



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The 21st Sunday After Pentecost

October 8, 2023 10:30 Service of the Word

In today's gospel reading Jesus says that he is the vine and we are the branches. The branches produce much fruit. It sounds like a wonderful idea; at least at first. Then Jesus goes on to talk about the vines being pruned to bear even more fruit. We live in wine country. We know that pruning is severe. A pruned vineyard looks terrible. Yet it is exactly where it needs to be to be productive in the next season. May we be willing to allow our lives to be pruned of unproductive vines and leaves so that we may bear much fruit.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

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,
A moment for reflection

P: Steadfast and faithful 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 There Is None Like You
(For music turn to Hymn 87 in the Songbook binder)

Chorus

**There is none like You
No one else can touch
My heart like You do
I could search
For all eternity long and find
There is none like You**

Verse

**Your mercy flows like a river wide
And healing comes from Your hands
Suffering children are safe in Your arms
There is none like You**

Text and music by Lenny LeBlanc, CCLI # 674545, Copyright 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

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.

Gathering Dialog (Deuteronomy 26, 11, 8)

A: You are the treasured people of the Lord,

C: a people holy to the Lord our God.

A: Keep the words of the Lord in your heart; teach them to your children.

**C: Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away,
when you lie down and when you rise.**

A: One does not live by bread alone,

C: but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray...

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot life. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and now the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Isaiah 5:1-7

B: Let 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 briars 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!

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 80:9-20 (read responsively)

D: Restore to us, God of might,
the light of your presence,
and we shall be saved.

**C: You brought a vine from Egypt,
cleared out nations to plant it;
you prepared the ground
and made it take root
to fill the land.**

D: It overshadowed the mountains,
towered over the mighty cedars,

**C: stretched its branches to the sea,
its roots to the distant river.**

D: Why have you now torn down its walls?
All who pass by steal the grapes,
wild boars tear up its roots,
beasts devour its fruit.

**C: Turn our way, God of might,
look down from heaven;
tend this vine you planted,
cherish it once more.**

D: May those who slashed and burned it
wither at your rebuke.

**C: Rest your hand upon your chosen one
who draws strength from you.**

D: We have not turned from you.
Give us life again
and we will invoke your name.

**C: Restore to us, Lord God of might,
the light of your presence,
and we shall be saved.**

Second Reading Philippians 3:4b-14

E: [Paul writes] even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If 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.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (John 15:5)

C: Alleluia. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in my and I in them bear much fruit. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading John 15:1-17

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 15th chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus said] ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I

have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

After the reading:

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Video Message "Shells" from the *Nooma* video series by Rob Bell

Hymn of the Day God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending
(For music see Hymn 678 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **God, whose giving knows no ending,
from your rich and endless store:
nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
costly cross, grave's shattered door,
gifted by you, we turn to you,
off'ring up ourselves in praise;
thankful song shall rise forever,
gracious donor of our days.**
2. **Skills and time are ours for pressing
toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
all at peace in health and freedom,
races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
lest we strive for self alone;
born with talents, make us servants
fit to answer at your throne.**
3. **Treasure, too, you have entrusted,
gain through pow'rs your grace conferred;
ours to use for home and kindred,
and to spread the gospel word.
Open wide our hands in sharing,
as we heed Christ's ageless call,
healing, teaching, and reclaiming,**

serving you by loving all.

Text: Robert L. Edwards, 1915-2006, copyright 1961, re. 1989 The Hymn Society, admin Hope Publishing Company. Music: C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848-1918

Response to the Word

P: In Christ you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

P: Living together in trust and hope, we 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.**

D: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

C: pray in the Holy Spirit. *(Jude 20)*

D: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. *(Jude 21)*

D: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**C: Everything old has passed away;
behold, everything has become new!** *(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

Prayers of Intercession

(A Responsive Prayer Inspired by John 15:1-8)

F: Vine of life, in your branches we are nestled taking shelter and sustenance in the shade of your strength.

C: With thanksgiving we celebrate the growth and hope we have found in placing our roots in you.

F: Lord, make us more than sour grapes and unripe olives.

C: May we look beyond political and ethnic divisions to find your love at the core of our relationships.

F: May our branches bend with the weight of the fruit you have bestowed.

C: Help us to look beyond our own needs, to recognize those who are hungry for food, love and justice.

F: May our leaves soak up your light.

C: When we meet those who are worn down with illness, loneliness, and grief, may your light shine through us.

F: Gardener of all life, as you trim and shape us for your purpose may we place our prayers into your hands.

C: We trust that new seeds will grow from tired and empty thoughts.

F: These things and whatever else we need we pray in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

† THANKSGIVING †

Special Music

Hymn of Thanksgiving

Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil

For music turn to Hymn 713 in the Blue Hymnal

**Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your Word.**

Lord, let my heart be good soil,

**where love can grow and peace is understood.
When my heart is hard,
break the stone away.
When my heart is cold,
warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost,
lead me on your way.
Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart be good soil.**

Text and music: Handt Hanson, b. 1950, Copyright 1985 Prince of Peace Publishing/Changing Church, Inc.

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth.

C: Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus our Savior and Lord. 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.**

† SENDING †

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.

Sending Hymn Praise and Thanksgiving

(For music turn to Hymn 689 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Praise and thanksgiving, God, we would offer
for all things living, created good:
harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard,
hay from the mown fields, blossom and wood.**
2. **God, bless the labor we bring to serve you,
that with our neighbor we may be fed.
Sowing or tilling, we would work with you,
harvesting, milling for daily bread.**
3. **Father, providing food for your children,
by Wisdom's guiding teach us to share
one with another, so that, rejoicing
with us, all others may know your care.**
4. **Then will your blessing reach ev'ry people,
freely confessing your gracious hand.
When you are reigning, no one will hunger;
your love sustaining showers the land.**

Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901-1984, alt. Copyright, Oxford University Press. Music: Gaelic tune; arr. copyright 2006 Augsburg Fortress

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers Linda Flood
Acolyte Thomas Bullwinkle
Counters Babette Huber and Burdie Gillern
Coffee Hour

Worship assistants for next Sunday, October 29

Greeters and Ushers Tom and Carol Urbanic
Acolyte Alyssa Young
Altar Care Mary Zuege
Communion Assistant Gary Boisseau
Counters Michele Myers and Helen Crown
Coffee Hour Pie Sunday

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St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
William Shi, Pianist