

Joy Lutheran Church

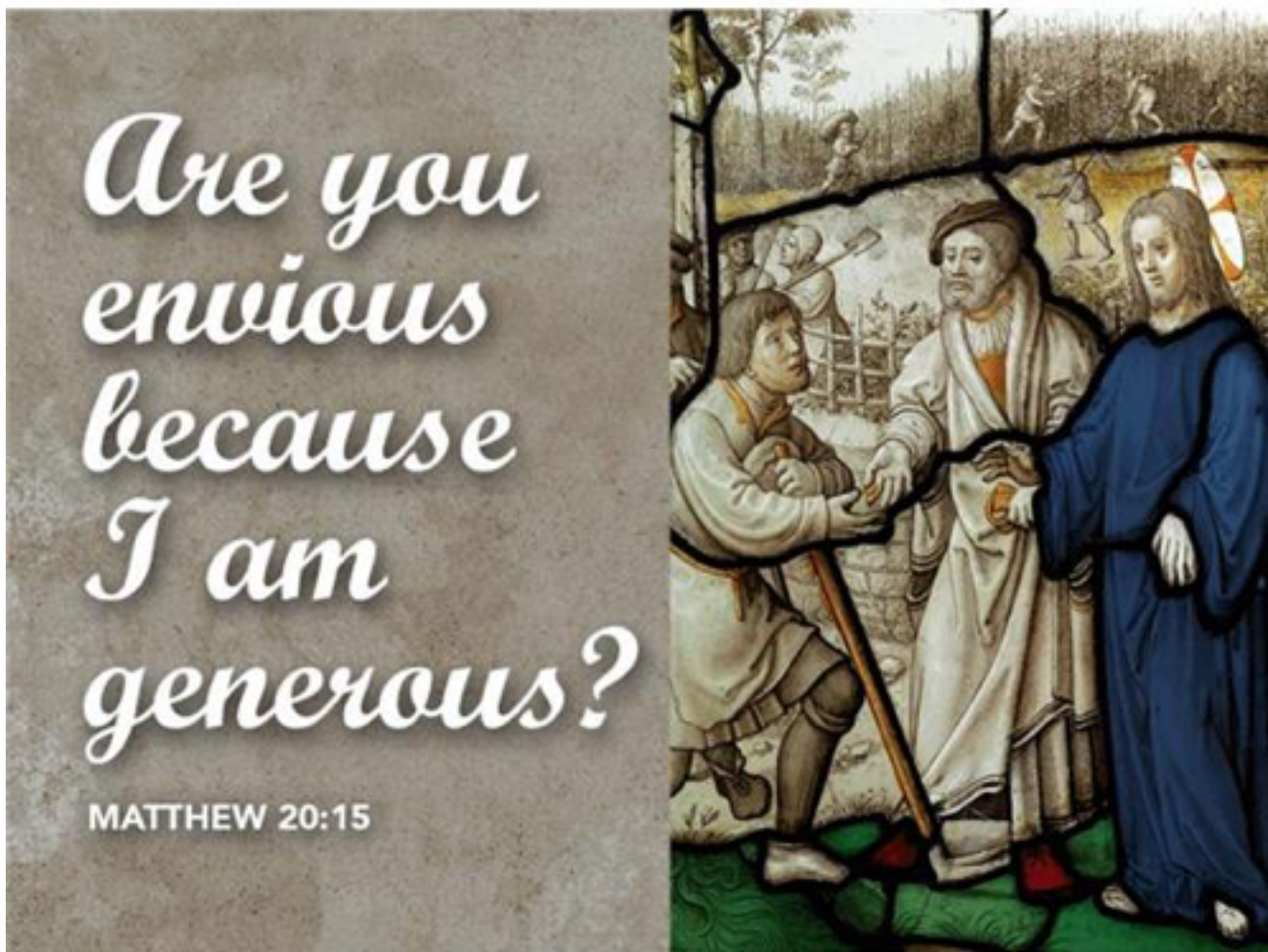
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September 20, 2020



Creation Sunday
17th Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome to worship at Joy Lutheran Church

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, divorced, married, widowed, or if your relationship status is “complicated.”

We are glad you are here if you come every Sunday or if this is your first time at our church or any church at all. You’re welcome if you know the Bible backwards and forwards, or have never really read it, if you know Jesus or are just curious to hear what He is all about.

We welcome you if you have doubts about “organized religion” or are a “cradle Christian.” We welcome liberals, conservatives, moderates, and undecided. If you cheer for the right team, or don’t like sports, you are welcome here.

We especially welcome those who could use a prayer right now, or an assurance that God loves them, those who are struggling, and those who are doing okay.

Whoever you are, whatever your past or present – God welcomes you and so do we!

Children are always welcome here. We are used to the joyful sounds of our youngest sisters and brothers. We do have some activity bags near the main entrance, to keep restless hands busy. Due to COVID-19 we discourage use of our Family Room right now.

Introduction

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

Welcome/Apostolic Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all,

C: **and also with you.**

Call to Worship

L: Come worship the God of all Creation.

C: **We gather to praise the Creator, the continuous source of all living things.**

L: Come, worship our God who breathes life into being.

C: **We praise the Creator who fashions the forests,
whose trees clean the air of this world.**

L: Come, worship our God who forms life out of soil.

C: **We praise the Creator whose land brings nourishment.**

L: Come, worship our God who receives our lament in the wilderness.

C: **We praise the Creator whose Son brings healing to all Creation.**

L: Come, worship our God who sends waters flowing with life.

