

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Pentecost 20 - October 18, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

**Hymn #480 - *“Almighty Father, Heaven and Earth”***

**Almighty Father, heav’n and earth  
With lavish wealth before you bow;  
Those treasures owe to you their birth,  
So richly furnished for us now.**

**The wealth of earth, of sky, of sea,  
The gold, the silver, sparkling gem,  
The waving corn, the bending tree  
Are yours; you are but lending them.**

**To you, as early morning’s dew,  
Our praises, gifts, and prayers shall rise  
As rose, when joyous earth was new,  
Faith’s patriarchal sacrifice.**

**We, Lord, would lay, at your request,  
The costliest off’rings on your shrine,  
And when we give and give our best,  
We but return your gifts divine.**

**O Father, whence all blessings come,  
O Son, Dispenser of God’s store,  
O Spirit, bear our off’rings home -  
Lord, make them yours forevermore!**

**Confession of Sins:**

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**C: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

**P:** Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### **First Lesson: Isaiah 5:1-7**

Let me sing for my loved one a song about my loved one's vineyard. My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile ridge. He dug it up and gathered the stones out of it. He planted it with the best vines. He built a tower in the middle of it. He also cut a winepress into it. He expected it to produce clusters of sweet grapes, but it produced only sour grapes. So now, you residents of Jerusalem and you men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard that I have not already done for it? When I expected it to produce clusters of sweet grapes, why did it produce sour grapes? Now, let me tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge, and it will become a pasture. I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. I will make it a wasteland. It will not be pruned or hoed. So briars and thorns will shoot up. I will also command the clouds not to pour rain on it. Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of Armies is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the planting that was pleasing to him. He expected justice, but instead there was oppression. He expected righteousness, but there was an outcry. (EHV)

### **Psalm 118:**

**Refrain: This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad! This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad!**

**The LORD is my strength 'and my song;  
He has become my sal'vation.**

**The LORD's right hand is 'lifted high;  
The LORD's right hand has done 'mighty things!**

**I will not ‘die but live,  
And will proclaim what the ‘LORD has done.**

**Refrain: This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad! This  
is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad!**

**I will give you thanks, for you ‘answered me;  
You have become my sal’vation.**

**The stone the builders rejected has become the ‘capstone;  
The LORD has done this, and it is marvelous ‘in our eyes.**

**This is the day the ‘LORD has made;  
Let us rejoice and be ‘glad in it.**

**Glory be to the Father and ‘to the Son  
And to the Holy ‘Spirit,  
As it was in the be’ginning,  
Is now, and will be forever, ‘Amen.**

**Refrain: This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad! This  
is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad!**

### **Second Lesson: Philippians 3:12-21**

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus also took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it yet, but there is one thing I do: Forgetting the things that are behind and straining toward the things that are ahead, I press on toward the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let all of us who are mature continue to think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you too. Only let us think the same thing and walk in line with what we already have attained. Brothers, join together in imitating me and in paying attention to those who are walking according to the pattern we gave you. To be sure, many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. I told you about them often, and now I am saying it while weeping. Their end is destruction, their god is their appetite, and their glory is in their shame. They are thinking only about earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. We are eagerly waiting for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. By the power that enables him to subject all things to himself, he will transform our humble bodies to be like his glorious body. (EHV)

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia. I will proclaim Your name to my people; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You. Alleluia.

**Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43**

“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. He leased it out to some tenant farmers and went away on a journey. When the time approached to harvest the fruit, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. The tenant farmers seized his servants. They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then the landowner sent even more servants than the first time. The tenant farmers treated them the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance!’ They took him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. So when the landowner comes, what will he do to those tenant farmers?” They told him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end. Then he will lease out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his fruit when it is due.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? “That is why I tell you the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruit. (EHV)

**The Apostles’ Creed:**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Hymn #203 - “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”**

**Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word;  
Curb those who by deceit or sword  
Would seek to overthrow your Son  
And to destroy what he has done.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, your pow’r make known,  
For you are Lord of lords alone;  
Defend your Christendom that we  
May sing your praise eternally.**

**O Comforter of priceless worth,  
Send peace and unity on earth.  
Support us in our final strife,  
And lead us out of death to life.**

