



*You are welcome here!*

**We are disciples of Jesus,  
growing in Faith, Hope, and Love**

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**Worship Times**

Sunday 10:15 am  
Wednesday 7:00 pm



**Pastor**

Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal



*September 24, 2023*  
*17<sup>th</sup> Sunday After*  
*Pentecost*

# Gathering

## ✘ INTRODUCTION

*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. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet 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.*

## ✘ CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C **Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P Faithful and steadfast God,

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

**Amen.**

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

C **Amen.**

## ✘ GATHERING HYMN – Faith Begins By Letting Go (ACS #1004)

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## ✘ 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.**

## ✘ **NOW THE FEAST AND CELEBRATION – (ELW #167)**

*Refrain:* Now the feast and celebration,  
All of creation sings for joy  
To the God of love and life and freedom;  
Praise and glory for evermore!

1. Now is the feast of the lamb once slain,  
Whose blood has freed and united us  
To be one great people of God. *Refrain*
2. Power and riches, wisdom and might,  
All honor and glory to Christ forever. *Refrain*
3. For God has come to dwell with us,  
To make us people of God;  
To make all things new. *Refrain*

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## ✘ **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**A** Let us pray. 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.

**C** Amen.

## Word

### ✘ **FIRST LESSON – Jonah 3:10 - 4:11**

<sup>10</sup>When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

<sup>4:1</sup>But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup>He prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. <sup>3</sup>And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” <sup>4</sup>And the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” <sup>5</sup>Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. <sup>7</sup>But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

<sup>9</sup>But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” <sup>10</sup>Then the LORD said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. <sup>11</sup>And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

#### ✠ **RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 145:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>I will exalt you, my God and king,  
and bless your name forever and ever.

<sup>2</sup>**Every day will I bless you  
and praise your name forever and ever.**

<sup>3</sup>Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!  
There is no end to your greatness.

<sup>4</sup>**One generation shall praise your works to another  
and shall declare your power.**

<sup>5</sup>I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty  
and all your marvelous works.

<sup>6</sup>**They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,  
and I will recount your greatness.**

<sup>7</sup>They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;  
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.

<sup>8</sup>**The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

## ✘ SECOND LESSON – Philippians 1:21-30

<sup>21</sup>For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. <sup>22</sup>If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. <sup>23</sup>I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; <sup>24</sup>but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. <sup>25</sup>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, <sup>26</sup>so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

<sup>27</sup>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, <sup>28</sup>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. <sup>29</sup>For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—<sup>30</sup>since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

*Please stand as you are able for the reading of the Gospel.*

## ✘ GOSPEL ACCLAMATION –

A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya. A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

A - le - lu - ya, a - le - lu - ya. El Se - ñor re - su - ci - tó.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Christ is ris - en, ris'n in - deed.

## ✘ GOSPEL – Matthew 20:1-16

P The Holy Gospel, according to Matthew, the twentieth chapter.

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

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup>After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup>When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup>and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. <sup>5</sup>When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup>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?’ <sup>7</sup>They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ <sup>8</sup>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.’ <sup>9</sup>When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup>Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup>And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, <sup>12</sup>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.’ <sup>13</sup>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? <sup>14</sup>Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup>Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ <sup>16</sup>So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

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

## ✘ SERMON

## ✘ HYMN OF THE DAY – Neither Death nor Life (ELW #622)

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## ✠ APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 105)

P With the whole Church, let us confess our faith:

**C 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 Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

*A brief silence.*

A God who is gracious and merciful, teach your church to invite and welcome all. Lead us to be grateful for the blessing of community. Challenge your church to choose equity and compassion over judgment. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God who sends the wind and the sun, you know every worm and bush by name. Help us remember that even the humblest parts of creation are precious to you. Show us how best to care for the earth and its creatures. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God who is ready to relent from punishing, impart your compassionate wisdom to legislators, judges, members of the military, and law enforcement. Give them courage to serve their communities in times of uncertainty, stress, or exhaustion. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God who saves, direct your people who are tempted by evil ways. Protect your children from calamity and disaster. Strengthen all who are incarcerated. Encourage all who are in despair or pain of any kind. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God who is slow to anger, may we boast about the goodness of Jesus with the confidence of Paul in prison. Inspire us to find abundance in whatever vocation we are called to in the world and in service to our congregation. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

A God who abounds in steadfast love, we give thanks for the saints called to the kingdom of heaven. United with them in spirit, hold us firm as we labor in this life and look to the life to come. Merciful God,

**C receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

P Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

**C Amen.**

## ✘ PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

## ✘ OFFERING

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, here and around the world.*

*After the offering is gathered, the gifts are brought forward to the altar.*

*As this happens, please stand as you are able for the offering prayer and meal.*

## ✘ OFFERING PRAYER

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

**C Amen.**

# Meal

## ✘ GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

**C And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

**C We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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



P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### ✠ HOLY, HOLY, HOLY - ELW Setting Three (p. 144)



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

### ✠ EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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 death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**✕ LORD'S PRAYER**

**P** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C** **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** Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

**✕ LAMB OF GOD – ELW Setting Three (p. 146)**



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



sin of the world; grant us peace.

**✘ DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

**✘ COMMUNION HYMN – I Love to Tell the Story (ELW #661)**

**✘ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A Blessed be your name, O God, for we have feasted on your Word, Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts. Strengthened by this food, send us to gather the world to your banquet, where none are left out and all are satisfied. In Jesus' name we pray.

C Amen.

**✘ BLESSING**

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

C Amen.

**✘ ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**✘ SENDING HYMN – On What Has Now Been Sown (ELW #550)**

**✘ DISMISSAL**

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

C Thanks be to God.

## ✠ SERVING TODAY

Presiding Minister:	The Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal
Music Director:	John Zacharias
Altar:	Kris Davies
Assisting Minister:	Kris Davies
Lay Reader:	Francine Bennett
Usher:	Julie Bothun
Videographer:	Steve Curry
Communion Cup Holder:	Meleah Zapata

Children in attendance are welcome to break away during our services with our Sunday School teachers. Those teachers include Cheri Oertel (director), Julie Bothun, Katie Valencia and Phyllis Bell.

If anyone would be interested in volunteering once a month to teach Sunday School during the service, please contact the church office or talk to Cheri Oertel.

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