**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, WOODLAND, MI**

**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, October 10, 2021**

**\*If you are listening in your car, please tune your radio to FM 87.7\***

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRELUDE**

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity,

☩ one God,

who creates, redeems, and sustains us

and all of creation.

**Amen.**

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

To you, O God,

**all hearts are open, to you all desires known. We come to you, confessing our sins. Forgive us in your mercy, and remember us in your love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior.**

**Amen.**

By water and the Holy Spirit God gives you a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of ☩ Jesus Christ, God forgives you all your sins. The God of mercy and might strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life.

**Amen.**

**Gathering Song“O That I Had a Thousand Voices” ELW 833**

 

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray together.

**Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us your gift of faith, that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to what lies ahead, we may follow the way of your commandments and receive the crown of everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**First Reading**    **Amos 5:6-7, 10-15**

A reading from Amos.

 6Seek the Lord and live,
  or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire,
  and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.
 7Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,
  and bring righteousness to the ground!

 10They hate the one who reproves in the gate,
  and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.
 11Therefore because you trample on the poor
  and take from them levies of grain,
 you have built houses of hewn stone,
  but you shall not live in them;
 you have planted pleasant vineyards,
  but you shall not drink their wine.
 12For I know how many are your transgressions,
  and how great are your sins—
 you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
  and push aside the needy in the gate.
 13Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;
  for it is an evil time.

 14Seek good and not evil,
  that you may live;
 and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
  just as you have said.
 15Hate evil and love good,
  and establish justice in the gate;
 it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
  will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Psalm 90:12-17**

 12So teach us to num- **|** ber our days
  that we may apply our **|** hearts to wisdom.
 13**Return, O Lord; how long | will you tarry?**
  **Be gracious | to your servants.**
 14Satisfy us by your steadfast love **|** in the morning;
  so shall we rejoice and be glad **|** all our days.
 15**Make us glad as many days as you af- | flicted us**
  **and as many years as we suf- | fered adversity.**
 16Show your ser- **|** vants your works,
  and your splendor **|** to their children.
 17**May the graciousness of the Lord our God | be upon us;**
  **prosper the work of our hands; pros- | per our handiwork.**

**Second Reading**  **Hebrews 4:12-16**

A reading from Hebrews.

12Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

  14Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

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

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

**Gospel** **Mark 10:2-16**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

17As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’ ” 20He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” 21Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” 22When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.
  23Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” 24And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” 26They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” 27Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”
  28Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” 29Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, 30who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese “With God All Things Are Possible”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Terry and I have lived in the parsonage now for 4 years. Though we really tried to get rid of lots of stuff before we moved so that we could downsize and we did, we also still brought way too much stuff with us. And I am embarrassed to say that in these 4 years, there are still boxes that we have not unpacked and that we have accumulated more stuff. There are days that seeing excess stuff which also leads to lots of clutter is overwhelming.

I think that we all know how much personal possessions and stuff can sometimes get in our way. I would love to live in a minimalist way but the process to get there by dealing with too much stuff can be daunting.

Today’s Gospel speaks to us, using this example of the man who came to Jesus, seeking life in the kingdom of God, about stuff and all of the things in life that can be obstacles for us to fully live in the life that Jesus has called us to live.

While on his way to Jerusalem, a rich, young man approaches Jesus. What do we know about this man? We know that he is rich. We know that he is a devout Jew and keeper of the law. And we know that he is looking for something more. He wants the life that Jesus has to offer.

I do want to clear a couple of things up about his conversation with Jesus. He was not asking how he could be saved or have assurance of eternal life. According to his Jewish tradition, he was doing the right things to be saved. He was faithfully keeping the law. He was asking about entering life in the kingdom of God which is here on earth. He wanted more meaning in his life and wanted to follow Jesus.

When Jesus told him he was lacking one thing and that he needed to give all of his possessions and money to the poor and follow him, he meant that this man had to be willing to let his things go to be able to follow Jesus. Giving up his stuff was not a requirement for salvation but a requirement for experiencing abundant life in God’s kingdom where Jesus would give him all that he needed. He needed to change his priorities of what was most important to his life.

And it is very important to read that Jesus told this to the man out of love, not judgement.

 Jesus loved him.

Jesus wanted him to experience abundant life.

But the man could not part with his possessions. We don’t know what happened to him after this. We can only hope that at some point he did change his priorities in life and follow Jesus.

Then Jesus used this encounter as a teaching moment about the dangers of the lure of money and possessions. And he used what seems to us as a very odd illustration. How in the world can we even think about a camel going through the eye of a needle?

 I can hardly get a thread through the eye of a needle, let alone a camel.

What we don’t know that the disciples did, is that there was a small entry way in the walls of cities that was called the eye of the needle. It was hard for travelers with camels to get through that entryway because it was too small for a camel so they would have to go through the main, larger gate.

Now what Jesus said made sense. And in using that illustration he was saying that it is difficult for those with much wealth to enter into the kingdom.

Now, Jesus is not condemning people who have a lot of wealth and saying that rich people cannot get into heaven. This lesson is really not about getting into heaven at all. It is about being able to fully follow Jesus and live in the abundant life that he promises us.

What he is warning us about is that there are things in our lives that can become obstacles for living fully in the life that Jesus is offering to us. I hope that we all understand that we do not have to do anything to earn our way into heaven. Jesus has done all that is needed for that assurance of eternal life. Jesus tells us that trying to earn our way into heaven is impossible but with God all things are possible.

Until the day that God calls us home into that life in heaven, we have a life to live here on earth, in his kingdom on earth.

The man in today’s Gospel is actually asking the wrong question. He asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. He thinks he has it made as he thinks that he has kept the law all of his life. And in Jesus time, keeping the law was how people felt that they could earn eternal life.

The question that he should have asked and that we should be asking is what shall we be? How shall we live in the way that Jesus calls us to live? The fact that the man had many possessions was not as much the issue as the fact that he could not let go of them and simply walk with Jesus in trust that Jesus would provide for all of his needs.

We all need to learn over and over again how to use what we have to serve others. And it is not just about money or possessions. This can also be about time and talents that we can give when people are in need. There is so much satisfaction when we do projects that may use our time or abilities to help other people.

 That is the lesson that Jesus wants all of us to learn. In doing this and trusting that God will provide for all of our needs, we can live a free and full lives of spiritual abundance.

Jesus is calling us to abundant live with him because he loves us.

 However we chose to use our money and our possessions, is not something that Jesus judges us about.

 But is does challenge us to think about our priorities. Our life will become more meaningful when we put Jesus first and are willing to give of what we have to those who have little. We are not being asked to literally give up everything we have to give it to the poor but we are being asked to evaluate our lives and to think of what is most important to us.

Jesus wants to be first, not out of guilt or fear of judgement but out of love.

There are people in this community who have little. What are ways that Jesus may be calling us individually or as a church community to reach out by sharing what we have? There are people who have lost everything in recent hurricanes and other natural disasters in our country and around our world. A gift to Lutheran Disaster Relief reaches those people with the love of Jesus.

Today, we have health kits for Lutheran World Relief that many of us donated to, that others put together and they are displayed today for all of us to see. These kits go to people who have suffered disasters or great poverty all over our world and even in our own country.

In the past, we have displayed many quilts that also went with the health kits to Lutheran World Relief. We all miss our dear sister, Irene Ames, who was the driving force in making these quilts though many others helped her along the way. Would you like to see our church full of quilts again? Who among us has quilting ability and the desire to organize a new quilting effort or even the desire to learn to quilt? This could continue to be a wonderful, creative ministry here at Zion.

People are now making prayer shawls to take to people who are in need of comfort and the promise of prayer from our Zion family. Perhaps it would be enjoyable for a group to meet together to knit or crochet prayer shawls to have fellowship and prayer while working.

And whenever we have a collection for a community need, people here are so very generous in giving to meet these needs.

These are examples of things that Jesus calls us to be a part of to live abundantly with him and to help others also have abundant lives through our ministries. All that we can do to reach out to others who are in some kind of need without obstacles of any kind holding us back, is what Jesus is talking about today in our Gospel lesson.

THIS is being a part of the kingdom of God here on earth. This is living the abundant life in Jesus’s love. Come, follow Jesus and live in this wonderful life that he has given to us!

May the peace of God which passes all human understanding keep our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Hymn of the Day “Gather Us In” ELW 532**



**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.**

\*Or, “he descended into hell,” another translation of this text in widespread use.

