and the manager in particular is simply a picture of that ambiguity and tension. It is a picture that probably looks very familiar to most of us, a picture of the tension and ambiguity in our own lives, struggles, and decisions. There is even some ambiguity in labeling this man as the dishonest manager. What does that mean, the dishonest manager? Maybe the label of dishonest isn't what we think it is. Maybe it is less a declaration about the manager and more a description of his relationship to his master. First, we have no details of what this man did or did not do to be charged with squandering and to be fired or whether the charges are even valid. Second, while the word that is translated as dishonest can refer to a particular action or wrongdoing it can also mean the quality of unrighteousness. In that sense the manager's relationship with his master is not right. It's broken, impaired, out of sync. Perhaps the manager has chosen self-interest, self-loyalty, and self-serving over interest in, loyalty to, and service of his master. That can happen quickly and easily to any of us. This manager then is the face and image for Jesus's words, "You cannot serve two masters"

Since we don't know a lot about this guy or what he did maybe we can shift our focus a bit. Instead of trying to audit his books maybe we ought to examine our own books. Instead of being shocked that this dishonest manager is commended maybe we can see precedent, hope, and possibilities for our own commendation. The accounting that should have been the manager's ruin became the starting point for a new life, new relationships, and a new home. Grace was hiding in the demand for an accounting,

waiting to be discovered and claimed. The accounting demanded of this manager was both an ending and a new beginning, a death, and a resurrection.

While the master may have wanted an audit of past numbers and transactions the manager saw that his old life was empty, bankrupt. New life would be seen only by looking forward. New life would be found only by being and doing differently. The manager claimed for himself the grace hidden in his master's demand for an accounting, and he was commended. If the dishonest manager can be commended, why not me? Why not you? Here's a crazy idea. What if the accounting asked of us is never complete, the books are never closed and the bottom line is never tallied, until there is new life, until there is a commendation? What if the accounting is not about finding wrongdoing but new life? What if it's about grace rather than punishment? That certainly changes our usual understanding of an accounting but isn't that what parables are supposed to do? They change the way we see and understand. If a parable makes sense, we've probably missed the point.

The accounting of our management isn't about numbers, wrongdoing, or punishment but about helping us see and orient our lives in a new direction. It opens us to new possibilities. It points us to our eternal home. "Give me an accounting of your management." What are you doing with your life? Who are you serving? The parables of the "prodigal son" and "shady steward" ultimately tell us the same story. It's the story of a God who is persistently generous toward his consistently imperfect children. God keeps entrusting the treasure of this life into our hands. Sometimes we use that treasure well, for the salvation of our souls and the blessing of our neighbors. Sometimes we squander the opportunity that is opened to us every morning when we wake up. But the story of God's forgiveness and generosity is renewed each morning. **Amen!**

15 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	
MONDAY	8:00 AM	AA MEETING	
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING	
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
	8:00 PM	AA MEETING	
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP	
16 PENTECOST	10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP OFF IN THE KITCHEN

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Anthony Giordano	Deb Giordano
Altar Guild	Roe Prosser	Deb Giordano
	Marie Quatorze	Jess Berbeck
Coffee Hour	Giordanos	Janet Croft

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Grace Schinella	Harriet Capers	Bob Curley
John Mulligan	Arlene Goodenough	Celeste
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Robert Sweat
Barbara Stinson	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Anthony
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara	Gabriel	Aidan
Elodie	Sophia	Carol K.

People of Haiti	Christopher & Family	Julia
Maggie & Family	People of Ukraine	Tim
Nathan Treadwell	Bob Lazevnick	Art
Bill Masoeust	Carolyn	Del

Help us to 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

