

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

September 20, 2020 Kingdomtide
"At Home Worship"

Call to Worship

Sing to God a new song,

for God has done marvelous things.

Make a joyful noise to God all the earth,

for God is still doing marvelous things!

This is the hour for worship and praise.

Sing to God a new song.

Opening Prayer Eternal God, you create us and you sustain us.

Be here with us now as we worship you, we pray. Teach us that nothing else can support us like you support us. As you share your goodness with us, teach us to share that goodness as Christ did in all the world. As you lavish your love upon us, help us to receive that love and offer it to the world. Amen.

Scripture Reading *"...the bread that the Lord has given you to eat."* Read Exodus 16.2-15

Prayer of Confession Holy One, we often lack the courage and strength to resist the temptations in our path. It is so hard to believe that your realm is near, so hard to act as if we truly believe. We fail to hear your call in our lives; we miss your rainbow among the clouds. So hear us now, O Lord, as we confess our weaknesses and temptations.....

Time of Silent Confession *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts that we may know the comfort and peace of forgiveness.*

Words of Assurance Our Creator God sustains us in paths of

love and faithfulness. Jesus the Christ offers us repentance and new life. The Holy Spirit breathes into us fresh energy and strength. The God who calls us beloved offers us forgiveness of sin and fullness of grace. Amen.

Scripture Reading *"...this is God's doing."*
Read Philippians 1.21-30

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

Prayer Holy and Beloved caretaker God, as we wander in the wilderness of our lives, lead us like our ancestors of old with your cloud by day and your pillar of fire by night that we may never lose our way. Bless us with your presence, O God, that we may always know the strength of your hand and the tender mercy of your love. Feed us with your bread from heaven, that we may be filled. All this we humbly ask, in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying.....

The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading *"The last will be first and the first will be last."* Read Matthew 20.1-16

Meditation As is so often the case in the parables of Jesus, the one we read today describes a scene which would have been so very familiar to his first-century readers. Landowners regularly sought out workers to tend to their vineyards for a typical twelve-hour workday. And then, at the end of the day, the workers were paid. Jesus took that well-known scenario and used it to make a point, to help instruct his disciples and those who would follow. This was an important lesson because, perhaps just like us, the

disciples were really struggling to make sense of this story. In our world, too, it is hard to believe that all of the workers would receive the same pay, despite the fact that some worked twelve hours while others worked only one. That would NEVER happen in our culture for the workers would rise up and revolt. But Jesus isn't talking either about his first-century culture or our own twenty-first century one. Instead, he is talking about the Kingdom of God where love is more important than money and where God's grace is what counts for justice.

We miss the most valid point of this story, however, if we do try to make it all about money for that was the furthest thought from Jesus' mind. What this story is all about is God and God's amazing generosity. God rewards according to grace, not according to accomplishments because that is, pure and simple, the way God and God's Kingdom works. This parable gives attention to the giver of grace and how very blessed we are as recipients of God's bounteousness.

Similar to the gospel narrative today is the account from the Book of Exodus of the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites. Just a month out of slavery and they were already complaining - even thinking that going back to Egypt, back to slavery would be better than their current situation. But our generous God heard their complaining and sent provisions for them each and every day! They were a people whom God truly blessed and, even though scholars throughout history have tried to explain the daily manna, that blessing is, once again, all because of the grace and generosity of God our Creator.

So, while we bring our culture's attitudes and ways of being to these Scripture stories, the fact is that God has something even better, even bigger in mind for us and that is the kingdom that will have no end, the Kingdom of God.

Words of Benediction Hope in the Lord as your journey of faith continues for God is our refuge and our strength. Trust in our God in the week ahead for God is our companion and our protector; blessed be the name of our God.



Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.