

OCTOBER LECTIONARY READINGS

Sunday, October 6, 2019- Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Scripture: Lamentations 1:1-6
Psalm: Psalm 137
Epistle: 2 Timothy 1:1-14
Gospel: Luke 17:5-10

Sunday, October 13, 2019 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Scripture: Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7
Psalm: Psalm 66:1-12
Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:8-15
Gospel: Luke 17:11-19

Sunday, October 20, 2019 - Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Scripture: Jeremiah 31:27-34
Psalm: Psalm 119:97-104
Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5
Gospel: Luke 18:1-8

Sunday, October 27, 2019 – Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Scripture: Joel 2:23-32
Psalm: Psalm 65
Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:6-8. 16-18
Gospel: Luke 18:9-14



"First Notes"

As of this writing, we are two weeks into another program year and three weeks into our rental arrangement with the Plymouth School District. Things are starting to move ahead on all fronts.

And in the farm fields and gardens, things move on towards the harvest. I throw in that last reference because it's not only fitting to this time of the year, but it's appropriate to things that have been happening at church in the recent past. Over the course of the last few months, we have taken the "Five Practices" from the "concept' stage to seeing what it would be like to have these ideas put into practice. Bit by bit, we have begun to break down the work of the church into ministry teams and we are getting a sense of what that feels like. We are starting to reap that harvest of the seeds sown earlier.

However, if we're going to move fully into that model of doing ministry, we are going to have to start to make changes in the by-laws—the ways that we structure committees, groups, and the governing bodies of the church. Not all of the work needs to be done immediately, but some of it needs to begin soon. It has been apparent to most of us in church leadership that our current system isn't serving our needs and it is not very good stewardship of our resources of time and talent—for both individual church members and for the church, as a whole. Our governance structure needs to reflect the church we are currently.

To that end, I am asking for the help of persons who have the interest and skill in reworking by-law language, and for the prayers of everyone else as we begin these first steps. (If you belong to the first group, please contact the church office to indicate your interest; if you belong to second group, please start praying).

I also want to let you know that we are planning a worship series for the Sundays in November, "A Wonder-Full Life." The series will tie in certain themes from the classic film, *It's a Wonderful Life* as we look at how we approach the resources God has given us. Many elements make up meaningful worship: preaching, liturgy, music, visuals, plus a sense of rhythm and pacing. Pastoral and music staff can provide guidance and leadership for these elements, but like any other aspect of ministry, it needs the participation of persons who can help provide those elements. If you are someone who feels called to be a part of the ministry of worship arts—music, liturgy, setting the space with appropriate visuals—please contact the church office or drop a hint with the music or pastoral staff.

Whether it's crafting by-law language or decorating a worship space, I am convinced that God has sprinkled enough people with various gifts at Salem church to accomplish what needs to be done. To paraphrase Jesus, the harvest is plentiful, but we need to get the workers out to bring it in. (And to quote John Wayne in the role of Wil Anderson in *The Cowboys*, "We're burnin' daylight.")

Your servant in Christ,

Rev. Jim Hoppert

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST