



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person*

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Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
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Parish Administrator	Barbara Bash
Sexton	John Bryant

✧ *In Worship Today* ✧

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Guest Preacher	The Rev. Pam Miles
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Gospel Acclamation Leaders	Jenna D. and Cantor Kyle
Gospel Reading	Jenna D. and John Reese
Hymn of the Day	led by Meg Shaw, Lori Lynn Phillips, Joel Matter, & Cantor Kyle
Prayers of the Church and Responses	Joel Matter and Lori Lynn Phillips



## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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October 4, 2020

*“Word Out” audio transcript*



### **Prelude**

A “miniature” for piano on BALM IN GILEAD  
African American spiritual; setting by John Carter (b. 1930),  
preceded by a brief improvisation

### **Welcome**

**P:** Welcome, this eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space to receive the good news, spoken and sung; taking a moment to be still, and knowing God is God.

In today’s gospel, Jesus speaks once again about God’s kingdom. Joining us to help make sense of his words, we welcome our guest preacher, Pastor Pam Miles.

### **Greeting**

**P:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**G:** **And also with you.**

☐: The first Sunday of every month is our family service. Kids play a special role in this service. They read the lessons, play instruments and sing. We also have a children's sermon. For today's children's sermon, I want to ask all kids listening if you can name the following prayer. Listen closely:

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.  
And 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.

Can you guess its name?

We call this the Lord's Prayer, because it's the one where Jesus, our Lord, teaches us how to pray.

I want you to notice something. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "Your kingdom come."

Well, whose kingdom?

Can you guess?

It's not *my* kingdom. It's not *your* kingdom. It's God's kingdom; the kingdom of God.

Jesus talks a lot about the kingdom of God, including in today's Gospel. It's his way of saying that God wants us to live together in a special way. And that Jesus is the beginning of this new way. In the kingdom, people will be treated fairly. Bullies won't be allowed. People will no longer be able to hurt each other.

Can you imagine that kind of place? That's God's kingdom. And we pray for it whenever we pray the Lord's Prayer.

Pray now with me:

Kind and loving God, help us build your kingdom by being kind and caring toward each other, by being fair to each other – and forgive us whenever we aren't.

And all God's people said: Amen.

# Gospel Acclamation

John 10:27

**G:**

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

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

*Repeat alleluia*

**A:** Jesus says, I chose you and appointed you  
to go and bear fruit that will last.

**G:**

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

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

# The Holy Gospel:

Matthew 21:33-46

**A:** The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

**G:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

**A:** [Jesus said to the people:] <sup>33</sup>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. <sup>34</sup>When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves

to the tenants to collect his produce. <sup>35</sup>But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. <sup>37</sup>Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>38</sup>But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' <sup>39</sup>So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. <sup>40</sup>Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" <sup>41</sup>They 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."

<sup>42</sup>Jesus 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'?

<sup>43</sup>Therefore 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. <sup>44</sup>The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

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

**A:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**G:** Praise to you, O Christ.

**Sermon**

Pastor Pam Miles

Yikes. That's a pretty horrific parable Jesus shares today. It leaves one speechless. We know that parables are stories to teach us a lesson. A parable is a place where we connect the dots and imagine who, in our current context, fit the character that's being spoken about. A parable is where we take the lesson, and apply it to our daily living, to be in better accord with God's ways, versus our ways. And a parable always has a

shocking moment, which turns our world view upside down.

So the question is, what is the lesson from this parable? Well, who do you associate with the characters? And where was the shocking moment for you in the story?

I think as we gather this Sunday on the festival day commemorating St. Francis of Assisi, the person who did so much for the encouragement and care of animals and creation, this text also indicts us on where we have failed in our own areas of stewardship.

It was not uncommon for land owners during Jesus's time to lease out their property to tenants, with the understanding that a portion of their production would be returned to the landowner as payment. It was also not uncommon for landowners to not live in the same area as the land they leased out. Rich landowners had numerous lands, which they leased out, and numerous servants to help keep an eye on their lands and properties, and do the necessary collections from the tenants. But the shocking part in our story today was the excessive nature in which the landowner kept pursuing the tenants to be in good relationship and honor the agreement and promises of payment.

I have to say, this hits a little too close to home right now, with a landlord, we heard in the news, who was just shot by a tenant in Seattle because the tenant was fearful of payment due and of being evicted. And we could easily make the parable fit our current context of news. But I don't think the two stories match up here. Let me tell you why.

The shocking part of our biblical story is the landowner keeps sending servants to rebuild the broken relationship of the agreement, again and again and again, with each party being sent becoming harmed, and even killed by the tenants – even his own son. But the landowner never gives up trying to rebuild what was broken.

Now why would such a rich landowner, after the first brutal treatment, not just send in soldiers and take over the vineyard again, and if needed, violently remove the bad tenants, or slaughter the bad tenants, if necessary? The produce wasn't bad, so there's no need to burn the vineyard down, but it's

clear that there needs to be a purging of the bad tenants who don't follow the covenant and agreement they had with the landowner. Why would anyone continue to send people to speak with and try to build a relationship with others who have a history of continued harm and disregard?

That's the shocking part of the story for me, that I feel we must address here. And just as the response by the people was for the landowners to "put those wretches to a miserable death" – I think we'd agree.

But Jesus doesn't affirm their call for justice through murder. Jesus changes the whole direction, and no longer focuses on the land, or the tenants, or the produce. He talks about a stone being rejected, and how this rejected one will become the cornerstone on which everything will be crushed.

Now, I'm a hiker, and to be crushed by a stone one knows clearly that it must fall *on you*, not you fall on *it*. Otherwise, you are merely stumbling and tripping or falling, and you pick yourself back up and continue on your regular path. It's a small interruption on your trail.

So I find it curious that this wording is about people falling on the stone and being crushed. But here's the thing: I think Jesus is trying to make the point that the response of justice and a cry for murder was *normal*, and the usual way of dealing with such matters. But that's where they failed in their understanding of the parable, of the *extravagant grace* which the landowner was repeatedly giving the tenants.

We are often crushed by our fixed ideological "rocks," I think. Our perceived strict ideas of right and wrong, black and white, them and us – it is our own crushing, when we are broken over these strictly-fixed, self-imposed ideologies. And sometimes we need to be broken, so that we can be rebuilt back up again on sturdier, healthier, more holistic ground.

The tenants' ways can easily be compared to our own mistreatment of what gifts we have been given, and maybe it's too easy to generalize how our care of the earth for the last several generations since the Industrial Revolution is a reflection of not being good stewards. But I think that, that's just the surface, to be honest. Let's go deeper.



The tenants had good produce, they were taking care of the land. What they weren't doing was giving their produce back to whom had granted them the land to use in the first place. They weren't holding up their end of the contract, of their promises.

Where have we disregarded our promises? Where have we not shared? Where have we climbed on the backs of others to achieve and be self indulgent? Where have we failed in our commitments to give back, give back out of our produce?

You see, this is where the parable strikes deep at us, even crushes us. It calls us to a confession. It calls us to actually fall on this stone; this Cornerstone which was rejected, this Jesus, who was the son sent, and was killed because the Father was extravagant in His love and grace, again and again and again, with numerous messengers being sent to change and rebuild relationship with his beloved children.

And the tenants? Well they just didn't want to change their selfish ways.

It indicts us in our complacency, on our failed promises. In falling and being crushed, we don't pick ourselves back up and keep going with just a skinned knee; we are changed, drastically changed.

But confessing is a hard thing to do. And Jesus knew this. Even when we are called to a corrected behavior with abundant grace, again and again, we fail in so many ways. We fail to see our neighbors, no matter their skin color, as beloved children of God, as our siblings whom we are to love and treat equally. We fail to see that words of welcome are not the same as actions of welcome, and partnership of equity and equality. We fail in caring for creation, and produce more than we could ever need, and then we throw it away, and we poison the very dirt which we rely on to feed us. We hoard and let others struggle, even starve. We are complacent in speaking up for justice, and believe the *next* generation will be the ones that make the necessary changes to make the world better. We turn a blind eye to systems which we benefit greatly from, yet oppress and literally imprison others unfairly.

Yes, this parable is an indictment upon us all. And it is a call, a serious call, to confession, too. For in that moment of us breaking upon the stone of Jesus, we can be rebuilt and made whole in the grace, mercy and forgiveness of our Creator God.

We can't do it by the pulling up of our own bootstraps. This is God, rebuilding us on the cornerstone of Jesus. Rebuilding us and rebuilding this world and the Kingdom of God on amazing grace. And if we are built on the cornerstone of Christ Jesus, then we are a new creation, all about love, acceptance, empathy, truth, justice and mercy.

God is not a vengeful God, but one who is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, a God who continues to send messengers to us again and again to rebuild a broken relationship, even sending his son, even to his death by our hands.

So this parable asks the hard question: Where have we failed in our relationship with God? What *is* our covenant with God and our promises, and where have we failed? Well, our covenant is in our baptismal promises. Do you remember those?

