

**Worship Guide for**  
**Sunday, September 20, 2020 | 10:00 am**  
**and**  
**Thursday, September 24, 2020 | 7:00 pm**

*Watch live on NPC's Facebook Page*  
*For those who do not have a Facebook account,*  
*please visit [www.newnanpres.org](http://www.newnanpres.org) to view the recording.*

**PREPARING FOR GOD'S WORD**

**PRELUDE**

Cliff Brock

This is the day the Lord has made. **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

**LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

Rev. David Jones

**Welcome** and we invite you to let us know you are a visitor in the comments thread. One of our elders will reach out to you this week with a word of welcome. Please see the Worship Guide at [www.newnanpres.org](http://www.newnanpres.org) if you wish to follow along.

**Pasta Sauce** is the item we are collecting this month for One Roof and Bridging the Gap. Please bring jars or cans of sauce – marinara or alfredo – with you to church throughout this month.

**Worship Sign Up** Please sign up for in person worship services each week. You may do so on Realm, or by emailing [npcadmin@newnanpres.org](mailto:npcadmin@newnanpres.org) or by calling the Church Office at 770-253-4405. This helps us with planning and contact tracing.

**Book Study** on “Waking Up White” begins tomorrow night at 6:30 via Zoom. This is your last chance to join. Please email me at [david@newnanpres.org](mailto:david@newnanpres.org).

**Confirmation Class** began this weekend for many of our youth. Please join me in praying for our students and their journey of faith discovery.

**OPENING PRAYER**

As we prepare for a time of worship, we breathe in God's mercy...  
And breathe out God's mercy to others...

**HYMN 664 Morning Has Broken**

*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 re-creation of the new day!*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God,

**we have sought after things, but we have not sought after you.**

**We have expected generosity, but we have not shown generosity.**

**We have not been gracious or grateful.**

**We have failed to remember all that you have done.**

**Forgive us and fill our hearts with gratitude.**

**Help us to share our gifts**

**and strengthen our legs so that we can run after you, O God.**

**In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

People of God, our sins are forgiven; we are reconciled to God. Let us therefore love one another with gratitude in our hearts and praise on our lips. **Thanks be to God!**

## RECEIVING THE PEACE

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

May the Peace of Christ be with you all! **And also with you!**

## A TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

Rev. Darcie Jones

## GLORIA 583 Glory to God

*Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!*

*Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!*

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!*

*Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!*

## LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Tyler Brock

Let the wisdom of your Word rain down on us like manna and feed us, that we may be strengthened to do the work to which we are called, for the glory and honor of your name.

**Amen.**

## NEW TESTAMENT READING Matthew 20:1-16 | The Laborers in the Vineyard

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. <sup>3</sup> When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; <sup>4</sup> and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. <sup>5</sup> When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. <sup>6</sup> 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?’ <sup>7</sup> They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ <sup>8</sup> 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.’ <sup>9</sup> When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. <sup>10</sup> Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. <sup>11</sup> And when they received it, they grumbled against the

landowner, <sup>12</sup> 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.’ <sup>13</sup> 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?’ <sup>14</sup> Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. <sup>15</sup> Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ <sup>16</sup> So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

### “A Fair Wage”

The lectionary is a wonderful resource of the church, though it can cause issues. Today’s scripture, for instance, is an example of that. We hear today’s parable in isolation, as if it stands alone. But if we go back a chapter, we notice that there is no transition signaling a break between the beginning of this chapter and the end of the last one. In fact, the end of the last chapter features the same words as the end of our scripture today. It indicates that what we read today is actually meant to be read with the previous passage. If we read like that, the story begins with a rich man coming to Jesus asking for eternal life. The man leaves grieving when Jesus tells him that he should sell all his possessions, give that money to the poor, and follow him. But Jesus does not end there, he continues to astonish by saying that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples apparently feel the need to remind Jesus what they have left in order to follow him. They ask what their reward might be. Jesus tells them of a reward of great status, but then says that everyone who leaves behind wealth to follow him will receive a hundredfold reward and eternal life. After all of this, Jesus launches into the parable that we read today.

Reviewing these details is important. It turns out that the parable is spoken to the disciples, who greedily demanded to know what reward they will be given since they chose to follow Jesus. On the one hand, we might find some comfort in thinking that due to Jesus speaking exclusively to the disciples, thus we are not meant to worry about their application to us. With this thinking, it is also good to know that Jesus spoke exclusively only to the rich man about selling all of his possessions, and not necessarily to us. Yet, I suspect that the gospel writers have another possible reason for how they craft their narratives.

It would make sense that though the teachings are spoken to one audience, they are also intended for us. Knowing this, we might allegorize the parable, which eases the burden of the teaching. I have heard this allegorization: God is the landowner, the faithful are the workers. At the end of the day, the faithful might be upset when one who has lived their life without God suddenly makes a miraculous change to faith. Then the story becomes a “don’t-forget-that-God’s-grace-is-undeserved-yet-freely-given” tale. But this reading is insufficient.

