**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Sunday, October 4, 2020**

***18th Sunday after Pentecost***

**Introduction to the day**

*In today’s gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets’ mission, and Christ’s death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God’s love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ’s sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.*

**SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Prelude**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

P: In the name of the Father,

and of the ☩ Son,

and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.** **Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake

God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority,

I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,

In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**Gathering Song *The Church's One Foundation* (ELW 654)**

(hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord;  
she is his new creation by water and the word.  
From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy bride;  
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.  
  
2 Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth,  
her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth:  
one holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,  
and to one hope she presses, with ev'ry grace endued.  
  
5 Yet she on earth has union with God, the Three in One,  
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.  
Oh, blessed heav'nly chorus! Lord, save us by your grace,  
that we, like saints before us, may see you face to face.

**Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

**C: 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.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**First Reading: Isaiah 5:1-7**

L: A reading from Isaiah.

*The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God’s loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth “wild grapes” of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.*

1Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard:  
 My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.  
 2He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;  
 he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
 he expected it to yield grapes,but it yielded wild grapes.  
  
 3And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,  
 judge between me and my vineyard.  
 4What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?  
 When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?  
  
 5And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.  
 I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;  
 I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.  
 6I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
  and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns;  
 I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.  
  
 7For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,  
 and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;  
 he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 80:7-15 read responsively**

7Restore us, O God of hosts;  
  let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.  
 8**You 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.  
 10**The 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.  
 12**Why 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.  
 14**Turn now, O God of hosts,**  
  **look down from heaven;**  
 15behold and tend this vine;  
  preserve what your right hand has planted.

**Second Reading:** **Philippians 3:4b-14**

L: A reading from Philippians.

*Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ’s resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.*

[Paul writes:] 4bIf anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.  
  7Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.  
  12Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

L: The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**Alleluia. Alleluia.**

**Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46**

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**C: 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.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

**Sermon**

***Silence for meditation***

**Hymn of the DaY *How Firm a Foundation* (ELW 796)**

(Hum or sing softly with mask on)

1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,  
is laid for your faith in Christ Jesus, the Word!  
What more can he say than to you he has said  
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?  
  
2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,  
for I am your God and will still give you aid;  
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."  
  
3 "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,  
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply.  
The flames shall not hurt you; I only design  
your dross to consume and your gold to refine."  
  
4 "Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove  
my sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
and then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,  
like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

**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,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come 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.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

A: With confidence in God’s grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

A: 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,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: 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,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Curb the impulses of greed and pride that lead us to take advantage of others. Grant that world leaders seek the fruits of the kingdom for the good and welfare of all people. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: 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). Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: 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,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Thank you for the saints who teach us to live faithfully in your vineyard. May our chorus join theirs until our labor is complete. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

**Meal**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**Offering Prayer**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink,

and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,

through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Preface by Pastor**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of pow’r and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy God,

our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,

you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,

and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.

You sent your Son to eat with sinners

and to become food for the world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,

his life given for us and his rising from the grave,

we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:

strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,

and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,

Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,

in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**Amen**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**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**

P: Come to the banquet table

where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

*Please come forward to receive the “body of Christ” by holding out your hands in a cup like fashion as far as you can. The Pastor will drop the wafer into your hand, saying “the body of Christ given for you,” and you respond “Amen,” then go to the left or right and receive the “blood of Christ” from a pre-filled glass. The glasses will be separated so you don’t touch one another. Take the glass and the communion assistant standing in the choir loft will say, “the blood of Christ shed for you.” There will be a separate tray of glasses with grape juice for those who prefer grape juice.*

**Communion**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*and each person may respond*

Amen.

**Communion Song**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;**

**grant us peace.**

**Song after Communion*Jesus, Remember Me***

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.  
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

**Prayer after Communion**

A: 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.

**C: Amen.**

**Sending**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**Blessing**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

***Please leave your offering in the offertory plate located at each exit of the church.***

***Announcements***

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Luke Antolick, Bob Braucht, Dawn Hauser, Ralph Lehman, Caleb Leone, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Cora Pellitier, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Jane Shaffer, Brenda Traxler, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

The altar flowers this morning are given to the Glory of God and in honor of Mary Dougherty for her birthday by Carol, Julie & Brett, Pam & Bob.

Special Thanks to this week’s helpers: Lectors – Kathy Brundick; Assisting Ministers - Deb Heydrich and Ron Brundick; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants-; Head Usher -Gina Johnson; Tellers- Jim Ely; Bulletin sponsor -;

Next week’s helpers: Lectors –Darlene Bilby; Assisting Ministers -Bill Ely Jr. and Ken Dougherty; Acolyte –; Communion Assistants -; Head Usher -Gina Johnson; Tellers- Jim Ely; Bulletin sponsor -;

The Lutheran Church **Women’s Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran.

Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597

Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659

Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**Blessing of the Animals** - Pastor will be offering a Blessing of the Animals today at 1:00 p.m. in the parking lot of St. John Lutheran. We invite dogs, cats, fish, and other creatures come for a blessing. Feel free to join us.

**Pro Life March** on the Golden Strip in Williamsport Sunday, October 4, 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Anyone interested in joining those who are planning to attend please call Joyce Braucht 570.398.2852 to for more information. Thank you.

**Blanket Sunday -**Lutheran World Relief **-** sponsored jointly by the Women of ELCA and the Committee for Global Missions Upper Susquehanna Synod of the ELCA. The Women of the Church receive their annual offering for Blankets October 11. While we no longer physically receive blankets due to the cost of shipping them, we do give thanks for those who donate money to purchase blankets in other countries where they are used for warmth and shelter in refugee camps and orphanages.

**Bible Study to Resume October 19** -While everything is still in a state of flux regarding the safety of members to gather in groups, we are hopeful that we can resume Bible study on October 19 with a luncheon following Bible study at the home of Gloria and Dean Ely, 1212 Creekside Lane. Bible Study will be held at 10:00 a.m. every Monday in the large Sunday School room. We will study the book of Esther. Please read ahead on Esther.

**Chancel Choir is FUN!**  -Yes, you need to go to rehearsal, but we are a great group.  Choir invites you to join us—make a joyful noise unto the Lord and have great fellowship!  Choir will practice Wednesday, October 21 and 28 at 6:30 p.m. and sing an anthem beginning on Sunday, November 1.  Choir members will be asked / required to wear a mask or shield at all times, and we will work on socially distancing at rehearsal and in the nave. We’d love for you to join us!

**Carpenter’s Farm -**A favorite Fall tradition is approaching as we invite all of our youth to Carpenter’s Farm in Linden on Sunday, October 25 at 1:00 p.m. We will be going for a hayride, walking through the corn maze, and all participants will be allowed to take home one pumpkin. If you are interested in this event, please text Molly at 570-814-3489.

**“Grab-a-Tab” -** The youth of St. John would like to ask for donations of little tabs from beverage, soup and dessert cans. It doesn’t matter what color the tab, just grab them and deliver them to the church office. This project will benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Danville.“Grab-a-Tab” program allows people of all ages to join in the effort of providing a “Home-away-from-Home” to children with cancer or other serious illnesses and their families.

**Giving Plus+ -** St. John Lutheran is offering a new way to support the ministries of St. John. Now you can download the “Giving Plus+” app from your app store for your cell phone. This feature is also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card. Now this feature is available. If you have any questions, contact Pastor Aucker.

**Give+ Text:** Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you’ll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

McElhattan United Methodist church is having their free Thanksgiving dinner on Saturday, November 21, 11 am until they are out of food. They will need donations of chocolate chip cookies.

Woolrich and McElhattan United Methodist Churches are conducting their annual Christmas stocking stuffer for area families. They are asking for donations of small items for a stocking: slinky’s, match box cars, hair ties, stickers, crayons, toothbrushes, anything small that one would fit in a stocking by November 8. Either leave at St. John or Woolrich United Methodist Church. They will have a drive-by distribution before Christmas.

**Christmas-at-Sea**

Would you like to bring joy to seafarers who will not be home with their families for Christmas? Our port chaplains deliver satchels filled with gifts to the seafarers they meet in port in the weeks prior to Christmas. Later, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, when the ship is in the middle of the ocean, the captain will hold a celebration, and all the crew will open their satchels, each containing:

One sweatshirt – hooded or unhooded (size L-XL)

Three pairs of socks – thermal or white gym

One casual pullover T-shirt (size M-L)

One can of nuts or bar of chocolate, and

A Christmas card from you.

We invite you to participate in a memory of Pastor Martha McCracken by purchasing the items needed for a Christmas Seafarer’s bag. Bags are available in the office. Please return by Nov. 1. for many years Pastor McCracken was President of Seafarers Ministry.

***THIS WEEK’S EVENTS***

Sunday, October 4, 2020 *18th Sunday after Pentecost*

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service

1:00 p.m. Blessing of the Animals

2:00 p.m. Catechism

2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Pro Life March

7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Monday, October 5, 2020

6:30 p.m. Boy Scouts

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

7:00 p.m. Council meeting

7:30 p.m. A.A. and N. A. meetings

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

10:00 a.m. Communion/ Prayer at Trinity Episcopal

Thursday, October 8, 2020

9:00 a.m. JS Ministerium

4:00 p.m. Pack Boxes

Friday, October 9, 2020

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Food Distribution

Sunday, October 11, 2020 *19th Sunday after Pentecost*

*Blanket Sunday*

9:00 a.m. Nave Worship Service

7:00 p.m. AA meeting