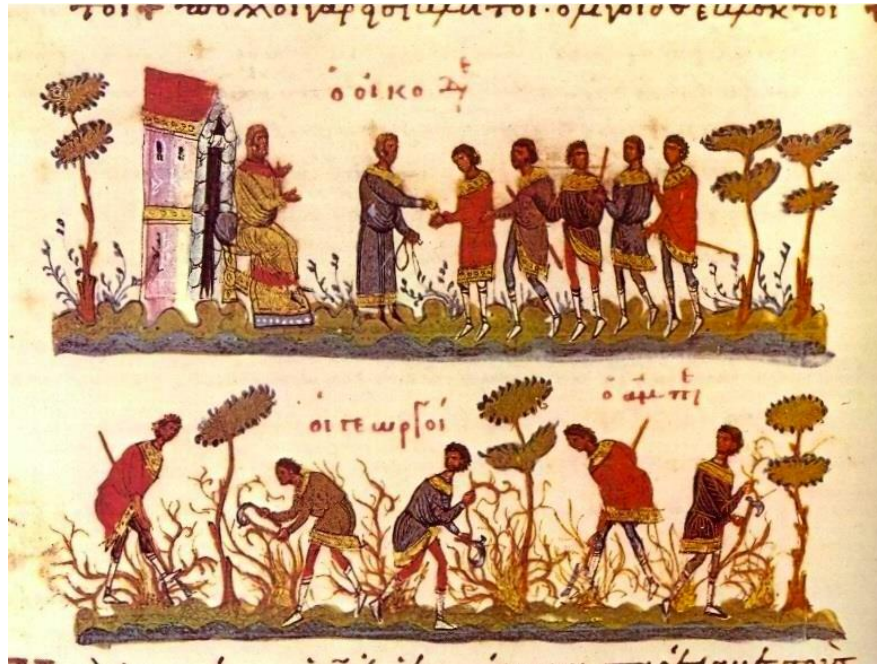


Living Out God's Call to Joy and to Justice

First Presbyterian Church, McAllen
Sunday Worship – September 24, 2023



Opening Sentences

- This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it as we prepare our hearts and minds to worship the One who is worthy of our praise.

Prelude

Call to Worship

Please rise in body or in spirit for the Call to Worship.

We will sing praise to God
and bless God's name forever and ever.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!

We will declare God's mighty acts
and celebrate God's abundant goodness.

We will proclaim God's awesome deeds.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!

Your faithfulness, O Lord, is sure
in all your words, your gracious deeds;
you gently lift all burdened souls
and well provide for all our needs.

The eyes of all are fixed on you;
by you their wants are all supplied;
your open hand is bountiful
and every soul is satisfied.

Lord, you are just in all your ways,
and kind in everything you do;
forever near your stand to hear
and help all those who call on you.

My mouth shall speak your praise, O Lord;
my soul shall bless your holy name;
let all things living join the song
of praise, from age to age the same.



Nelly Bube
Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

Prayer of the Day

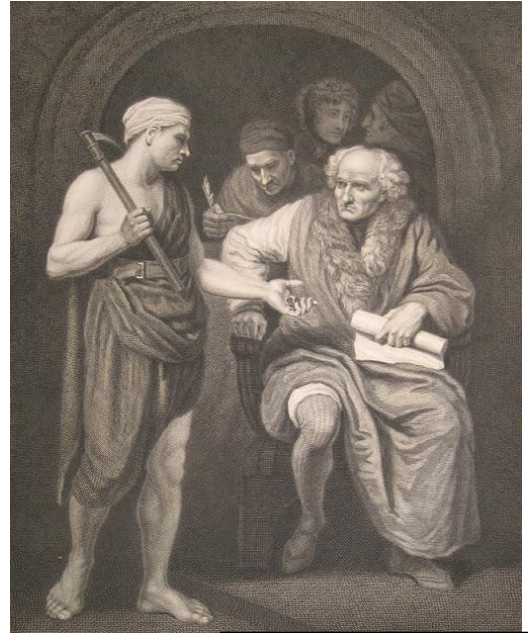
Gracious God, your love for us
is both a blessing and a challenge.
May we be so filled with your love
that it stretches us in this time of worship,
opening us to new lengths and depths
and new ways of reflecting your love to others.
Encourage our spirits by your Spirit
as we turn to you in praise and prayer.
Inspire us to proclaim your greatness
in word and deed,
now and in the days to come. Amen.

Call to Confession

Trusting in God's mercy,
let us offer our Prayer of Confession.

