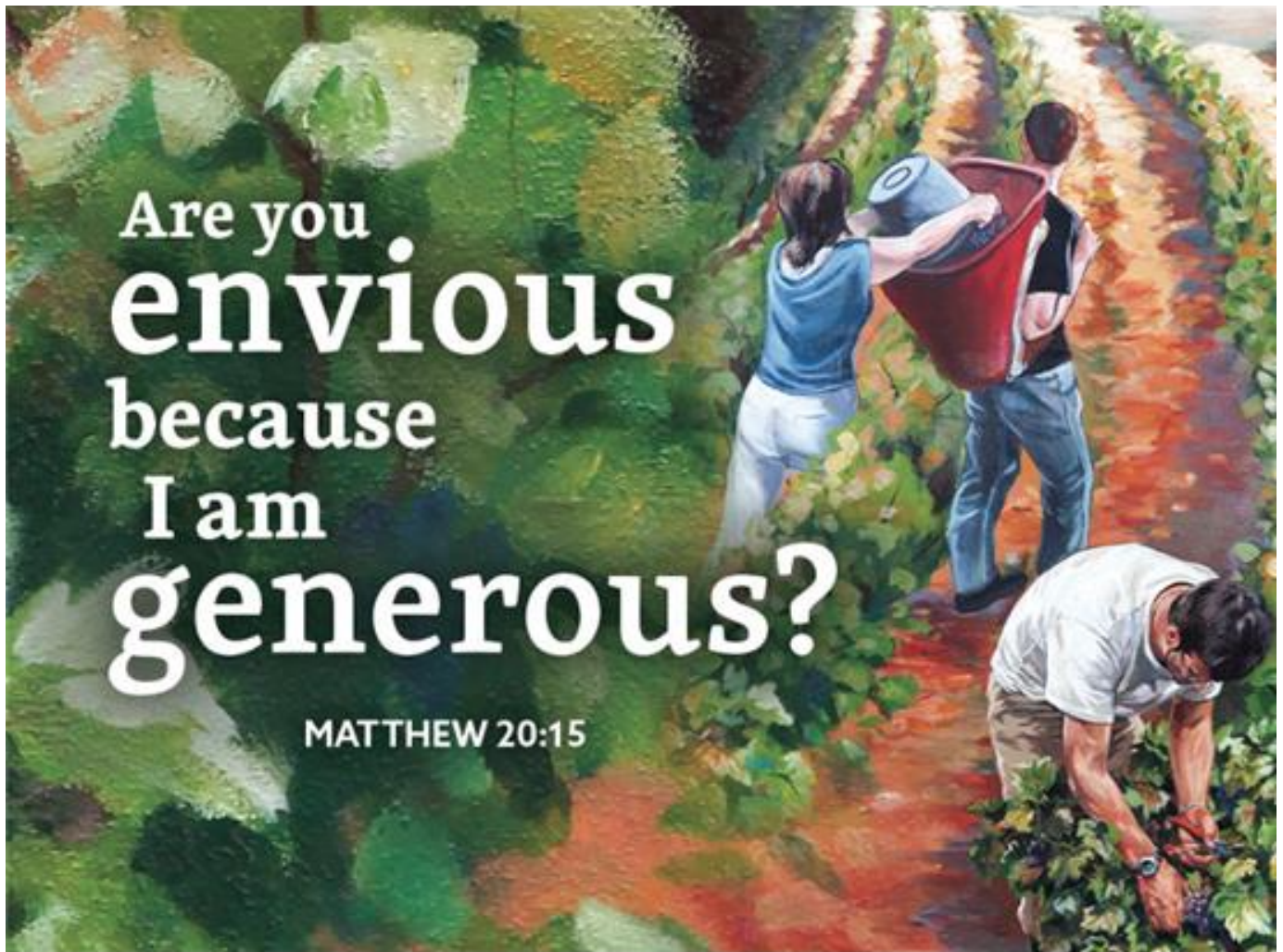




Sunday, September 20, 2026
17th Sunday after Pentecost



BETHLEHEM
LUTHERAN CHURCH

48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org

PRELUDE

Pequé, Pequé, Dios Mío
(O God of Love, Have Mercy)

Charles Callahan
tune: Mexican traditional

In Thee Is Gladness
(IN DIR IST FREUDE)

David Cherwien
tune: Giovanni G. Gastoldi

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. In many and various ways, our scripture reminds us that YOU MATTER to the God who claims you as God's own: loved, known, and seen.

