

October 26, 2025

20th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A humble cry for God's grace

For some, today's parable offers a quintessential illustration of just how "Lutheran" Jesus was—whereby the folly and arrogance of the Pharisee's works righteousness is laid low by a tax collector's humble cry for God's grace. But if this parable merely confirms what we already believe, we've missed Jesus' genius in telling it in the first place. New Testament scholar Amy-Jill Levine points out that Jesus used this distinctly Jewish genre of storytelling not to convey obvious moral lessons but to "prompt [his followers] to see the world in a different way, to challenge, and at times to indict."

Like both the Pharisee and the tax collector, we have gone up to the "temple" to pray and are sent home to share God's love. The dismissal urges us, "Go in peace." Children might be reassured to know that we experience peace in that God loves us—not because we do or don't deserve it, but because love is who God is.

Ironically, Christians have at times gone to great lengths to prove themselves the penitent sinner over and against the commandment-following Pharisee. In my own experiences, too many church members have come to mistake shame and guilt for humility. But the character of the tax collector who beats his breast as a sign of genuine contrition in the parable offers little justification to those of us who reflexively equate beating ourselves up with being a "good Christian." In fact, therein lies the trap. When we begin to make the parable into any sort of algorithm by which we might decide the "good" from the "bad," we end up condemning ourselves. We in effect turn the tax collector's prayer from "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (v. 13) into "God, I thank you that I am not like that Pharisee!" (see v. 11)

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First St. John Lutheran Church

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Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Director of Music
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
(* * * *), Office Manager



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

October 26, 2025 - 10:30 am

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Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism (starting soon). Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	Adult Sunday School
9:15 am	J.A.M. Sunday School
10:30 am	Late Worship
2:00 pm	Chapel Communion

(2nd Sunday of the month)

LIVESTREAM AND RECORDED WORSHIP: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website

SMILE! YOU'RE ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

NURSERY is provided during second service, downstairs in the basement of the church. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

RESTROOMS are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

FLOWERS: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

MEMORIALS: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.



REFORMATION DAY

On October 31, we commemorate the start of the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517. On this day we recognize God's work of reform in the Christian Church, and we pray for unity among our brothers and sisters in Christ.



2025 POINSETTIA SALE

SPONSORED BY THE ALTAR GUILD



Fill in the form below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship at Christmas time. You can place this form with payment in the offering plate or mail it in to the church office. Payment must accompany orders. Checks payable to: **First St. John**

Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, December 14th.

Number of plants @ \$15.00 each _____ Enclosed: \$ _____

Color (circle one) Red White

Name _____

Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased) _____

In Honor of (Living) _____

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

Ringling of the Bell

Opening Hymn *“The Church’s One Foundation”* No. 654

Invocation

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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.

P: You are the treasured people of the LORD,

C: a people holy to the LORD our God.

P: 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.

P: One does not live by bread alone,

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

Confession and Forgiveness

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage 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.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

Hymn

“We are Baptized in Christ Jesus” v. 1-2
(printed on next page)

No. 451

We are baptized in Christ Jesus, we are baptized in his death; that as Christ is raised victorious, we might live a brand new life. And if we have been united in a dreadful death like his, we will all be reunited, for he lives.

In the water and the witness, in the breaking of the bread, in the waiting arms of Jesus who is risen from the dead, God has made a new beginning from the ashes of our past; in the losing and the winning we hold fast.

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

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, "Peace be with you." We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to Christ the Son, glory to the Holy Spirit, ever three and ever one; as it was in the beginning, glory now resounds again in a song that has no ending. Amen

The Greeting and Prayer

P: The Lord be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Holy God, our righteous judge, daily your mercy surprises us with everlasting forgiveness. Strengthen our hope in you, and grant that all the peoples of the earth may find their glory in you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

Genuine repentance and pretentious piety stand in stark contrast in the gospel and all around us. All creation stands in need of God's forgiveness. Keep the faith. God's people shall be accounted righteous for Jesus' sake. Our God is merciful to sinners. For this we worship and glorify God forever.

FIRST READING: First Reading: Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22

In a time of drought, the people pray for mercy, repenting of their sins and the sins of their ancestors. They appeal to God to remember the covenant,

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Bob Haar

Sherrie Haar

READER

Bob Haar

SOUND BOARD

Amy Nelson

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY URGENT NEEDS!

Please purchase full size items.

dish soap*	shampoo, child	disposable razors
paper towel*	laundry soap*	toothbrush, adult
toilet paper	fabric softener sheets	toothpaste, adult
tissues	body lotion*	sanitary pads*
deodorant	body soap*	band aids
shampoo, adult		

**denotes high need item*

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month. If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.



but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

P: The risen Christ invites us to this table.

