

St. Peter's Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share the Spirit's Healing,
Follow the Way of Jesus.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost– September 20, 2020 – 8:45 am.

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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. 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.

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*You can say the **BOLD** words with Pastor.*

GATHERING

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

We make the sign of the cross, which was marked on us at baptism.

We bless the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems,
and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen**

We confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. You may remain seated, or kneel as you are able. *Silence is kept for reflection.*
Faithful God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Leader and Savior. Amen**

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, we will live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. Amen

GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY *From Philippians 1 & 4*

To all the saints in Christ Jesus, Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with your spirit.

Please join me in prayer. *A brief silence.* Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness 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.
Amen.

HEARING GOD'S STORY

READING: Philippians 1:21-30

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Paul writes: For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

This reading ends here.

HOLY GOSPEL: 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.

P: This is the Holy Gospel as the Word was given to Matthew in the 20th chapter.

Jesus said to the disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And 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?' They said to

him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

When 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.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, '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.'

But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

This is the Good News of Christ's victory.

HYMN of the DAY: "God of Grace and God of Glory"

- 1 God of grace and God of glory, on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.
- 2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days,
for the living of these days,
- 3 Cure your children's warring madness; bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.
- 4 Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

Text: Harry E. Fosdick, 1878-1969

MESSAGE: Generous

I'm sure you've watched your kids, or any group of youngsters, assembled on a playground who start up a game. There's choosing sides & who goes first, who's up to bat or playing offense, & what's off limits or who calls the penalties. How quickly after the game has begun do we hear the complaint, 'that's not fair!?' Kids very much want to keep the rules, even to arguing the thorniest details while others cry out, 'c'mon, let's just play!' Or perhaps it's a Halloween (of years gone by) when we'd pass out the candy & everybody casts around to see if *'He got more than I did! She didn't gimme a fair trade for my Milky Way!'* Remember trading baseball cards? *I should get more for my Boog Powell!* & I do remember Boog of the O's. With a name like that...

Even today, I bet most of us, despite what we know about divine grace & mercy, still wonder if we're always being treated fairly. Now I've never been patient enuf, or **ruthless** enuf, to get the best price for the houses that we've sold. It's like you gotta play hardball to get what's coming to you, or face it that I'm a chump! Now I've only ever spent a few years in the labor market, or in an office where I wasn't 'the boss' (*whatever that means in a church!*). But I imagine that you or your family members have done some hustling to get ahead, to do more than just survive. & at one time we've all had to spend time living paycheck to paycheck. But in today's 'marketplace,' the worry isn't even about pinching pennies. *How long will my store, will our business, be able to remain open? Will these lay-offs last? Are they going to cut my hourly wage? I can't afford to go part-time.* Like no time since the Depression have we seen so many people wondering: *what will we do when the rent or mortgage is due? What if I get sick? How will I feed my family? Or pay an emergency medical bill? Oh, I can't possibly retire now! We've lost everything in the flooding, the wildfire, the tornado, the drought!* Now I'd never dream of swearing in the pulpit, but these days we're going thru some very real ...stuff, & this is not a good time for my daily Bible reading to be in the middle of the apocalypse according to Daniel! & I'm not one to thump a Bible to say how we're paying the price for our wrongs, **but** it sure seems like our collective sins– the way we treat each other & our planet, our failure as good managers of what we've been given– are coming home to roost.

1 thing our preaching study group noted was how up to date this example in Jesus' parable is for today. We don't know much about sheep, or keeping servants, & it's been a while since anyone in our congregation has farmed the land or fished for a living. But it's not the part where this landowner is

ridiculously generous to the laborers, which we'll get to, of course. It's that we've seen just these sorts of day workers at the huge hardware stores or an industrial area of the city, waiting for a truck to take them out for some kind of hard labor in exchange for a cash payout. They are there at harvest time in the orchards & farm fields to our north & west. Their work isn't even as reliable as food deliveries or Uber/Lyft drivers. But they are hustling like the men waiting for work in the marketplace of ancient Joppa or Shechem. So I wouldn't call these workers 'idle.' They certainly had to be sweating!