Prayer of Confession

**Lord, your generosity surprises us.
For you do not mete out grace
according to how hard we work,
or how often we worship,
or how closely we follow the rules.
No, you lavish grace upon us
according to your own desire.
But we insist on deciding
who is deserving and who is not.
We grumble that some receive too little
while others have more than they deserve.
Forgive us, we pray.
Help us to live with humility and gratitude
so that our words and deeds
might embody your grace.
*A moment of silent prayer.***



from The Macklin Bible
The Lord of the Vineyard

Assurance of Pardon: A Responsive Reading from Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.
**Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**
you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.
**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.
**As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

Act of Praise

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

GG #582

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

Passing the Peace of Christ

The peace of our Lord be with you all. / **And also with you.**

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God, your Word surprises, challenges, upsets,
and overturns our ways of seeing and thinking.
Come and find us today wherever we are, however we are.
By the power of your Holy Spirit,
cause that which is withering in us to blossom,
and that which is exacting in us to broaden
until we see as you see, and thereby glimpse the kingdom you are bringing.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Anthem

Gospel Reading

Matthew 20:1-16

“For 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 the usual daily wage, 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 the usual daily wage. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 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 the usual daily wage? 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.”

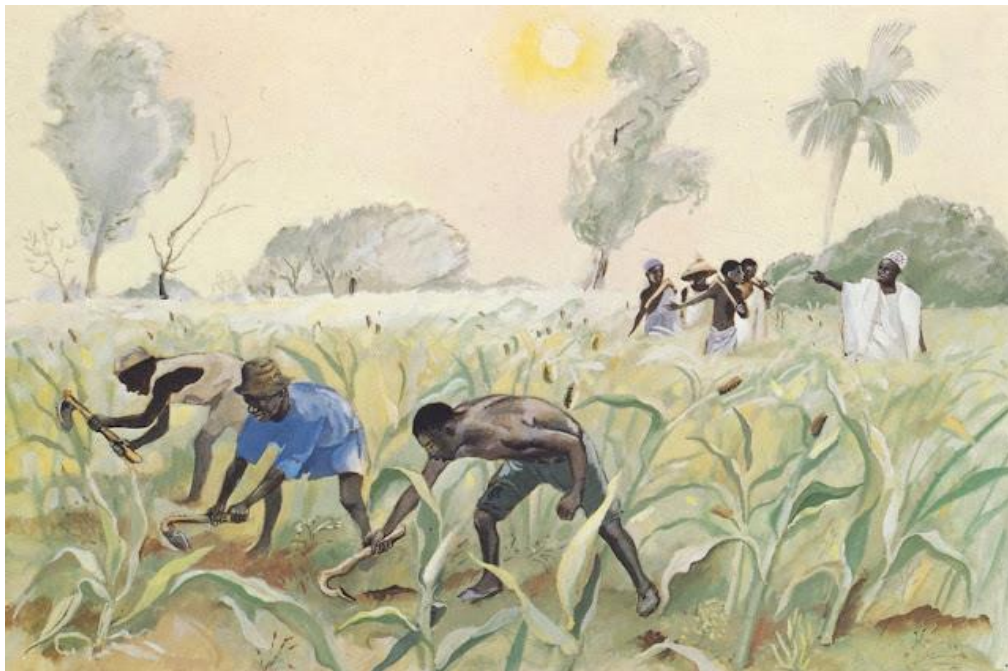
The Word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

from Confession of 1967

**The life, death, resurrection
and promised coming of Jesus Christ
has set the pattern for the church's mission.
His human life involves the church in the common life of all people.
His service to men and women
commits the church to work for every form of human well-being.
His suffering makes the church sensitive
to all human suffering so that it sees the face of Christ
in the faces of persons in every kind of need.
His crucifixion discloses to the church
God's judgment on the inhumanity that marks human relations,
and the awful consequences of the church's own complicity in injustice.
In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming,
the church sees the promise of God's renewal of human life in society
and God's victory over all wrong.
The church follows this pattern in the form of its life
and in the method of its action.
So to live and serve is to confess Christ as Lord. (9.32-33)**



Jesus MAFA; Christian art from Cameroon
The Late-Arriving Workers

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,
offering up ourselves in praise;
thankful song shall rise forever, gracious donor of our days.

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.

Treasure, too, you have entrusted,
gain through powers 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.

Time with the Younger Church

Codex Aureus Epternacensis; 11th century
Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard



Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

God of unending mercy and steadfast love,
we are grateful that you are slow to anger,
for there is much in this world that is wrong
and set against your purposes.

Overcome our many injustices with your justice;
overtake our lust for revenge with your great mercy.

We pray for nations locked in enmity
to be set free from old patterns
and to embrace a new way of relating.

We pray for people who wield economic power
to take notice of those whom you notice
and to have compassion for those who are vulnerable.

We pray for day laborers and the unemployed and the homeless.

Inspire we who have enough to share what we have,
not in measured and resentful amounts,
but gladly, abundantly,
so basic needs do not go unattended.

Gather up the first and the last,
the least and the greatest,
in the common work of your kingdom,
until there is no more first or last at all,
for all are one in your name.