Red hymnal - ELW - Evangelical Lutheran Worship Blue hymnal - ACS - All Creation Sings

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus, Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

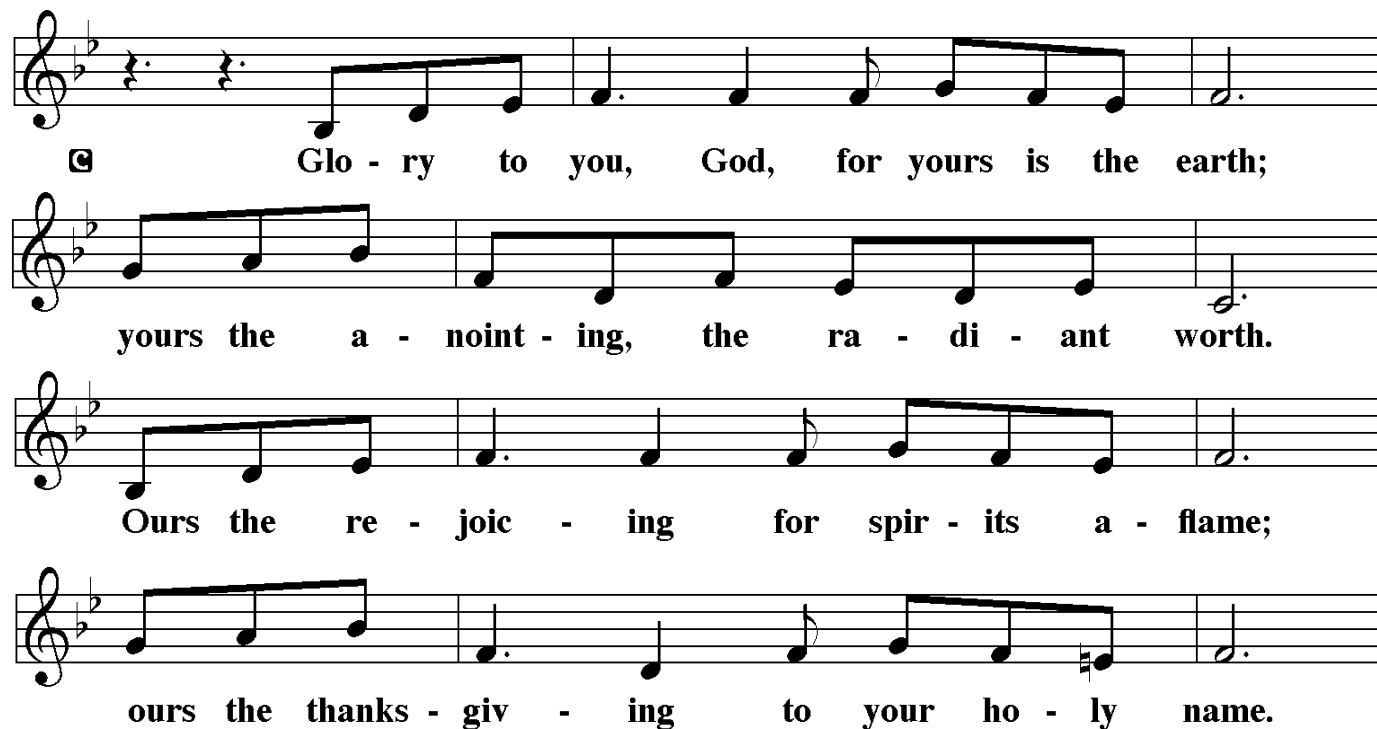
Rise Up, O Saints of God!

