

GREETING

Gathered in Christ. **We serve with grace.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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 SONG "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.....#803

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.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 5:1-7

¹Let 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! The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80:7-15

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**⁸You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
you cast out the nations and planted it.**

⁹You cleared the ground for it; it took root and filled the land.

**¹⁰The mountains were covered by its shadow
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**

¹¹You stretched out its tendrils to the sea and its branches to the river.

**¹²Why have you broken down its wall,
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**

¹³The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.

¹⁴Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven;

¹⁵behold and tend this vine; preserve what your right hand has planted.

SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 3:4b-14

[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.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 21:33-46

Glory to you, O Lord. [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 "IT'S MORE THAN GRAPES HAPPENING IN THE VINEYARD"

HYMN OF THE DAY "Thine the Amen"#826

APOSTLES CREED

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.* 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. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all creation, you plant and nourish the earth as your own precious vineyard. Bless fields and orchards and the hands of those who labor in them, that your people are fed with an abundant harvest of good fruit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

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. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all compassion, in Christ, you lovingly poured yourself out like wine for your people. Have mercy on all who mourn, who struggle with their mental health, who cry out for justice, who hunger, and all in any need (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

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. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of all hope, the saints who came before us lived and died with their hearts fixed on you. We give you thanks for their faithful witness, and we wait with hope for the great day when we join their voices in praise. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY SONG "*GIVE THANKS*"

C: Give thanks with a grateful heart. Give thanks to the holy one. Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son. And now let the weak say I am strong. Let the poor say I am rich; because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

OFFERING PRAYER

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.**

COMMUNION HYMN "*Jesus Loves Me*.....#595

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.**

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 the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join your unending hymn:

HYMN: "*Holy Holy, Holy*" Setting 4, #153

P: 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 his death, celebrating his resurrection, trusting his presence in every time and place, we plead Amen. God, you are Breath: send your Spirit on this meal. You are Bread: feed us with yourself. You are wine: warm our hearts and make us one. God, you are Fire: transform us with hope. God most majestic, God our strength and our song, You show us a vision of a tree of life with fruits for all and leaves that heal the nations. Grant us such life, the life of the Father to the Son, the life of the Spirit of our risen Savior, life in you, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: "*Lamb of God*" Setting 4, #154

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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. **Amen.**

BLESSING

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

SENDING HYMN "*Earth and All Stars*"#731

SONG OF PEACE

My peace I give unto you. It's a peace that the world cannot give. It's a peace that the world cannot understand; peace to know; peace to live. My peace I give unto you.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is at work in you. **Thanks be to God.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please share your Bethlehem "Scoop" with Ro! Find that page on the shelf in entrance or complete it on-line, included with your electronic bulletin this week.

If you need 3 more business cards, find them in the card holder on Deacon Ro's desk in the office!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15!!!! It's another Blue Jean Sunday!!! I've heard it said cleanliness is next to Godliness! Join us after "Come and Celebrate" for an extra dose of Godliness as we continue our efforts to give Bethlehem it's new, fresh, clean, crisp look!!!

Anyone who wants to join the North Colorado Conference Gathering, Saturday, October 21, 10:00-2:00pm at Our Savior's in Greeley for conversations on the future of Rocky Mountain Synod and the upcoming Bishop's Election, please visit with Chaplain Ro. Lunch will be provided and Ro will provide transportation.