

Church of the Divine Love

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 4

JUNE 2, 2024 10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn (see hymn board for hymn numbers)

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**

Psalm 81:1-10

Second Lesson: **2 Corinthians 4:5-12**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Mark 2:23 – 3:6**

Sermon – The Rt. Rev. Matthew F. Heyd

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 B page 367

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 367

Hymn during Consecration (printed 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 – **You Raise Me Up** (on insert)

Sermon Sunday June 2, 2023

1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-5,12-17; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

When we hear the story of Jesus' disciples eating grain, they had picked on the Sabbath day of rest in Mark 2:23-28, we might wonder what the Pharisees were so upset about. The disciples weren't hurting anybody and I'm sure that the people who owned the field wouldn't have missed a few stalks. So, what's the problem?

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses in Exodus 20, God said explicitly that his people were not to do any work on the seventh day of the week. What was called the Sabbath was meant to be a day of rest. In order to define what was 'work' so the Jewish people could keep this commandment, a complicated set of rules developed which defined what a person was and was not allowed to do. From this perspective, picking grain from a paddock was considered 'work' and so the disciples were breaking God's command. The Pharisees' reactions might appear to be a bit extreme, but do we sometimes react in a similar way? Most Christians have our own ideas about how we should observe our own day of rest. We might not have them written down, but most people I've known in the church have their own set of rules about what and how we should do what we do. I'm meaning things like what songs or hymns we should or shouldn't sing, what liturgies we should or shouldn't use, when we should sit and when we should stand, how people should dress, how children should behave, and the list could go on. It might be uncomfortable to admit, but most of us have a set of rules that we think people should follow in the church. Then, if people don't do what we think they should, we can start to be critical of them, kind of like the Pharisees were of Jesus' disciples.

What is ironic is that Christians are breaking the Sabbath law just by worshiping on Sunday. Biblically, the Sabbath day of rest is Saturday – just ask someone from the Jewish community or a member of a Seventh Day Adventist church. There are two main reasons I'm aware of why Christian changed it to Sunday. The first is that the early followers of Jesus met together on the first day of the week to remember and celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The second reason was because they wanted to send a clear message that we are no longer under the law but under grace. As people whose relationship with God and eternal futures are not based on whether or not we keep the law, we are free to meet together and worship whenever is good for the community of faith. That is why Jesus replies to the Pharisees' criticism by saying that 'the Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath'. Jesus teaches us that people were not created to be slaves of the law along with its rules and expectations. Instead, God gave us the law to serve us. Rules are meant to be a blessing, not a burden, especially in Christian community. If our rules are no longer serving God's people, or if they are becoming a burden to God's people, then we need to ask whether they are fulfilling God's purpose. If that is the case, then maybe it is time to set those rules aside in the freedom the gospel gives us.

What seems to matter most to Jesus, not just in this story but all the way through the gospels, is people. If the rules get in the way of people finding grace or healing, love or forgiveness, then Jesus breaks the rules to give them what they need. This is what made the Pharisees so angry with Jesus, and even here, at the start of the second chapter of Mark's gospel, the religious and political leaders of Jesus' time are already starting to wonder how to get rid of him. They begin planning to kill him because Jesus prioritizes people over their rules. For Jesus, people are much more important than religious rules and laws. What would our communities of faith be like if we took the same approach? I understand that we all have our preferences about when and how we worship, the style of music and liturgy or lack of it, how people

should dress and behave when they come to church. But how might our churches be different if we were willing to put our preferences and expectations aside and made people our priority?

We need to remember that Jesus prioritizes each and every one of us by giving his life for us. We extend and communicate grace and love to each other when we prioritize each other and are willing to make others in our community of faith more important to us than our rules, laws and expectations. When we understand that Jesus prioritized people over rules, no matter what their age, background or gender might be, then we begin to embrace them in God's grace and love as we follow him and do the same.

Life is full of rules and laws. We have tax laws, property laws, traffic laws, laws relating to marriage and family. Schools have their codes of conduct, and every major corporation has pages of policy. God, when he created us, also gave us laws and commandments that we should learn, follow and obey. But we need to be careful that we don't twist his laws into something they were never meant to be. And that is where today's passage in Mark is so helpful. Today's passage teaches us three important truths we need to know about God's laws. First of all, God's laws are made for our benefit. Secondly, it is always lawful to do good. And thirdly, legalism is the enemy of grace.

In other words, the law is a means to an end. The law is meant to give you guidance and to show you concrete ways that you can love our neighbor. But it is not meant to create technicalities and roadblocks that prevent you from loving your neighbor. So, when you have the opportunity to do good for someone, you don't have to stop and ask yourself, "Hmmm, is this lawful? Is this allowed?" All the commandments are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." And so, it is always lawful to do good.

First of all, think good thoughts of God. So often people think that God made up all these laws and commandments just to weigh us down and make our lives miserable. Nothing could be further from the truth. God's laws are made for your benefit. When you follow in God's way, your life will be sweeter, not worse. Secondly, receive the Sabbath as a gift from God. The Sabbath is an opportunity to rest from your work and to join with others to worship God. We shouldn't think of the Sabbath as a burden, or an imposition, or some type of interruption to our week, but rather we should look forward to this day that has been set apart for us by God. We should call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable. (Isaiah 58:13). And then thirdly, be a people of grace. Love God; love your family; love your neighbor. "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." (Romans 12:13) "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32) "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." (Colossians 3:14) God is a God of grace. Let us be a people of grace. **Amen.**

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: PROPER 4

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)
CLOSING OF NURSERY SCHOOL
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

MONDAY 8:30 PM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP
8:30 PM AA MEETING

SAURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: PROPER 5

9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)
COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Jess Berbeck	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Reception	Erika Ferbres

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:

Manetta Family	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Deb P.
John Mulligan	John Rocco	Judy
Warren	Donna A.	Kristen
Christopher	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Jerry & Family	Phil Ryder	Henry
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Robert Hosey	Beverly Noel	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Ciara
Mary & Family	Ann Turco	Jan
Grace Schinella	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Marjorie Guerrier.	Joseph
Nathan Treadwell	Alexandra Goldman	

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster
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.

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

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