**The Sermon:        Isaiah 5:1-7  
                          “**What Kind Of Fruit Will He Find?**”**

Life is full of **surprises**. Some of them are **good**, while others are **not** so good. In our sermon text for today, we read about a **bad** surprise for the LORD. The song of the LORD’s vineyard presents a picture of **sour grapes** - not at all what the LORD expected to **find** in His vineyard. But the picture isn’t really about **grapes** at all, it’s about the sour behavior of the people of **Judah** - God’s **children**. The question we have to ask ourselves today is: When God looks at **us** - His children in this **present** day and age - **What Kind Of Fruit Will He Find?**

This prophecy of Isaiah comes in the form of a **song**. It’s a song about a man who owns a **vineyard**. The **first** part of the song shows just how well that man **prepared for** and **took care** of his vineyard. We learn first of all that he selected the best **place** for his vineyard to be planted - on a fertile **ridge**, where the **soil** was good, and the **drainage** was excellent. Then he did everything he needed to do to get this land ready for **planting**. He dug it **up**, and he cleared away the **stones**. Any of you who have ever spent time picking stones in a field know that this is a very **tedious** and **laborious** process. But the effort was **worth it**, because this man was **determined** to make his vineyard the best one around. Next we’re told that he planted his vineyard with the **best vines** - again, sparing no **expense**, so he would have vines that would certainly produce the **best** fruit. In the **middle** of the vineyard, he built a **watchtower**, so that he would have a place to **stand guard**

over the vineyard, and make sure no one would come in and **steal** his harvest. In addition, he cut out a **winepress** - an area where the workers could **stomp** the grapes and collect the **juice** - making the entire process from **start** to **finish** - the most **efficient** it could be.

Of course, this song isn't **only** about a **man** and his **vineyard**. Verse seven of our text makes it clear what Isaiah was singing about: "*The vineyard of the LORD of Armies is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the planting that was pleasing to him.*" The great care which the man in the song took in **preparing** and **planting** his vineyard, is a symbol of how greatly the **LORD** cared for His **people, Israel**. Think about how the LORD had taken care of them in the **past**. He **chose** them out of all the nations of the earth, and said that they would be **His own**. He brought them out of their **slavery** in Egypt. He defeated **enemy** after **enemy** for them, so that they could take **possession** of the Promised Land. He gave them His **Word** - sending them **prophet** after **prophet** to remind them of the **covenant** He had made with them. And what was the end **result** of all that loving care? What **happened** as the song continued?

We're told that the vineyard owner had planted the **best** vines in the **best** place with the **best** possible protection, so naturally, he would expect to be able to harvest the **best grapes**. But when the vineyard owner **looked** at his crop, he didn't **find** the best grapes. Instead, he found **bad** grapes - **sour** grapes. The Hebrew word that Isaiah used here actually means "**stinking** things." In other words, these grapes weren't just **sour** - they were **rotten**. In fact they were the exact **opposite** of what the vineyard owner had **expected** from his vineyard.

**Rotten** - that's a perfect description of **Israel's actions** toward the LORD. The LORD looked at His special people, and He found something which was completely **unexpected**. They weren't acting like His dearly loved **children**. They were doing just the **opposite**. As Isaiah said, "*He expected **justice**, but instead there was **oppression**. He expected **righteousness**, but there was an **outcry**.*" God didn't find **good fruit** among His people. They were not producing **God-pleasing** actions. Instead, He found actions that were **rotten** - acts of **idolatry**, and **violence**, and **sexual immorality**, and all kinds of **other** evil things. We can sense the LORD's **frustration** and **disappointment** with His people, and His **disapproval** of their behavior when He said, "*What **more** could have been done for my vineyard that I have not already **done** for it? When I expected it to produce clusters of **sweet grapes**, why did it produce **sour grapes**?"*

The question is, do Isaiah's words apply to us **today** - and the answer is **yes**. Isaiah was writing about the **physical** Children of Israel in Old Testament times. But his words still ring true for the **spiritual** Children of Israel today - that's **us**. Just like God took **care** of His children in the Old Testament, He has taken care of **us** very well too. It's really **amazing** just how **well** the LORD takes care of us. He's given us all kinds of **physical** blessings - our **health**, our **homes**, our **families** and **friends**. He has also taken care of our **spiritual** needs by providing us with His **Word** and **Sacraments**, giving us a **church home** here at Trinity, and giving us **Christian** family members and friends to **encourage** us on our path through life. We have been provided with so many wonderful **advantages**.