No matter what, God will continue to claim you, call you, love you, even love you when you stumble and are crushed by your own false ideologies, because in that divine grace, God will rebuild you on a cornerstone which will not be shaken, and will only make you stronger in that amazing grace.

So my friends, take a moment: reflect, honestly and vulnerably before God. Failed stewardship, failed covenant and responsibilities, lack of empathy, maybe, displaying hatred and judgment before love – only you know what your true confession is. Reflect, my dear ones. We all have failed.

And then allow yourselves to be broken, allow yourselves to be rebuilt, allow yourselves to be loved, and remade in the image of a God of grace, who desires nothing more than a right relationship with you.

Amen.

Hymn of the Day

There Is a Balm in Gilead

ELW 614

*Refrain*

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad to make the wound-ed whole;

there is a balm in Gil-e-ad to heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Some - times I feel dis - cour - aged and think my work's in vain,  
2 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,  
3 Don't ev - er be dis - cour - aged, for Je - sus is your friend;

*Refrain*

but then the Ho - ly Spir - it re - vives my soul a - gain.  
you can tell the love of Je - sus and say, "He died for all."  
and if you lack for knowl - edge, he'll ne'er re - fuse to lend.

## Prayers of the Church

**A:** With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

**A:** Holy God, you call us to work for peace and justice. Refresh the church with your life, that we may bear fruit through work and service. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** Thank you for the abundant harvest of the earth. Bless and care for those whose hands bring the fruits of the earth to the tables of all who hunger. May we be inspired by your servants who cared deeply for your creation, especially Francis of Assisi, whom we commemorate today. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** Curb the impulses of greed and pride that lead us to take advantage of others. Grant that the world leaders act with integrity and fairness, seeking the fruits of the kingdom for the welfare and well-being of all people. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** Sustain all who suffer with the promise of new life. Assured of your presence, heal our pain and suffering, and equip us to embrace all who yearn for wholeness of mind, body, and soul. We call to mind those who are struggling today, especially those who have suffered due to wildfires and hurricanes, victims of COVID-19, and all who struggle against terminal illness. Lord, in your mercy,

**G:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** We pray for those who oversee and manage in our community and for all who seek employment. Give hope and a future to those who lack meaningful work, those who have been marginalized or abused in the workplace, and those who desire new opportunities.

**A:** Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** For whom or what else do the people of God pray?

*A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.*

**A:** Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** Thank you for the saints who teach us to live faithfully and seek justice in your vineyard. May our chorus join theirs until our labor is complete.

Lord, in your mercy,

**C:** **hear our prayer.**

**A:** Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C:** **Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

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

**C:** **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.**

## Announcements

**P:** We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at [queenannelutheran.org](http://queenannelutheran.org).

**P:** Receive now the blessing:

## Benediction

**A:** Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**P:** Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
bless and preserve you.

**G:** Amen.

## Dismissal

**P:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**G:** Thanks be to God.

## Postlude

Piano “reflection” on EVERY TIME I FEEL THE SPIRIT  
African American spiritual, setting by Anne Krentz Organ (b. 1960)

*(See note about today’s music, next page.)*

## **About Today's Music**

On today's recording for Family Sunday, Jenna D. helps lead the singing of the Gospel Acclamation and she offers the Gospel reading appointed for this day together with John, her dad. *Thank you, Jenna, and John!*

We continue our celebration of African American spirituals with our Hymn of the Day, "There Is a Balm in Gilead" (ELW 614). Many thanks to Meg, Lori Lynn, and Joel, who joined Cantor Kyle (distanced in the nave) to record the hymn.

Today's service includes music from the collections *Piano Reflections on Pentecost Tunes* by Anne Krentz *Organ and Hymn Miniatures for Piano* by John Carter, both published by the ELCA's Augsburg Fortress. These prolific composers are internationally known for their modern-day sacred music. Carter served for many years as Director of Music at University Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio. Organ is Director of Music at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge, Illinois; you can read a brief interview with her here: <https://blog.preludemusicplanner.org/meet-the-composer-annekrentz-organ>.

## **About Our Guest Preacher:**

Pastor Pam Miles is the pastor at Pointe of Grace Lutheran church in Mukilteo, WA. She led our worship here at Queen Anne Lutheran in July 2019 (Pam Gompf was her name then, prior to a marriage), when she was the newest ordained pastor in the NWWA synod, with her ordination having just happened the Friday before. Pam is a mother of three young adults, graduate of Luther Seminary, and an avid hiker.

