

First St. John Lutheran Church

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www.firststjohn.com

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director of Music
Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jennifer Hess, Office Manager



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

October 1, 2023 - 10:30 am

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18th Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism. Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	JAM Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:45 am	2nd Year Catechism every other Sunday

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL meets at 9:15 am in the lounge every Sunday.

CHILDREN AGES 3 THROUGH 5TH GRADE will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (JAM Room).

2ND YEAR CATECHISM CLASSES: Second year class will meet every other Sunday at 11:45 am.

NURSERY is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

Prelude Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ring of the Bell (Please Stand)

Opening Hymn “Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading” No.401

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be God, the one who forms us, † Jesus who bears the cross, the Spirit who makes our joy complete.

C: Amen

P: Let us bow before God in humility, confessing our sin.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

P: Steadfast and faithful God,

C: you have revealed the ways of justice, yet we fail to follow you. We are overwhelmed by the world’s violence and suffering. We are afraid to risk what we have for the sake of others. For the harm we have caused, known and unknown, forgive us. For the unjust demands we place on others and your creation, forgive us. For the ways we turn away from you and our neighbor, forgive us. Lead us back to you and set us on the right path; in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

P: Beloved in Christ, God’s justice stretches beyond all understanding. God’s compassion is beyond compare. In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us. In † Christ, you are already and always forgiven.

C: Amen

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, “Peace be with you.” We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:

**“Lord I lift your name on high;
Lord I love to sing your praises,
I’m so glad you’re in my life,
I’m so glad you came to save us.
You came from heaven to earth to show the way.
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;
Lord, I lift your name on high.”**

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual loving kindness to us, your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

Jesus’ parable about two sons who don’t do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-29

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own

¹The word of the Lord came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the

righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die.

²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life.

²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: PSALM 25:1-9 (*congregation responds in BOLD*)

¹To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

²**O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.**

³Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴**Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

⁶**Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.**

⁷Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

⁸**Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

⁹He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in

humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,
⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

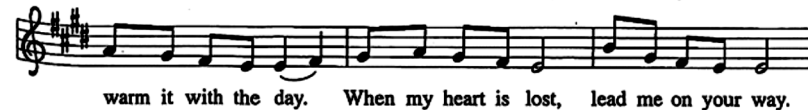
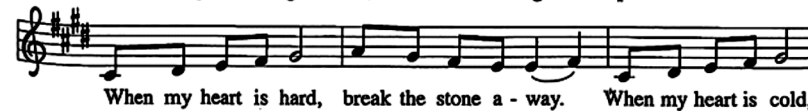
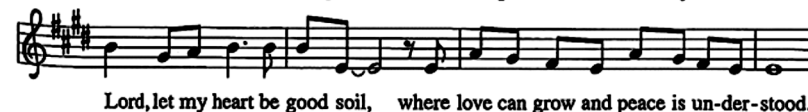
¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

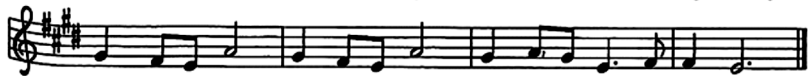
Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation





Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to Matthew Chapter 21.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:28-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple, Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

28 “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 He answered, ‘I will not,’ but later he changed his mind and went. 30 The father^[a] went to the second and said the same, and he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn

“O Jesus, I Have Promised”

No. 810

(Please stand)

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

(Please be seated)

The Offering

Offertory Music “Mansion Over the Hilltop” FSJ Chancel Choir
Dr. Joan Walldorf—Director

Offering Prayer

P: God of power, God of plenty, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C: **Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Merciful God,

C: **Receive our prayer.**

The Lord’s Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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.

Blessing

P: The God of glory, † Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

“You Servant of God”

No.825

SERMON NOTES:

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. God is at work in you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

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PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Ben Hodges, Matt Miller

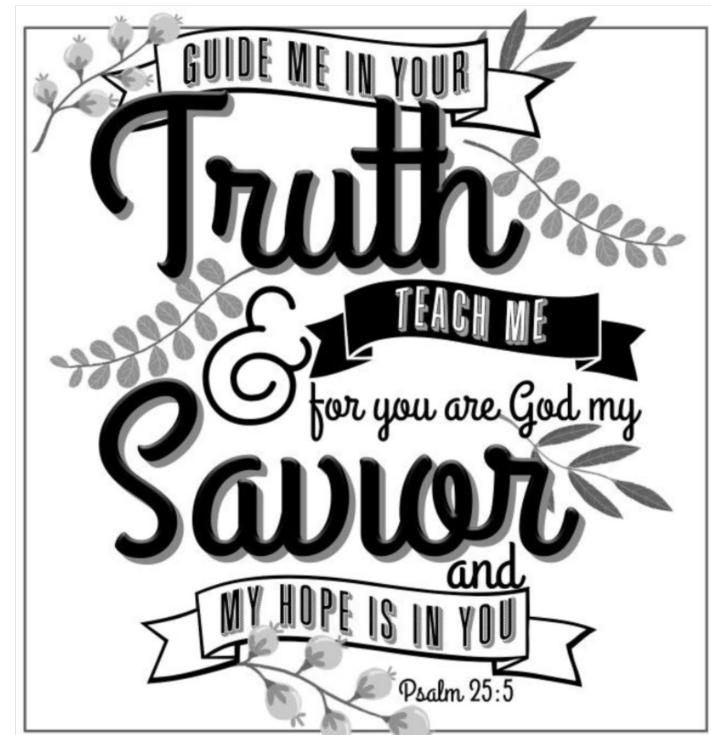
READER

Toni Wilbarger

SOUND BOARD

Amy Nelson

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PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

Please purchase full size items.

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| dish soap | shampoo, child | disposable razors |
| paper towel | laundry soap | toothbrush, adult |
| toilet paper | fabric softener sheets | toothpaste, adult |
| tissues | body lotion | sanitary pads |
| deodorant | body soap | band aids |
| shampoo, adult | | |

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month. If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.



October 1, 2023

18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Get Going . . . Now!

In today's gospel Jesus tells a story about two sons. Both are asked by their father to work in the vineyard. One says he will not work but ends up going anyway; the other agrees to the task but never actually goes. Neither one was true to his word, but everyone agrees that the son who first said "no" actually *did* what his father asked.

Perhaps the son who agreed to work meant to do the tasks . . . sometime. He never *said* "no" to his father; he merely *did* "no." The answer he gave with his mouth was not as strong as the answer he gave with the rest of his body. The problem began with his delay. Good intentions melted into postponed commitments, which revealed his real priorities and laid bare his true heart.

Have you put off making good on your commitments? Have you said "yes" with your mouth but ended up saying "no" with the rest of you? Have good intentions melted into procrastination?

The son who said "no" reminds us that second thoughts are not always bad. Sometimes we make up our minds too fast, or we make a promise on impulse. Other times we are too quick to ignore or underestimate an opportunity that could mean life and health for another. Sometimes our hesitation, delay, or inaction harms human relationships. Second thoughts are at the heart of forgiveness. They can reflect the generosity and graciousness of God.

It is not too late. Only stubbornness can keep you out of the vineyard and out of God's new day. There is a gracious invitation being addressed to you this day. It comes with an expectation that those called to service will seize the opportunity to work for what is good. No matter how you have answered in the past, you are invited to respond anew today. Live your "yes." Get going . . . now!