**prayers of Intercession**

Made children and heirs of God’s promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

Uniting God, you call forth different gifts in those who follow you. Encourage us to welcome the diverse benefits and blessings of the whole church in teaching, preaching, prophecy, healing, and more. We pray especially for Trinity Lutheran Church and Rev. Jessica Hahn. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, you bring forth crops from the soil and bounty from the trees. Increase the produce of the land and bless all who toil in fields and orchards. Provide for good working conditions and keep them safe. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Empowering God, you offer compassion for those who are overlooked or forgotten. Open the hearts of local, national, and world leaders to show such compassion and love for their neighbors. Help those who are sick or injured. We pray especially for the Cole family especially Sophie, Chris Farlee, Sarah Kindstedt, the family of Jerry Southgate, Pam Swiler, Joyce Marsterllar, the family of Jill Meyer Barner, the family of Dale Knuth, Evelyn Knuth, Eric Anderson, Lisa Hetchler, Janine Kaufman, Brian Smith, Cort Zylstra, Vi Aho, and Charles Farlee. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Sheltering God, in Jesus you travelled among us without a place to lay your head. Provide safe places to sleep and rest for those who have no place to live. Sustain ministries that offer food, clothing, and peace of mind. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Renewing God, you bring life out of death. Help us part with those things that are no longer beneficial to us and open our hearts to see where new life is budding in this congregation. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, we thank you for the lives of those who have died. Make us confident in your promise of salvation and support us in our own journey of faith. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering & Offering song**



**Offering Prayer**

Let us pray. Gracious God, you bless us with gifts of guidance, new life, growth in grace, and fruitful labor. Accept the first fruits of time and toil, field and orchard we offer here. Bless and multiply these gifts to our nurture and the care of your creation; for the sake of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

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.

**Lord’s Prayer**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those**

**who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial**

**and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours,**

**now and forever. Amen.**

**COMMUNION**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and keep you in His grace.

**Sending**

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

**Blessing**

The holy Three, the holy One increase your hope,

strengthen your faith, deepen your love, and ☩ grant you peace.

**Amen.**

**Sending SonG “God of Grace and God of Glory ” ELW 705**



**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

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**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SERVED TODAY:**

**Presider: Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese**

**Musician: Martha Yoder**

**Elder: Jolene Griffin**

 **Trustee: Jerry Engle**

**Offering Counters: Jerry Engle & Carlotta Willard**

**Safety Person: Dan Zylstra**

**PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

With thanks for all God’s blessings and his love for all people. Our Bishops, Craig Satterlee Elizabeth Eaton, and the congregations of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. **Trinity Lutheran Church in Hillsdale and Rev. Jessica Hahn.**

Prayers for our friends, especially for the Cole family especially Sophie, Chris Farlee, Sarah Kindstedt, the family of Jerry Southgate, Pam Swiler, Joyce Marsterllar, the family of Jill Meyer Barner, the family of Dale Knuth, Evelyn Knuth, Eric Anderson, Lisa Hetchler, Janine Kaufman, Brian Smith, Cort Zylstra, Vi Aho, and Charles Farlee All those members of Zion’s family traveling; all those homebound or in frail health; all those suffering with quiet, unknown needs or worries.

For those who serve on our behalf: public safety, utility workers, medical personnel, military personnel. For those who might be forgotten.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

* **Directory:** We're wanting to put together the directory this month but not everyone has verified their information. Please check your church mailbox for a yellow slip of paper, verify that the information is correct, make any changes and return to the secretary's mailbox as soon as possible.
* Thank you! A very special thank you to Alice Morrow for the donation of a beautiful handmade village quilt.  Thank you also to Wayne Hazel and his son, Ed, for donating and making the wooden quilt rack at Ed's wood shop and to Wayne for hanging the quilt.  The quilt and rack are wonderful additions to our other quilts displayed in the Fellowship Hall.  Alice worked on this quilt for several years and completed it in 2020.  Alice and Wayne are second cousins in the Schmalzried/Jordan family.  Be sure and go into our Fellowship Hall and see all our beautiful quilts.
* **Lutheran World Relief Sunday is today!**  Thank you to Thrivent Financial for giving us a $250.00 grant to purchase some of the items needed for the kits.  Thank you also to all who donated items needed or cash to help with the shipping costs.  Thank you to the ladies of the Charity Circle who were our action team and helped assemble some of the kits.  Each kit included a towel, 2 bars of soap, a toothbrush and a nail clipper.  Tubes of toothpaste are handed out when the kits are given out.  The personal care kits we assembled will be displayed in our sanctuary.  On October 20th Jerry and Carol Engle will deliver the 68 kits to a truck at a Lutheran School in Wyoming.  We will also help the First Lutheran Church of Charlotte by delivering their quilts that day too.  Zion is blessed to be able to help others in need.

**This week at Zion:**

* Bd of Youth/Parish Ed, after church
* Pet Blessing, today 3PM
* Council meeting Tuesday, October 12, 6:30 PM
* Worship planning, Thursday, October 14, 4:30 PM

**Save the date**

* Congregational Memorial Service, November 7 time to be announced