So most economics professors, & nearly all the hourly wage earners, would say that not only what the landowner did was **incredible**, but also bad for worker relations, setting everyone's expectations for a fat pay packet, when he did what he thought was right. From the start, the way he goes out of his way, instead of just sending the manager, to gather up all these workers, seems to show that this grape harvest needed to be in *yesterday!* We can guess this vintage was going to fetch a good price, even if he blew past his labor cost budget line! He doesn't say it outright, but thinks it right to give everyone the wages they needed to go home to feed their family. This is a thought we should bear in mind as we wrestle with what it means to work in this changing atmosphere of outsourcing factories to 3rd world countries, & automation taking over so much skilled & unskilled labor, even McDonalds!

Is God's generosity incredible, & too hard for us transactional thinkers to grasp? Would we be envious if someone were being so generous as to defy description; does it look unfair to us? My predecessor at St John, Pr Ken Nehmer, would always say that we'll be surprised who will be in heaven, & we should be surprised, & grateful, that we are. More so, it will never enter our minds that God was unfair when so many that we dismiss & discount are saved. But on this side of the last days, we still have our biases. Here it is, when the landowner confronts 1 of the workers who lodges an unfair labor practice report: I choose to do with my wealth what is right for others. V 15 can be translated literally, 'Is your **eye evil** because I am **good**?' Yes, we curse those who have it good, but given the chance, we'd take all we could get from a rich man who can't seem to do the math. I've heard it said, 'How do you get rich? Don't spend your money!' I think that this was Ebenezer Scrooge's financial plan, & I don't think he was very happy, **until**... so the moral of 'the Christmas Carol' was, don't let your possessions possess you.

But I have to wonder if broken people tend to break things around them. There are obvious examples: those who self-medicate with drugs & alcohol, who are jealous or angry all the time, those who think that other races, or the opposite gender, or those with disabilities, & even members of the other political party, are plainly their inferiors. You hear this about such folk: they either kiss up or punch down to get what they want. I hate to think how so many are becoming more like that in our day. as I said 2 weeks ago, people have been taught to behave this way, to be envious & angry- to hate.

Yet there are broken people who have been brutalized by the situations in which they live: women or children who can't escape an abusive relative; gays, lesbians, & people of other orientations that have been cast out by their family; the immigrant community that has been taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers; & our black & brown communities that cannot count on local law enforcement or the justice of our court system. These powerless people may break themselves, or need to break something, when so much violence like this has been done to them. This abuse must stop.

The question is not what is fair, but what is right. The time is now for the Church of Jesus Christ to work to heal that which is broken in our society. We do not have to be political, tho many believers are, while we all know the importance of voting in exercising our vocation as citizens of a democracy. But those who read the Hebrew & Christian testaments know that God has handed down laws & faith practices that promote & provide justice for all, with special attention to the poor & outcast, those the world sees as broken. The Spirit inspired prophets to denounce those who abuse their power. Jesus breaks down social barriers that kept poor & common people from claiming the abundant life God has graced to all humanity. The apostles stepped out past their own people & places to build a diverse & generous servant Church.

It is time for us to be a part of God's work for all peoples. The Church today can be seen to grow & thrive where it is serving in the midst of broken & hurting communities; we want to think that's all in the 3rd world, but no one is immune to today's pain—ask the residents of any US city, farmers with too little or too much rain, citizens whose homes are being swept away by flood, storm, & fire. So when the Church of Western society chooses to grow in faith, we will act boldly to take up the needs of our neighbor, to fight for those who are not finding justice or mercy in our land, & share our world's resources with everyone who deserves the generosity of a loving God. Amen

APOSTLES CREED

Together let us confess our baptismal faith.