C: **We praise the Creator whose baptism unites us
to be one in the Body of Christ with all Creation.**

Confession and Forgiveness

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who so loves the world and all who live in it. Amen. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God, Creation, and one another.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

C: **Reconciling God, we expect nature to serve our needs, and we have damaged it in the process. We trample places and pollute your waters. So often we abuse rather than stewarding your good Earth. Forgive us, loving God. Remind us of the covenant you made with the whole Earth. Nourish us that we might be part of restoring your awe-inspiring Creation. Amen.**

L: Christ, the one who was buried into the heart of the Earth and then raised up to new life, forgives you all your sin. Freed from your burdens, be led by the Spirit to do God's healing work in the world. Amen.

Refrain:

*The heavens are telling the glory of God,
and all creation is shouting for joy.
Come, dance in the forest,
come, play in the field,
and sing, sing to the glory of the Lord.*

[Add to refrain last time only:] Sing, Sing to the glory of the Lord.

1. Sing to the sun, the bringer of day,
He carries the light of the Lord in his rays;
The moon and the stars who light up the way
Unto your throne. *(Refrain)*
2. Praise for the wind that blows through the trees,
The seas mighty storms, the gentlest breeze;
They blow where they will, they blow where they please
To please the Lord. *(Refrain)*
3. Praise for the rain that waters our fields,
And blesses our crops so all the earth yields;
From death unto life her myst'ry revealed
Springs forth in joy. *(Refrain)*
6. Praise for our death that makes our life real,
The knowledge of loss that helps us to feel;
The gift of yourself, your presence revealed
To lead us home. *(Refrain)*

-- by Marty Haugen

Reading***Leviticus 25: 1-4, 23-24***

¹The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying: ²Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath for the LORD. ³Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; ⁴but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.

²³The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants. ²⁴Throughout the land that you hold, you shall provide for the redemption of the land.

(read responsively)

¹The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

**²Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.**

³There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;

**⁴yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.**

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

**⁶Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hid from its heat.**

Gospel Reading

Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Hymn

Beautiful Savior

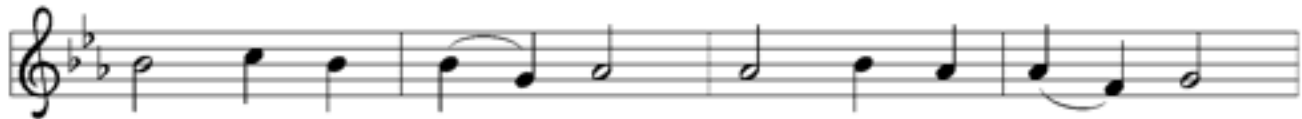
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1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,
 2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,
 3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,
 4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,



Son of God and Son of Man!
 robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;
 bright the spar - kling stars on high;
 Son of God and Son of Man!



Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,
 Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er,
 Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er,
 Glo - ry and hon - or, praise, ad - o - ra - tion,



light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
 he makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.
 than all the an - gels in the sky.
 now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

Prayers

Benediction

L: Go in Peace - Christ is with you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

RECAP FROM THE SEPTEMBER 8th CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Your Council's September 8th meeting was dominated by discussion of the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) and related topics. After many months of hard work, the MSP group was ready to submit their draft document for Council review. The major topics we discussed included:

Finances as of 8/31/2020:

- Our income and expenses are mostly in line with the 2020 budget approved in January
- We had approved upgrades to the sound system in the sanctuary, which resulted in additional maintenance expenses of \$3,500 in August.
- Our General Offering fell by over 20% for the month of August. Historically August is a down month and with no in-person services due to Covid, we weren't overly concerned but will watch this closely.

A subcommittee was formed (Pastor Karen, Scooter Benson and Sue Weimer) to consider names for the 6 person Call Committee. They will be looking for a representative mix of perspectives; members with children, youth, elders, new members, established members, etc.

Lengthy discussion was given to future staffing requirements. The council is recommending a full time pastor and a part time administration position.

- Our financial situation does not allow us to have both a full time pastor and full time admin position.
- Our finances will only allow us to seek a full time pastor with no more than 5 years of experience.
- A survey of areawide ELCA churches revealed that congregations of similar size to JLC had part time admin positions however all had direct volunteer member involvement, especially in the financial areas. We will need to step up to cover duties currently performed by our full time admin position.

The recommendation to make changes in staffing was especially difficult because of the direct impact it has on Jan Deering. She has been a valued and trusted presence in our office for almost 9 years. She has been invaluable especially during this transition period but the council felt that the church needs a full time pastor to lead us into the future. We are not proposing any immediate changes however the MSP requires a decision regarding full or part time pastor position. Please keep Jan in your prayers as she begins to access her future employment options.

--Sue Weimer, Council President



Announcements

Confirmation

Starts:

- Sunday September 27th
- 10:15 AM - 11:00 AM
- In Brause Hall
- We will practice social distancing and recommend masks

If your young person is in at least 7th grade and not confirmed this is the class for them! Questions: Call Pastor Karen, 907-434-1862

Sunday School Planning Meeting

- Monday, Sept. 21st
- 6:00 pm
- in Brause Hall (we will be practicing Social Distancing)

We hope to use a Virtual Sunday school at first (similar to VBS) and find ways we can gather occasionally for in-person fun. We will also talk about transitioning to In-person as Covid goes down.

Thank You for Contributions to the Food Drive

Special thanks also to Eris and Sean Soellers who collected 75 lbs. of food in their neighborhood! Great leadership!

Upcoming Events

-  **TODAY! Sunday, September 20th -- Creation Sunday In-Person Worship** (Service project after worship -- Picking up Trash from roads near Joy. Wear warm clothes and bring gloves.)
-  **Monday, September 21st -- Sunday School Planning Meeting**
-  **Monday, September 21st -- Book Club**
-  **Sunday, September 27th -- Confirmation Begins**
-  **Sunday, Oct. 4th -- Sunday School Begins** (details to follow, we are still planning and will be meeting with volunteers)