I think Jesus’ words challenge us because the teaching does not favor us. Dr. Stanley Saunders, a professor of New Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary, writes of the parable: “We shape our identities and our sense of worth by constantly comparing and contrasting ourselves with others. We want fairness and equality, when it serves our interest, but not if it means that we all get the same prize in the end.” Dr. Saunders goes on to say that the parable produces a false justice, because at the end, there exists division and envy. Jesus’s disciples desire privilege and status in Jesus’s coming kingdom, yet the gospels also show them becoming upset when discussing what their reward might be.

Understanding these implications, the desire of the disciples is made clearer. They are following Jesus, though not completely without selfish desire. When the disciples are eagerly awaiting to hear their reward, this parable is taught to them as instruction.

The nature of the parable is to open the minds of the hearer to the world around them, to study what it is the scripture is saying and apply it to our own circumstances. Jesus’s parable appears to be reprimanding the disciples for not being humble and even believing in their own superiority over the rich man who could not give up his possessions. Jesus corrects them by

offering a narrative where the landowner responds to the workers who feel wronged with boastful claims about being allowed to do what he chooses with what belongs to him. In a gospel that claims what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, this parable could be indicating that the disciples' belief in what they are owed is bound in a story that begins "For the kingdom of heaven is like..."

The parable hopes for a world that is built on humility, not superiority. The parable hopes we build our relationships out of fairness and equality. The parable hopes for peace when our work yields an equal share as those who are laboring more or less. The parable hopes that we are not subject to harsh judgment which comes from seeking our own interests first. In a world where what we do has implications in the heavenly realm, may it be that the parable hopes can become our lived reality.

### **SERMON HYMN 36 For the Fruit of All Creation**

*For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.*

*For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.*

*For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,  
future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.*

*In the just reward of labor, God's will be done.*

*In the help we give our neighbor, God's will be done.*

*In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,  
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will be done.*

*For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.*

*For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.*

*For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,  
most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.*

## **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

"Reach Out To Jesus"

Lynn Huffstickler, soloist

Words and music by Ralph Carmichael | 1968 Bud John Songs, Inc.

*Is your burden heavy as you bear it all alone? Does the road you travel, harbor dangers yet unknown? Are you growin' weary in the struggle of it all?*

*Jesus will help you when on his name you call.*

*He's always there hearing every prayer, faithful and true, walking by our side, in his love we hide all the day through. When you get discouraged just remember what to do – reach out to Jesus, he's reaching out to you*

*Is the life you're living filled with sorrow and despair? Does the future press you with its worry and its care? Are you tired and friendless, have you almost lost your way? Jesus will help you, just call to him today. He's always there hearing every prayer, faithful and true.*

*Walking by our side, in his love we hide all the day through. When you get discouraged just remember what to do – reach out to Jesus, He's reaching out to you.*

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying,

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Holy God, who hears our cries and pities our groans, you are ever faithful. We come to you with our petitions for ourselves and our community....For our church and its leaders—that they be of open mind and open heart...that they might be the Christian leaders you have called them to be... and that the church be an instrument of love, justice, and peace. Bless our Confirmands – Charlie Vasconcelles, Paige Krauth, Billy Eriksen, Matthew Eriksen, Evie Moss, Laine Moss, Peyton Hayes, Paisley Hayes and Alexander Rice - and help them in their journey of faith development.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

For our country and global community—that all may be peaceful, fair, and respectful of all peoples no matter the religion, color, gender, or kind of government.

Be present with those affected by the wildfires in California and Oregon, as well as those impacted by Hurricane Sally.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

For our local community—for those who are overlooked in our society—the poor, the young, the old, the bereaved, and the oppressed—help us to see them and to be with them.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

For the special intentions that we hold in our hearts.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Gracious and loving God, we know that you hear us and are always with us, and we thank you in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray saying...

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## **OFFERING OF GRATITUDE**

God blesses us generously and it is out of this abundance that we are able to give to the operation and mission of the church. This week, we highlight Confirmation. The Confirmands were able to take a day long retreat to the Calvin Center to begin their studying and reflection time. They were able to begin to engage "Big God, Big Questions," a Confirmation curriculum. We were able to equip our Mentors with their own guides to Confirmation. The church gave each youth a study Bible that will be a pivotal resource for them during this time and beyond. All of these things and more are possible because of your support. Thank you for your continued support that benefits Confirmation and our youth.

## **CLOSING HYMN 726 Will You Come and Follow Me, vv. 1 & 4**

*“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?*

*Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?*

*Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;*

*will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?”*

*“Will you love the ‘you’ you hide if I but call your name?*

*Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?*

*Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?”*

## **BENEDICTION**

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you along the way.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.

May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart cause your heart to love.

May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you. **Amen.**

## **POSTLUDE**

-----

## **GIVING REPORT**

**Bulletin Info.**      **9/20/2020**

	<b>Giving 2020</b>	<b>Giving 2019</b>
<b>Pledged</b>	<b>\$312,746.61</b>	<b>\$305,609.24</b>
<b>Unpledged</b>	<b>\$23,224.00</b>	<b>\$49,932.49</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$335,970.61</b>	<b>\$355,541.73</b>



Members and visitors alike, please plan to give today in whatever way you are able either [Online through Realm](#), through your bank account, using the QR code above or by mailing a check to the church. Thank you for your generosity.