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 the PEOPLE

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence.*

Generous God, you make the last first, and the first last. Where this gospel challenges the church, equip it for its works of service. Strengthen those who suffer for Christ. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sun and wind, bushes and worms, cattle and great cities—nothing in creation is outside your concern, mighty God. In your mercy, tend to it all. Give us a spirit of generosity toward all you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Where we find envy and create enemies, you provide enough for all. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence. Inspire leaders with creativity and wisdom. Bless the work of negotiators, peacekeepers, and development workers. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence: the Middle East, Afghanistan, & East Africa. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Reveal yourself to all in need as you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, ready to relent from punishing. Accompany judges and lawyers, victims of crime and those serving sentences. Give fruitful labor and a livelihood to those seeking work. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. Grant life, health, and courage to all who are in need: those with coronavirus, their families, & all who seek treatments and a cure. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We especially pray for Mitzi, Hollie, Suzette & family, Andy, Stephine, Beth, Bob, Linda, Tonya, the Sierzan family, Jim, ... Protect those in the way of the wildfires in the American West, & the tropical storm in the Gulf Coast. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We praise you for the generations that have declared your power to us. Give us faithfulness to follow them, living for Christ, until you call us to join them in the joyful song around his throne. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GIVING THANKS for GOD'S WORD

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. *A brief silence.* O God of justice and love, we give you thanks that you guide our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your resurrection feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

Jesus said, "Ask, and you will receive," and so we are bold to pray:

**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

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

SENDING into MISSION

Live in peace. Remember the poor.

We will Learn God's Truth.

We will Share the Spirit's Healing.

We will Follow the Way of Jesus. Amen

PEACE

The peace of Christ is always with you. **And also with you.**

*Please share words & gestures of peace with those near you,
or in the comments of our FB page*

At the time of this writing, please keep the following in your prayers:
ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Synod Bishop Bill Gohl, those hospitalized or at home recuperating, and our homebound members.

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*Today's Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God*

In Loving Memory of my grandfather,  
Ernest Grimm's September 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by his granddaughter, Carole Grimm.

In Loving Memory of our father, James H. Fry,  
who passed away September 19, 1994.  
Given by his daughters,  
Carol Beecher and Karen McCormick.

In Celebration of Nancy Barnes' 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Given by her family.

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Today's Bulletins are Given to the Glory of God

In Loving Memory of Lorriane Volz's
September 23rd birthday.
Given by the Volz family.

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Attendance for September 13, 2020: 25

## ***Learning, Serving, & Fellowship Opportunities***

**FREE to a good home:** Are you, or someone you know, interested in a FREE, but much loved, couch?? If your answer is "YES!" please contact the church office to schedule a pick up! 😊

**Mar-Lu-Ridge 5K Cookie Run:** Our VIRTUAL Cookie Run or 1mile Fun Run is the perfect way to support MLR from the comfort of your own neighborhood. You can walk, jog, or run the 5K anytime in the month of September. Register at <https://form.jotform.com/202193921881053> to receive your race packet then share your photo using #mlrcookierun!

**Connecting Faith & Justice – Critical Conversations:** CLAIM is sponsoring conversations to help us move forward in understanding and implementing change within ourselves. Each month, we will read a book and then gather to discuss what we have learned and share ideas on how to "make the change." You can get your book in either electronic or hard copy through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Kindle (or any vendor you prefer). The 2 remaining selections are: "How to Be An Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi on Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> and "Dear Church" by Lenny Duncan on Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. RSVP to [claimbaltimore@gmail.com](mailto:claimbaltimore@gmail.com) so we can provide discussion materials and Zoom links. Zoom meetings are from 7-8:15 pm.

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Mountain Service Days:** Sept. 22, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17. Join us as we assemble kits and create quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Each session capped at 10 participants so please register at <https://form.jotform.com/202255719670053> to reserve your space. This is a great way to serve our siblings around the globe!

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Walkathon:** September 27: 1-4 pm. This event will be in-person, with plenty of space to spread out and be safe. Walk the 5 mile camp road to raise gifts to support our year-round ministry. A box supper and community worship will wrap up our day.

**Baltimore Cancer Support Group's 7th Annual Car Show:** Sunday, October 4th from 10-2:30 pm. at the Joppatowne Shopping Center at the corner of Route 40/Pulaski Hwy. & Joppa Farm Rd. Raffles, prizes, and concessions! See attached flier for more information.