ELW 669

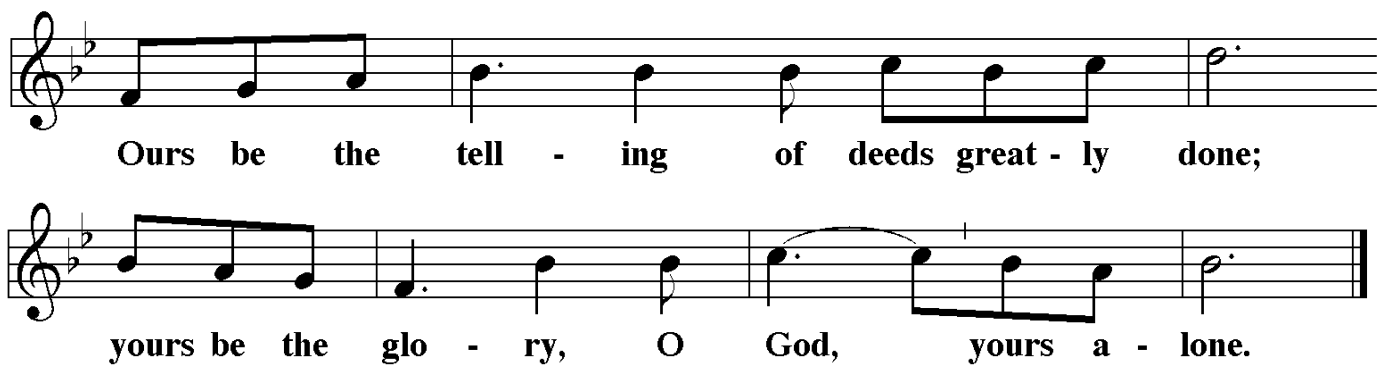
GREETING

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo - ry to you, God, for yours is the earth;
yours the a - noint - ing, the ra - di - ant worth.
Ours the re - joic - ing for spir - its a - flame;
ours the thanks - giv - ing to your ho - ly name.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP WITH JOY!

All kids ages 3 through grade 5 are welcome to a special worship time with a small snack and song, a time of hearing the Word, conversation and activities! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in designated spaces. Children will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion

READING: Jonah 3:10—4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

¹⁰ 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.

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² 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 and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and

relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” ⁴ And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ⁵ 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.

⁶ 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. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ 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.”

⁹ But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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?”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Sung 3 times: 1st – Choir 2nd / 3rd – All

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay

you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ 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?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ 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.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² 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.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”
The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy	ELW 587
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APOSTLES’ CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our 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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Reminded of God's gracious and abundant love, we offer our prayers, confident that God hears us.

A brief silence.

#1 Hold your church accountable for our unwillingness to share your good news and our anger at your generosity to others. Nourish us by your grace to be witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

#2 Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to the climate crisis so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great goodness.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

#3 Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their employees. Reconcile conflicts between employees. Fill places of employment with camaraderie, and bring an end to employment disparity. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for those who provide care following disasters, including through the work of Lutheran Disaster Response; and for our siblings in faith in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. In all our endeavors, remind us that we who are many, are one body in Christ.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We know that you love all people, you see our needs, and you know our cares and concerns, our hopes and joys.

We offer prayers of thanksgiving for:

- Timothy D (son of Tom and Sue D) and Heather B who were married on 9/19
- Bethany T and Connor C, who were married on 9/6

We pray for those who grieve, especially the family and friends of:

- Bill V, father of Sue C, who died on 9/7

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Darlene, sister of Bob S's close friends Vince and Lois, who had a severe stroke on 9/1

Hear these concerns we raise in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor. If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Thank you for your offerings that support the ongoing ministry that we share. Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry or scan the QR (quick response) code on the right and you'll be brought to BLC's mobile giving page.



OFFERING OF MUSIC

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
text: Frederick W. Faber

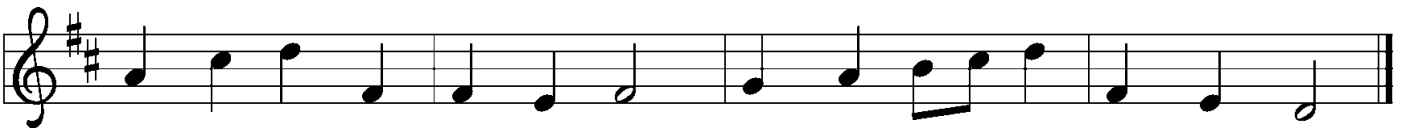
John Purifoy

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



1 Take my life, that I may be con - se - crat - ed, Lord, to thee;
2 Take my hands and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;



take my mo - ments and my days; let them flow in cease - less praise.
take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal,
and make us one in this community of faith and with your people throughout the world.

Glory and praise to you, O God, Author of life, Word made flesh, Power of the Most High, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One in body, one in spirit, we pray as Jesus taught:

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant.

