

Sunday, October 8, 2023
19th Sunday after Pentecost



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Sunday, October 8, 2023 ~ 19th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDE

Prelude on “St. Catherine”

setting, James F. Konkel
(ELW 812)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

In today’s gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets’ mission, and Christ’s death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God’s love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ’s sufferings and know the power of his resurrection..

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Steadfast and faithful God,
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.

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.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN	Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth	ELW 727
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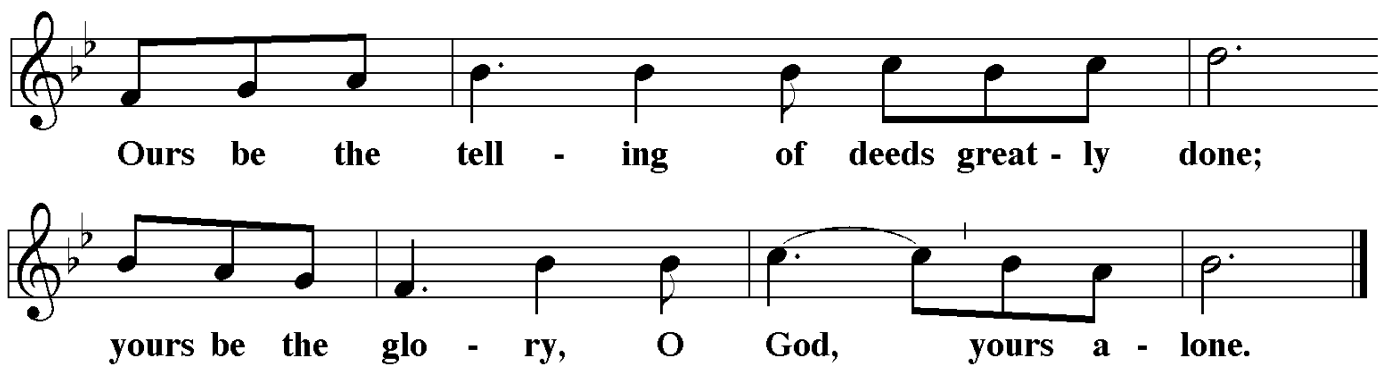
GREETING

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

Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b}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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said to the people:] ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord’s doing,

and it is amazing in our eyes’?

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY	Christ Is Our Cornerstone
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assisted by cantor: Allison Henry

Cantor: st. 1

All: sts. 2, 3

Christ Is Our Cornerstone

C F G sus4 G C F G sus4 G

Christ is our cor - ner - stone, On Him a - lone we build; With
 O then with hymns of praise These hal - lowed courts shall ring; Our
 Here may we gain from Heav'n, The grace which we im - plore; And

A min G F C F G sus4 G A min G

His true saints a - lone The courts of Heav'n are filled; On His great
 voic - es we will raise The Three in One to sing; And thus pro -
 may that grace, once giv'n, Be with us ev - er - more; Un - til that

F C F G/B C F G sus4 G C

love our hopes we place Of pre - sent grace and joys a - bove.
 claim in joy - ful song Both loud and long, that glor - ious name.
 day when all the blest To end - less rest are called a - way.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for the hymn 'Christ Is Our Cornerstone'. It is written in 3/4 time and consists of three systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The first system has lyrics: 'Christ is our cornerstone, On Him alone we build; With O then with hymns of praise These hallowed courts shall ring; Our Here may we gain from Heav'n, The grace which we implore; And'. The second system has lyrics: 'His true saints alone The courts of Heav'n are filled; On His great voices we will raise The Three in One to sing; And thus proclaim that may that grace, once given, Be with us evermore; Until that'. The third system has lyrics: 'love our hopes we place Of present grace and joys above. claim in joyful song Both loud and long, that glorious name. day when all the blest To endless rest are called away.' The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano).

Text: Anonymous c. 500-600; tr. John Chandler
 Music: Gregory D. Wilbur

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.

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

A brief silence.

#1 God of all grace, you are the source of life and joy. Strengthen the resolve of your church throughout the world, that together we press on toward the goal of your heavenly call in Jesus Christ. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

#2 God of all the earth, you desire peace and justice between nations and peoples. Guide leaders of nations, states, provinces, and cities, that they faithfully govern your people with wisdom, integrity, and compassion. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

#3 God of all steadfastness, you set Christ as the cornerstone and foundation of the church. Build up this congregation as living stones, that it stands in the community as a witness to your enduring faithfulness and love. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

By the power of your Spirit, you build us into your beloved community. Strengthen the connections we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Anna, Alex, Curtis & Kathleen, David & Sandy, and Linda. Strengthen the ministries we share with others, especially our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God of all compassion, in Christ, you lovingly poured yourself out like wine for your people. Pour out your mercy to those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

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

- Ben D., best friend of Dan M., who died on 10/2
- Doug S., former BLC member, who died on 9/30
- Dylan, friend of Paul T., who died on 9/25
- Connie H, whose memorial service will be held on 10/12

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Margaret M., who is recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

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.

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

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.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

It Is Well with My Soul

text, Horatio G. Spafford / tune, Philip P. Bliss

setting, John Ness Beck

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles - sing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were



sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.



Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we



of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,



Lord, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. 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.**

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

Lord Jesus, you are resurrection and life.

**We give thanks that at your table you fill us with good things and feed us
from your abundance.**

Pour out your Spirit on us and this feast of love.