And yet **What Kind Of Fruit Does God Find** when He looks into our lives? Does He find the **good** fruit that He is **looking** for? That **good** fruit would be the fruit of the **Spirit** which the Apostle Paul wrote about in his letter to the **Galatians**: "*The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*" Is that the fruit which God sees in our lives, or does He sometimes find just the **opposite** in us? When our God examines our lives, does He see **selfishness** and **anger** - does He hear **filthy** words and **coarse** jokes - does He expose **broken** promises and a **lack of zeal** for His **Word** and His **mission**? Could God look down at His people here at **Trinity** and say the same thing He said about the Children of **Israel**: "*What more could have been done for my vineyard that I have not already done for it? When I expected it to produce clusters of sweet grapes, why did it produce sour grapes?*"

That's the **sad** part of the story - the realization that we have not lived up to God's **expectations** of us. But here's the really **frightening** part of the story. The owner of the vineyard **didn't keep caring** for his vineyard after it yielded those **sour** grapes. Instead, he let the vineyard be **overrun** and **destroyed**. That was the **judgment** which was facing God's people. Their evil **words** and **actions** had dire **consequences**. The LORD said, "If you don't want to **act** like **My people**, then I'm not going to **treat you** like My people." And it wasn't very long before the LORD allowed the Babylohan **invaders** to come and carry away the Children of Israel into **captivity**. In our **Gospel** reading for today, Jesus spoke about this impending judgment for **us** as well, when He said, "*The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces its fruit.*"

Wherever people **trample** on God's grace and produce **rotten** fruit, His **judgment** is not far behind. How far off is His judgment on **us** - on our **congregation**, on our **synod**, on our **state**, on our **country** - on our **world**? Martin Luther compared the gift of the Gospel to a **rain shower**. It falls on a place **for a**

**while** until it's no longer being received by **faithful hearts**, and then it goes off **somewhere else** where it's received with **joy**. After the Lutheran Reformation, the country of Germany certainly **enjoyed** that Gospel shower, as the cathedrals were **filled** with worshipers, and God's Word was being taught in its **truth** and **purity**. But the situation in Germany is completely **different** today. Those same huge cathedrals are now almost **empty** on a Sunday morning. The shower of the **Gospel** has moved on.

Is that the future for **our** country too? How much longer will we be able **enjoy** the Gospel's shower, before the LORD takes it **away**, and moves it on to somewhere **else**? Christianity is growing rapidly in places like **Africa** and **Asia**. What is its future here in **America**? More and more Americans are turning **away** from the truth of **God's Word**, to a **self-determined** truth - which is **no truth** at all. As Paul told the Romans, *"Such people have traded the **truth** about God for the **lie**, worshipping and serving the **creation** rather than the **Creator** ... For this reason God **handed them over** to disgraceful **passions**."* There's certainly a **warning** for us to be found in these words from Isaiah. In fact, if these seven verses from Isaiah's prophecy were the **only** words we had to go on, that would be the **end** of the story. But thankfully, we know that there's **more** to the story. God's **judgment** always stands side-by-side with His **mercy** and **grace**. Yes, God did bring **judgment** on the Children of Israel, and He had them carried off into **captivity** for 70 years. But in His **mercy**, He preserved for Himself a **remnant** of faithful believers, and out of that tiny **remnant** came a young woman named **Mary**. Her firstborn **child** was the **embodiment** of God's love and mercy - He was **God's** own son - Jesus Christ, our **Savior**.

Jesus came to bring **judgment** on an **unbelieving** world, but He also came to offer **hope** to all who would **believe** in **Him** for their salvation - regardless of **race** or **social** status. Jesus came to bring hope to **you**, to **me**, and to **all** people - and He **did** it by taking the **punishment** for our sins on **Himself**. The **rejection** that we deserved because of our sins, was completely removed by the **payment** which Jesus made on the cross. The cross is where God's **judgment** meets God's **mercy**. There we see His **judgment** on **sin**, but we also see His **mercy** in applying that judgment to His **Son** and not to **us**. When we place our trust in **Jesus**, we don't need to be **afraid** of God's wrath, because we know that we have **forgiveness** through Jesus.