**Benefit Concert for Summit Grove Camp:** Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. at Genesis Church (1405 Seven Valleys Rd., York, PA 17408) featuring Aaron Shust, recording artist of "My Savior, My God," "Ever Be," & "My Hope is In You." Tickets for general admission are \$20/person, VIP meet & greet (5:30 pm.) are \$40/person. Get tickets online at [bit.ly/shustconcert](http://bit.ly/shustconcert) or [www.summitgrovecamp.org](http://www.summitgrovecamp.org).

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Giving Thanks Auction:** November 16-22. This online event will benefit the year-round ministry of MLR. Our items are handmade by local artisans and community members, plus we have some great MLR packages available too! Mark your calendars to join the fun. The event will end with a live online gathering November 22 to celebrate and give thanks for all of you!

**Mar-Lu-Ridge Advent Family Gathering:** December 6: 1-4 pm. Begin your holiday season with a day of fellowship and crafting! We'll share a meal and a campfire too.

**Flower Sponsorships Needed:** 9/27 and October 11/18/25 for the 10:15 service, call Nancy Barnes (410-592-3922).

**Bulletin Sponsorship Needed:** 9/27, call Anne Seeger (410-821-6161).

**Part-time Positions Available:** Lutheran Mission Society's Compassion Place is in need of a part-time Community Ministry Director. Applicants should call 410-636-0123 or email [dmaack@compassionplace.org](mailto:dmaack@compassionplace.org). They are also in need of a part-time Staff Position. Applicants should call 410-269-5016 or email [asheet1@aol.com](mailto:asheet1@aol.com).

**Amazon Smile:** When you shop on Amazon, please consider supporting St. Peter's Elementary School by using Amazon Smile. A portion of every purchase goes back to St. Peter's. To use Amazon Smile, please type in the following and sign in with your Amazon user name and password: [smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0796248](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-0796248).

**Internet Search:** Help St. Peter's church and school reach the top of the search engine results by typing our web address ([www.st-peterslutheran.com](http://www.st-peterslutheran.com)) directly into the search line/box (not the browser bar) on all of your devices!

**Help St. Peter's Food Center** by opening a new regular deposit account at Eastern Savings Bank (Fullerton location only). When you do, the Food Center receives \$5! Visit the Fullerton branch at 4113 Wholesale Club Drive, Suite 130, or go online to [EasternSavingsBank.com](http://EasternSavingsBank.com). **By appointment only.**

**Need a floral arrangement** for an upcoming holiday event or special celebration? Consider using our Sunday bouquet florist, Drayer's Florist! Call them for pricing and design information at 410-335-6286.

# Baltimore Cancer Support Group

## 7th ANNUAL CAR SHOW



Held at Joppatowne Plaza, on the corner of Rt 40 Pulaski Highway and Joppa Farm Road

**Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2:30pm**

### CLASSES

- A. Antiques (1920-1949)
- B. Classics (1950-1970)
- C. Muscle Cars (1965-1975)
- D. Future Class (1976-1996)
- E. Late Model (1997 -2010)
- F. Recent Model (2011-Present)
- G. Motorcycles (All Years)
- H. Street Rods (All Years)
- I. Trucks (Pre 1978)
- J. Trucks (1979- Present)
- K. Jeeps (All Years)
- L. Imports (Pre 2000)
- M. Imports (2001- Present)
- N. Customs (All Years)
- BEST OF SHOW

\$15 Entry Donation  
**Cars and Bikes will be on Black-Top  
Registration will be from  
10am to 12pm** the day of the event.  
**First 175 receives a dash plaque!!!**  
Judging will be conducted and  
**Awards presented at 2pm**  
**DJ BY: DANNY**

50/50

Raffles

Special Awards

Door Prices



Food and Concessions by

**TOWNE  
GRILL & PUB**

Dine-In • Carry Out • Delivery • Catering  
Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

1006 Joppa Farm Road (Joppatowne Shopping Plaza) ☎ 410-538-4665

Call Geri Booker with any questions (410) 671-6828/Anita H (410) 960-6294

*Proceeds Benefit Baltimore Cancer Support Group*

<http://baltimorecancersupportgroup.org/>