THE COMMUNION



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

HYMN FOR COMMUNION

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

ACS 1084

Stanzas — 1: Choir

2, 3, 4, 5: All

HYMN FOR COMMUNION

In This Feast of Love

ACS 962

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



En - via - do soy de Dios, mi ma - no lis - ta es - tá
The Lord now sends us forth with hands to serve and give,



pa - ra cons - truir con él un mun - do fra - ter - nal.
to make of all the earth a bet - ter place to live.



Los án - ge - les no son en - via - dos a cam - biar
The an - gels are not sent in - to our world of pain

un mun - do de do - lor por un mun - do me - jor;
to do what we were meant to do in Je - sus' name;

me ha to - ca - do a mí ha - cer - lo rea - li - dad.
that falls to you and me and all who are made free.

A - yú - da - me, Se - ñor, a ha - cer tu vo - lun - tad.
Help us, O Lord, we pray, to do your will to - day.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

God's Work, Our Hands

ACS 1000

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Sortie

from *Heures mystiques*, op. 29/5

Léon Boëllmann

BLC Pastors

The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Chrisanne Gates, Chancel Choir Director

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

Percussion: James Berner, Margie Gaul, Neil Vokes

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with one of the pastors following worship or send an email to volunteersupport@blcfairport.org and we'll follow up!

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Sandy Squires holds office hours on Wednesdays from 9-1 and is responsive to phone and email Monday through Friday during usual business hours. Please communicate your needs through the church office by phone (585) 223-0634 or by email office@blcfairport.org. Our co-Pastors are available Sunday – Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling the church office or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org

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New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.

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“Glory to You, God” *All Creation Sings* – Holy Communion, Setting 12

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien; Music: J. Bert Carlson © 2020 Augsburg Fortress

“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah” – WOV 612 Music: Caribbean traditional

Arranger: Mark Sedio Arr. © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

“Take My Life, That I May Be” – ELW 685, stt. 1, 2 Text: Frances R. Havergal, alt.

Music: William H. Havergal © 2006 Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

“Come to the Table” – ELW 481 Text: Claire Cloninger; Music: Martin J. Nystrom

© 1991 Integrity’s Hosanna! Music; Juniper Landing Music (adm. Word Music)

“The Lord Now Sends Us Forth” Text: Anonymous, Central America; tr. Gerhard M. Cartford

Music: Anonymous, Central America; English text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress

“Pequé, Pequé, Dios Mío” Tune: Mexican traditional

Music: Charles Callahan © 2017 Birnamwood Publications (adm. MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.)

“In Thee Is Gladness” Tune: Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi; Music: David Cherwien

© 1994 Summa Productions; 2002 Lorenz Publishing Co. (adm. The Lorenz Corporation)

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” Text: Frederick W. Faber

Music: John Purifoy © 1993 Triune Music Inc. (adm. The Lorenz Corporation)

“Sortie” – from *Heures mystiques*, op. 29, no.5 Music: Léon Boëllmann

Discomfort: Sign of Grace?

Poor Jonah. The guy never could get comfortable. He was uncomfortable with his God-given call to preach to Nineveh; he was uncomfortable in the arms of the sailors as they hoisted him over the boat's edge and tossed him into the sea; he was uncomfortable as the ocean's raging waves flung him about like flotsam; he was—undoubtedly—uncomfortable in the fish's belly; and he was uncomfortable and downright angry with God's mercy on the people of Nineveh. Jonah had a hard time getting comfortable with himself, and, even more so, Jonah was uneasy embracing the wideness of God's grace.

The same can be said about the laborers in Jesus' parable here in Matthew 20. The laborers who came in the early morning hours grumbled against the landowner because they were paid the same as others who started later and worked fewer hours. These laborers are ill-at-ease with the landowner's choice "to give to this last the same as I give to you" (Matt. 20:14). Like Jonah, they are uncomfortable with the unchecked mercy offered by the landowner/God. God doesn't play by our rules, and that can be very discomfoting for us all.

Our discomfort with grace manifests itself in all sorts of ways. It can be discomfoting for us to engage the poor and the outcast of our society. It can be discomfoting for us to welcome immigrants into our communities. It can be discomfoting to address the pervasive racism that still surrounds us. And it can be very discomfoting for us to open our lives to the transforming power of the cross of Christ, whereby "the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matt. 20:16).

Could it be that the more uncomfortable we become with the reckless love of God, the closer we are to understanding the meaning of grace?