That's why we can come away from this worship service today with **hope** for a brighter future. God has taken great **care** of us. He has accomplished our **salvation** through His Son. And Jesus has given us **hope**. He is worthy of our



**praise**, and we can **offer** that praise by producing **good** fruit - **sweet** fruit - "*The fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*" We do these things not because we **have** to, or because God will **destroy** us if we don't. But rather, we do these things because they are our way of saying **thank you** to a God who has cared for us in the **past**, who is caring for us **right now** in the **present**, and who will **continue** to care for us until He ultimately takes us home to **heaven**. Amen

### **Prayers:**

Dear God, teach us to live lives of loving **service** to You, out of **gratitude** for Your **love** - a love which moved You to sacrifice Your **Son** for our sins. Through His **death**, You have made us to be members of Your **family**. Therefore, help us to be completely **dedicated** to You, freeing our **energies**, our **abilities**, our **time**, and our **possessions** - yes, all that we **are** and all that we **have** - from a life of serving **self**, to a life of serving **God**.

Lord, You have made us Your stewards in a **special** way, entrusting us with Your holy **Word**. Teach us that this Word - meant for our **own** continual use - is also ours to **share** with others, especially the members of our **family**, that they may learn of the Savior's love for **them**, and believing, be **saved**. Help us determine what portion of our **time** we will give in personal witness to the Gospel. Help us determine what portion of our **energies** and **talents** we will use for God's work in the congregation. And help us determine what portion of our earthly **possessions** we will use to support the ministry of the divine Word, both in our **local** congregation, as well as in our **Synod**. Give our parents the ability to train their **children** in Christian stewardship, so that even from tender **youth**, they will have a desire to carry out the work of the **Church**, and to share the **responsibility** for preaching the Gospel.

O Holy Spirit, bless the offerings of **time**, **talent**, and **treasure** that we make to God for His kingdom. Let them be a delightful **privilege**, and self-evident **fruits** of our personal **faith**. And since only offerings given out of love for Christ are **acceptable** to You, increase our **love** by a diligent use of Your **Word**, and reception of Your **Holy Supper**. Amen.

### **The 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.**

**Hymn #258 - "Now Let All Loudly"**

**Now let all loudly sing praise to God the Lord;  
Christendom, proudly laud him with one accord.  
Gently he bids you come before him.  
Haste, then, O Israel, now adore him!  
Haste, then, O Israel, now adore him!**

**The Lord is reigning over the universe,  
The world sustaining. All things his praise rehearse.  
The angel host his glory telling,  
Psalter and harp are the anthem swelling.  
Psalter and harp are the anthem swelling.**

**Come, heathen races, cast off all grief and cares,  
For pleasant places your Savior now prepares,  
Where his blest Word abroad is sounded,  
Pardon for sinners and grace unbounded;  
Pardon for sinners and grace unbounded.**

**Richly he feeds us always and ev'rywhere.  
Gently he leads us with a true father's care.  
The late and early rains he sends us.  
Daily his blessing, his love, attends us.  
Daily his blessing, his love, attends us.**

**Sing we his praises who is thus merciful.  
Christendom raises songs to his glorious rule.  
Rejoice! No foe shall now alarm us.  
He will protect us, and who can harm us?  
He will protect us, and who can harm us?**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**The Blessing:**

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

**Hymn #518 - "Forth in the Peace of Christ We Go"**

**Forth in the peace of Christ we go;  
Christ to the world with joy we bring,  
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,  
Christ in our hearts, the world's true King.**

**King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings;  
Kingship with him his servants gain.  
With Christ the Servant-Lord of all,  
Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.**

**Priests to the world, yes, royal priests  
As members of Christ's family,  
Cleansed by the great high priestly death,  
We preach atonement full and free.**

**Christ on our lips, his Word we speak.  
Prophets are we whose deeds proclaim  
Christ's truth in love that we may be  
Christ in the world, to spread Christ's name.**

**We are the Church; Christ bids us show  
That in his Church all nations find  
Their hearth and home where Christ restores  
True peace, true love to humankind.**