



First Christian Church
Disciples of Christ

430 S. 16th St. Lincoln, NE 68508 402.475.4289

Weekly Worship

love all • live spiritually • rejoice in hope • show hospitality

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Week of October 23rd, 2022



Call to Worship

Feel free to follow along with our Call to Worship from today's live-streamed worship service.

One: This is the day the Lord has made:

Many: a day for praise and prayer; a day for gratitude and generosity.

One: This is the time God has given us:

Many: a time for singing and silence; a time for speaking and listening.

One: This is the life to which God calls us:

Many: a life of humility and service; a life of faith and trust.

Public Worship will be held at 10:30 am Sunday morning.
If you are not quite ready to join us for public worship, we invite you to follow along with this printed service.

Community Prayer

O God of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee, we give you thanks that we can all come before you just as we are. Help us let go of all pretense. Enable us to come humbly before you. Empower us to embrace all that is good within each of us. Enable us to set aside the barriers we often build between one another. All this we pray in the name of our Teacher and Guide, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

AMEN

Reflection

“Invited to Pray, Just as We Are”

Meditation for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost

I chuckled to myself as I sat in the front row of the TADA Theater and the musical “Godspell” began. As if on cue, the opening act in the musical was the parable we heard in worship that morning. The musical opened with a retelling of the parable of the Widow and the Judge. Then, as if they also had gone by the lectionary, the second parable paraphrased by the actors was the parable we have today, the story of the Pharisee and Tax Collector praying in the Temple. The parables of Jesus that we have been unpacking over these past few weeks are familiar ones. They display the best qualities of parables; they are relatively short stories, full of memorable characters and presenting important message. Like the parables before our passage today, we have to keep in mind the context. In this case Jesus told those listening precisely to whom this story was directed. “He (Jesus) also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt.”

Jesus went on with the story that described two very different people who had come to the Temple to pray. As is true in many of these parables, Jesus vividly describes these two men. Often, our human tendency leads us to perceive one person as the hero of the story and the other as a villain. This tendency was vividly on display as the actors in Godspell portrayed it. In fact, the Pharisee got booed by the cast portraying the onlookers and cheers went up for the Tax Collector. As we look at the story, we like those hearing it throughout the ages, may be tempted to perceive the Pharisee as the “villain” and the Tax Collector as the “hero.” However, the reality for those to whom Jesus preached was the opposite. The Pharisee would have been viewed as the “Good Guy.” He was a religious leader in the community. He would have been well educated, cultured and refined. The Tax Collector, on the other hand, would have been booed as the “villain” by those in 1st Century Palestine. Tax Collectors were often Jews hired by the Roman authorities to collect the taxes for Rome and Caesar. They were experienced as greedy and money hungry. Many in the Jewish community saw them as traitors. So, Jesus chose two unlikely characters to make a point. The roles were reversed. The upright character of the Pharisee became the one who was farthest from the ideals of God’s reign. The usually scorned and hated Tax Collector turned out to be the one who lived the closest to the ideals of the reign of God.

Despite their radical differences, they do have two things in common; they were both Jews and both of them came to the Temple to pray. Beyond these two points of commonality each of them was quite different from the other. The Pharisee exalted himself as far superior to the nearby Tax Collector and the Tax Collector humbled himself as unworthy to come before God. Keeping in mind to whom this parable was directed, those “who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt.” While we may not stand up in the middle of worship and loudly pray as the Pharisee did, our parable today invites us to ponder the ways in which we believe ourselves to be superior to others. In her comments for the Presbyterian Outlook Rev. Dr. Teri McDowell Ott suggested that one way in which we might do this is through our business. McDowell Ott commented “Today, being busy is a badge of honor. Busyness means you are valued and needed. That no one else can do what you do and therefore you must do everything. We flip open our calendars and show off all of our appointments like medals or awards.” Like McDowell Ott I also have to confess that I fall prey to this as well. When I am busy doing all the things I think I must do, I do not always handle interruptions well. Those “interrupting” often sense my frustration and respond “sorry to bother you, I know you are busy.” If I am as honest as McDowell Ott I have to admit with her: “My own worry that my activities might not be as important as they feel makes me justify myself, justify how I am spending my time, justify my very existence.” Like the Pharisee we cry out loudly to justify ourselves. Perhaps there is even more at play here. Perhaps, like the Pharisee, we cry out loudly hoping to be heard and affirmed. We want to know our efforts will pay off. We hope we will finally get the thanks and affirmation we seek.

As McDowell Ott pointed out, no matter how loudly we cry out for affirmation and attention we cannot justify ourselves. Like the Pharisee we are reminded that true “justification” comes only from God. We are justified, or made right, only by God’s free gift of love that comes through Christ. The Tax Collector, on the other hand, recognized that only God could make things right. May we have the courage to come humbly before God knowing that God has made things right through Jesus the Christ. We do not need to work so hard to do that which God has already done for all of us.

AMEN

Scripture Reading

Joel 2:23-32

O children of Zion, be glad
and rejoice in the LORD your God;
for he has given the early rain for your vindication,
he has poured down for you abundant rain,
the early and the later rain, as before.
The threshing-floors shall be full of grain,
the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.

I will repay you for the years
that the swarming locust has eaten,
the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter,
my great army, which I sent against you.

You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
and praise the name of the LORD your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you. And my
people shall never again be put to shame.
You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no
other.
And my people shall never again
be put to shame.

Then afterwards
I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth,
blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall
be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before
the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. Then
everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be
saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall
be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and
among the survivors shall be those whom
the LORD calls.

Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who
trusted in themselves that they were right-
eous and regarded others with con-
tempt: 'Two men went up to the temple to
pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-
collector. 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. I
fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my
income." But the tax-collector, standing far
off, would not even look up to heaven, but
was beating his breast and saying, "God, be
merciful to me, a sinner!" 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 them-
selves will be exalted.'

FCC Social Media!



Each week FCC is posting new pictures and an-
nouncements. Look for First Christian Church on
Instagram, Facebook, and You Tube for new con-
tent every week. Get connected!

Prayers & Praises

October 23, 2022

In Our Church Family:

- Marvin Thurber
- William Deterding
- Vic Burgess
- Jessica Vocasek
- Donna Baker
- Polly Putney
- Lois Frogge
- Joan Dietrich
- Mildred Brockemeyer

Relatives:

- Friends and Family of *Vic Burgess*
- Roger Christianson, *with stage 4 cancer, father of Brady Christianson*
- Laurie Aufdemberge, *with breast cancer, sister of Kristi Bowker*
- Nicole Lee, *as she recovers in the hospital, mother of Leigh Lestina*

Friends:

- Cedric Gibb, *healing prayers, friend of Ccc Burkhart*
- Carson Mousel, *grandson of Bob and Eileen Kunz, from Mildred Brockemeyer*
- Sue Babovec, *recovering from heart surgery*

Our Timothys:

- Bruce Frogge *at Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*
- Glenda Dietrich Moore, *Creative Arts Ministry in Lincoln, NE*

In the Nebraska Region:

- Wilsonville United Baptist Christian Church and Rev. Keith Theobald

Our Global Ministries Missionaries:

- Bryan Parrish serving in the Republic of Congo

Find more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners at www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

Morning Has Broken

Text: Elanor Farjeon, 1931

Morning has broken
like the first morning;
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall
on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness
where God's feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning,
born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation;
praise every morning,
God's recreation
of the new day!