

Home Worship October 4th Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Announcements Today is on-line Holy Communion Sunday. You may wish to have bread and juice available.

St. Mark's continues outdoor worship through October 18th weather permitting. We will now begin worship at 10:30am going forward. Please dress accordingly with chair and mask. We continue Food Pantry donations and Neighbors in Need. St. Mark's quilters have just made a variety of donations. 14 are going to Focus House, 8 went to Hope of Ogle County (a domestic shelter). There are 10 more soon to be donated.

Confession and Forgiveness.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,

who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Forgiveness 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. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm 80:7-15

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁸You have brought a vine out of Egypt; you cast out the nations and planted it.

⁹You cleared the ground for it; it took root and filled the land.

¹⁰The Mountains were covered by its shadow and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.

¹¹You stretched out its tendrils to the sea and its branches to the river.

¹²Why have you broken down its wall, so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?

¹³The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it, and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.

¹⁴Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven;

¹⁵behold and tend this vine; preserve what your right hand has planted.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 21:33-46 Glory to you O Lord

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said to the people:] ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” ⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The word of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ**

Sermon

I grew up in the era of vigilante movies. Walking Tall, Death Wish and Dirty Harry, “*go ahead punk, make my day.*” Other films on the list of over 200 in the last 50 years include The Sons of Katie Elder, The Gladiator, and more recently Spider-man and Batman made the list. A vigilante movie is about taking the law into your own hands.

These films contradict the teachings of Jesus. This is another instance where being a Christian and listening to biblical stories can be difficult. How should we react when we are exposed to violence? With continual protests and unrest in our land, people continue to take matters into their own hands, not only on film, but in the real world. Ferguson, Minneapolis, and Kenosha are just a few of the cities where people took matters into their own hands.

According to Matthew, God the Father is portrayed as a landowner who sets up a vineyard. The owner’s messengers are violently mistreated and killed. When the master sends his son to collect the harvest, the Son is also killed. This could be read as a prophetic statement about what is going to happen to Jesus himself very soon. Jesus himself will be the victim of violence.

Teaching the leaders and the crowd, Jesus then asks: “*What will the owner of the vineyard do to the wicked ones who killed his servants and his son?*” How will the owner of the

vineyard respond to violence? The people listening to Jesus say, “*The owner will kill all those violent people.*” Jesus’ listeners are the ones who suggest that the proper response to violence is... more violence. But Jesus’ response to violence is different than the response suggested by his listeners. He doesn’t suggest more killing. He quotes Psalm 118, about the ‘*stone which is rejected and then becomes the cornerstone.*’

Jesus does not respond to violence He always does God’s will, even if that requires heroic humility, a flood of forgiveness, a trust that our God is more powerful than death. It was the crowd who said that the answer to violence is more violence not Jesus.

Jesus offers a different way. Jesus turned over tables because the exchange rate from Rome was terrible, and ordinary people of little money had to pay so much more out of pocket in order to fulfill their religious duties. Then Jesus healed the blind and lame who were considered outsiders, unclean and unworthy to enter the temple.

Jesus asks, “*What will the master do to those violent people?*” The crowd made a mistake – believing more violence is the solution. Do we make that mistake? Do we turn to violence...if not in action perhaps in our hearts?

Jesus continues to confront the authorities: “*Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you...*” It’s no wonder that the chief priests and the Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus. He publicly announced God’s judgment on them.

Historians point out that every generation of children has been born into a world of brokenness, violence and tears. Ours is no exception. But we are not just born in and baptized into a broken world. We are baptized into the kingdom of God, and become members of God’s holy people today. Because of that, we can be taught to recognize God in all things, to turn to God in every situation, and to always follow the example of Jesus. How does Jesus respond to violence? By doing justice and providing healing for God’s people. This is our calling also.

As we share Holy Communion on this World Communion Sunday let us reject violence and put all matters into God’s hands. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

With confidence in God’s grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence.* Holy God, you call us to work for peace and justice in your vineyard. Refresh the church with your life, that we may bear fruit through work and service.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for the abundant harvest of the earth. Bless and care for those whose hands bring the fruits of the earth to the tables of all who hunger. May we be inspired by your servants who cared deeply for your creation (*especially Francis of Assisi, whom we commemorate today*).

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Curb the impulses of greed and pride that lead us to take advantage of others. Grant that world leaders that seek the fruits of the kingdom for the good and welfare of all people.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sustain all who suffer with the promise of new life. Assured of your presence, heal our pain and suffering, and equip us to embrace all bodies aching for wholeness of mind, body, and soul. We call to mind those who are struggling today (*especially Kent, Karla, and Brad*). We pray for

those in care facilities: Sibyl, Barb, Lois, Tammy, Trudy, Jessica, Hazel, Jeanne and Linda. We pray for those in military service: Logan, JJ, Bryan, Dustin, Brad and Travis).

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all managers in our community and for all who seek employment. Give hope and a future to those who lack meaningful work, those who have been marginalized or abused in the workplace, and those who desire new opportunities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus prayed that we might be one. One in spirit. One in mission. In union and communion with each other and with you. On this World Communion Sunday, give us eyes to recognize your reflection in the eyes of Christians everywhere. Give us a mind to accept and celebrate our differences. Give us a heart big enough to love your children everywhere. We thank you for setting a table with space enough for us all! Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray as Jesus taught

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.

Invitation to Communion

Come to the banquet where Christ gives himself as food and drink

Holy Communion Together

Friends of Jesus, receive nourishment for your journey.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God. You reveal your glory as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God, ever to be adored in your eternal glory.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Take your bread/wafer	The body of Christ given for you
Take you juice/wine	The blood of Christ given for you

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace.

Prayer after Communion

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 place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.