**Build us into a lasting community that embodies your love. Strengthen us to
serve you in all we do. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

One in body, one in Spirit, we 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

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

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. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



☞ 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, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

My Lord of Light

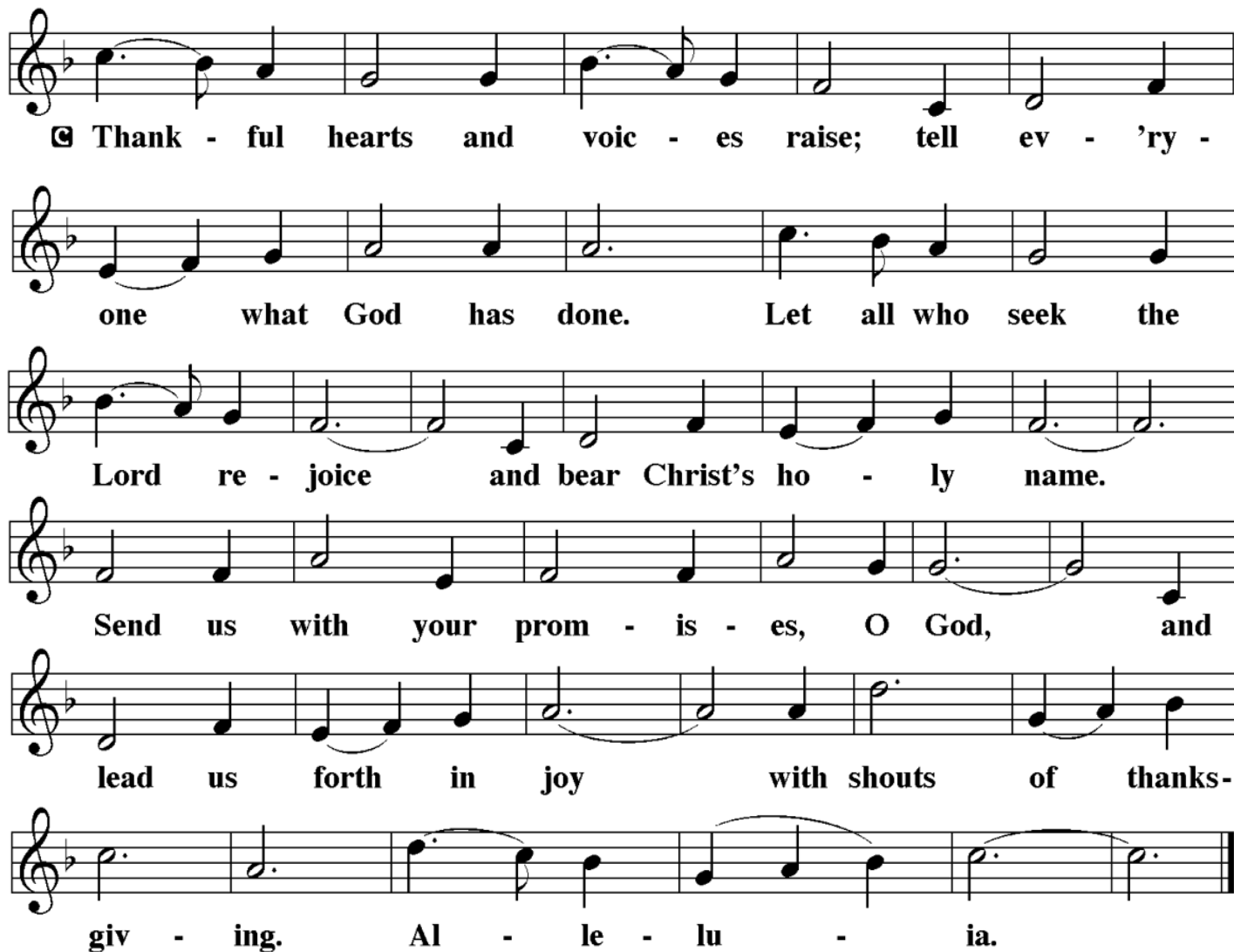
ELW 832

Thine the Amen

ELW 826

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



☐ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
one what God has done. Let all who seek the
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and
lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks -
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in † Christ Jesus.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

ELW 580

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr
(All Glory Be to God on High)

Samuel Scheidt

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

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 Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

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: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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Jesus, Cornerstone of Our Faith

God has showered humanity with gifts and blessings, but humanity continues to abuse those gifts. We have been entrusted with a creation to care for, and in our shortsightedness we abuse and pollute the earth, even bringing about the extinction of entire species. We abuse the gift of our bodies when we overindulge in food or alcohol or drugs. We have been given the ability to create so many wonderful things, and even this gift we abuse as we gather and keep as much as we can for ourselves.

This is nothing new. Even in the days of Isaiah it was clear the people turned away from God's gifts. God expected righteousness and justice. Instead the people responded with bloodshed and suffering, turning away from God.

Even if you can think of all the ways you have not turned from God and all the ways you have been faithful, it does no good. As Paul reminds us in the reading from Philippians, "Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ" (Phil. 3:7). Even all of Paul's good and faithful acts add up to nothing. For Paul, and for us, all that matters is Jesus.

As Christ himself reminds us, he is our rock, our cornerstone. Jesus is the foundation for our faith and the foundation for our lives. Even as we turn from Jesus, even as we reject Jesus, he returns to us with love and forgiveness. This is the grace of God, the love of God coming into our world and into our lives. To our joy we discover the open arms of Jesus on the cross, bringing life into this world even where there is death; bringing hope where there is despair; and bringing resurrection to all creation.