C: Come, eat and be satisfied.

(Please be seated)

The Communion *(distribution will be continuous)*

All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table.

Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

P: The God of righteousness, who gives justice to the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free, (+) bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

No. 655

Dismissal

P: Go in peace and serve the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

to show forth God's power, and to heal their land by sending life-giving rain.

⁷ Although our iniquities testify against us,
act, O LORD, for your name's sake;
our rebellions indeed are many,
and we have sinned against you.

⁸ O hope of Israel,
its savior in time of trouble,
why should you be like a stranger in the land,
like a traveler turning aside for the night?

⁹ Why should you be like someone confused,
like a mighty warrior who cannot give help?
Yet you, O LORD, are in the midst of us,
and we are called by your name;
do not forsake us!

¹⁰ Thus says the LORD concerning this people:
Truly they have loved to wander;
they have not restrained their feet;
therefore the LORD does not accept them;
now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.

¹⁹ Have you completely rejected Judah?
Does your heart loathe Zion?
Why have you struck us down
so that there is no healing for us?
We look for peace but find no good,
for a time of healing, but there is terror instead.

²⁰ We acknowledge our wickedness, O LORD,
the iniquity of our ancestors,
for we have sinned against you.

²¹ Do not spurn us, for your name's sake;
do not dishonor your glorious throne;
remember and do not break your covenant with us.

²² Can any idols of the nations bring rain,
or can the heavens give showers?

Is it not you, O LORD our God?

We set our hope on you,
for it is you who do all this

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 84:1-7, Congregation responds in BOLD.

1 How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!

**2 My soul longs, indeed it faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.**

3 Even the sparrow finds a home
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.

**4 Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.**

5 Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

**6 As they go through the valley of Baca,
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.**

7 They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

SECOND READING: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

The conclusion of this letter to a young minister offers a final perspective on life from one who faced death. Though others let him down, Paul was sure of his faith in the Lord, who stood by him and lent him strength.

⁶ As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. ⁸ From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

¹⁶ At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! ¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

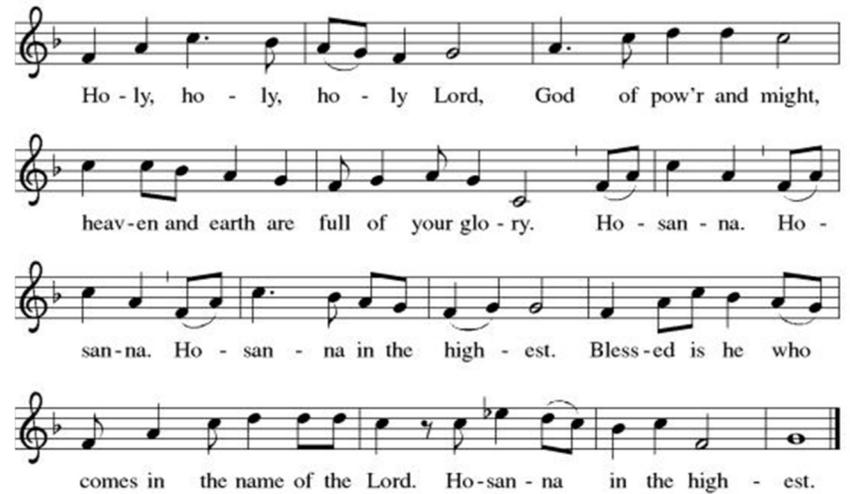
(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation *(sung by the congregation)*

"As Rain from the Clouds" (Words below) No. 508

As rain from the clouds, will your words come to earth,

everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



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.

P: Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

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.

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

The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

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,

***As snow from the heavens refreshes the land.
Then soften our soil that the good seed may grow
And ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.***

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 18

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 18:9-14

The coming reign of God will involve unexpected reversals of fortune with judgment rooted in mercy. Jesus tells a parable in which the one who humbles himself is exalted and the one who exalts his own righteousness is humbled.

9 [Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other, for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

“As Rain from the Clouds” (Words below) No. 508
***We praise you God, for the dew of your word;
We thank you good gard’ner for your tender toil.
Webless your best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
For harvest of grace in our once barren soil.***

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

No. 504

(Please stand)

Apostles’ Creed

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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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.

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

(Please be seated)

The Offering

Musical Offertory

“ You Are Mine” FSJ Chancel Choir
Jo-Anne Chrysochoos, Music Director

(Please stand)

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray. Be known to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, as you were made known to the disciples. Receive these gifts, and the offering of our lives, that we may be your risen body in the world.

C: Amen.

The 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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of