Help us all to see
not only your grace at work in the world,
but also your humor at work among us,
the holy laughter that heals us
and helps us see ourselves rightly.

We thank you for the privilege
of believing in Christ,
of living in Christ,
and of living for Christ,
our Lord and Savior,

who taught us to pray together, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven ...



Lawrence W. Ladd
Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard

Invitation to the Offering

God provides all that we need –
bread enough for each day.

Our calling is to be good stewards
of the generous gifts of God,
sharing out of our abundance
and caring for those in need.

Trusting in God's grace, let us present our lives to the Lord.

Offertory

Act of Dedication

I Come with Joy, v. 5

GG #515

Together met, together bound by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

Offertory Prayer

Lord, giver of all good gifts, thank you for the resources gathered here.
Use these gifts for the advancement of your kingdom;
in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn

Light Dawns on a Weary World

GG #79

Light dawns on a weary world
when eyes begin to see all people's dignity.
Light dawns on a weary world:
the promised day of justice comes.

*Refrain: The trees shall clap their hands;
the dry lands gush with springs;
the hills and mountains shall break forth with singing!
We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,
as all the world in wonder echoes **shalom**.*

Love grows in a weary world
when hungry hearts find bread and children's dreams are fed.
Love grows in a weary world:
the promised feast of plenty comes. *Refrain*

Hope blooms in a weary world
when creatures once forlorn, find wilderness reborn.
Hope blooms in a weary world:
the promised green of Eden comes. *Refrain*

The Life of the Church

Charge and Benediction

Congregational Response

Light Dawns on a Weary World, *refrain*

Postlude

Today's Worship Leaders:

Rev. Kathryn J. Escandell

Chris Leonard

Ann Rowland

Robert Garza

Ale Pacheco

FPC Chancel Choir

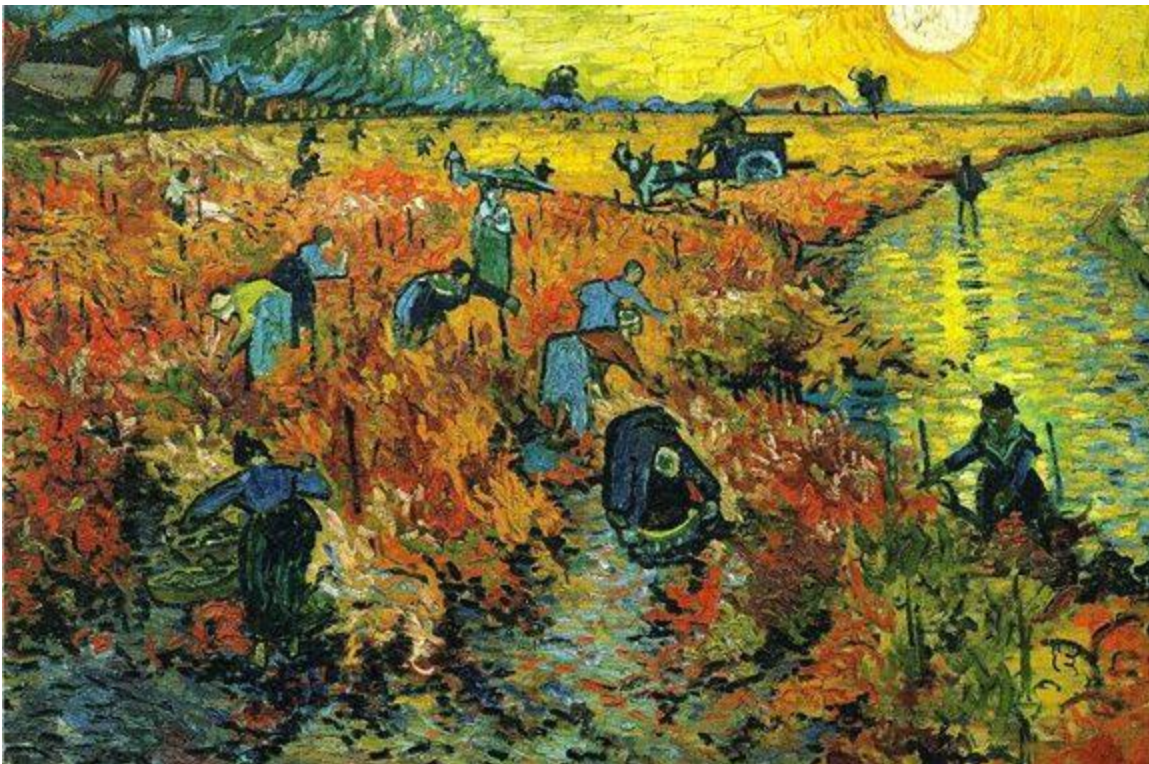
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Vincent Van Gogh
Red Vineyards at Arles