



Worship-at-home—20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 18, 2020

God's love for us is never ending!

Welcome to worship-at-home on the 20th Sunday after Pentecost. In the gospel Jesus begins teaching in the temple where religious leaders try to trap him with questions. The first question they ask is; should God's people pay taxes to Caesar.

Happy Birthday to Carol Witt and Judy Blomgren who celebrate this week.

Thank you for your offerings and continued support of Zion's ministry.

We give thanks for all in our community who work to keep us safe, healthy and informed.

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

Song of Praise

Thank you Jonathan Turner

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Blessing the Readers

Thank you Lucy & Broder Petersen

Readings **Isaiah 45: 1-7**
Psalm 96: 1-9
Matthew 22:15-22

Thank you Amy Petersen

Reflection

Pastor Elaine Olson

*O sing to the Cosmos a new song;
Sing to the Beloved, all the earth!
Sing to the Creator, and bless the Name above all names;
Sing praises to the Glorious One from day to day.
Declare the splendor of the Radiant One to all nations,
the marvelous works of Love to all peoples.*

These are the lovely words of Nan C. Merrill as she paraphrases the beginning of Psalm 96. The language of "Beloved," "Glorious One," "Radiant One," and "works of Love" are modern-day words used to expand the ancient name "Lord."

As Christians, we give God thanks and praise above all things, through all things. Jesus reminds us that God is our God, and we are God's people. We love God with all our hearts, minds, and souls, and our neighbors as ourselves. This is the way to meet the obligations of God and those of the world.

In Matthew's reading today, the Pharisees attempt to trap Jesus by asking about the Roman government's financial obligations. If Jesus answered one way, he would be guilty of treason against Rome. If he answered the other way, he would have been considered guilty of heresy in the religious leaders' eyes. Jesus responds by issuing a challenge of his own—give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God.

Jesus reminds us that living in the world is “both/and.” Yet, our ultimate allegiance is to God. Created in the image of God, God says, “I am your God, and you are my people.” God calls us by name, and we belong to this Divine Love. In return, we give God praise when we give ourselves to the suffering and justice in the world.

Yet, I see so much woe and suffering. The powerful persist with greed and arrogance and forget the hungry and poor; I grieve and lament. It’s hard to give my money into a world of injustice. Sometimes it’s hard to give God praise in my lament.

Yet, Jesus reminds us to not place one against the other. It is not helpful to play the game of “this or that.” It is a trap.

Instead, we live with Both/And. We pay what we owe, AND we praise God. We join those who know hurt AND remember God’s goodness. We stand within the world’s suffering AND remind each other that God joins the suffering with compassion.

We acknowledge the world's powers, the good and the bad, the helpful and the harmful, the greedy and the good. AND within it all, we give God thanks and praise. For this Divine Love abides entirely with all, for all, through all.

In Psalm 96, Nan Merrill, continues:

*For great is the Beloved, and greatly to be praised;
reverence Love above all else.
For where your thoughts are,
reveals that which you treasure; seek only the true Treasure.
Truth and integrity live with Love;
strength and beauty dwell with the Beloved.*

Amen. It shall be so.

Song W&P #149 *We Bow Down*

Thank you Beth Longlett

Prayers of the People *With confidence in God’s grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.*

For those who share your good news, preachers, missionaries, and evangelists...

For the heavens and all of the creation...

For divided nations and communities...

For those living with pain, illness, isolation, grief, anger, or doubt...

For the work of justices, magistrates, court officials, and all vocations of the law...

For those who have died in you...

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. Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor. **Thanks be to God.**