

**THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST
OCTOBER 23, 2022**



**REPAY THE YEARS
JOEL 2:23-32**

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***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

It is a time of good rain, early and abundant,
that renews and does not flood.

**We are the gatherers
of all that nourishes body and soul,
for we work among a harvest of possibility.**

It is a time of good trouble,
bringing justice without violence,
a time of unexpected spirit
bringing new words, understandings.

**We are the Everyone
who receives God's spirit,
the Everyone who shares God's spirit,
in spoken word and Sign,
in song, text, Braille, code, hand-reaching.**

You are gatherers, who are not washed away,
the troublemakers of a trouble called love,
the Anyone, dangerously open.

***INVOCATION:**

God, we come from years of losses – pandemic years,
disappointment years, hiding years – and from
broken days, wasted hours, painful moments. Yet our
hands are out, expecting love so wide it seeps
through our fingers. We hold only what we share. We
receive only what is shared with us – worship
blessings, life blessings, surprising blessings. Amen

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

God, we have put your people to shame. We have shamed people because of color, age, size, gender identity, sexual orientation, sensory difference, cognitive difference, life choices influenced by faith, politics, mobility, memory, mental illness diagnoses.

God, we have not been ashamed of shaming your children, but we have often been decided we know your preferences and been ashamed of ourselves. That too is sin. Like locusts we have turned against ourselves, swarmed against, and cut off life. We ask, O Holy One, for your forgiveness. Amen

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

God repays our unlove with love. God repays our cursings of ourselves and others with a forgiveness that always makes harvest even from desolation. Thanks and thanks abundant.

***GLORIA:**

Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat two more times.) (end) One God always here. One God always here.

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

⁶ I'm already being poured out like a sacrifice to God, and the time of my death is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. ⁸ At last the champion's wreath that is awarded for righteousness is waiting for me. The Lord, who is the righteous judge, is going to give it to me on that day. He's giving it not only to me but also to all those who have set their heart on waiting for his appearance.

¹⁶ No one took my side at my first court hearing. Everyone deserted me. I hope that God doesn't hold it against them! ¹⁷ But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that the entire message would be preached through me and so all the nations could hear it. I was also rescued from the lion's mouth! ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil action and will save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and always. Amen.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 18:9-14**

⁹ Jesus told this parable to certain people who had convinced themselves that they were righteous and who looked on everyone else with disgust: ¹⁰ "Two people went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself with these words, 'God, I thank you that I'm not like everyone else—

crooks, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week. I give a tenth of everything I receive.’ ¹³ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He wouldn’t even lift his eyes to look toward heaven. Rather, he struck his chest and said, ‘God, show mercy to me, a sinner.’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this person went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee. All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up.”

***RESPONSE:** These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: The Good News

Usually, the message I give is from a scripture taken from one of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But today I mostly want to talk about repentance. (These examples were taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

For example, in Matthew 4:17 we can read, “From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

In Matthew 3:2 are these words, “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven has come near.”

And in Mark 1:15 we can read, “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!”

I don’t know why, but for some reason I assumed the words of repentance were new in the New Testament; as if the people had never heard about repentance.

Especially the Jews; since even if they couldn’t read or write, they had learned from their parents or Rabbis about the prophets that we can now read about in our First Testaments. They certainly knew about the Prophet Moses, or Joshua, or Samuel. They used the word repentance all the time.

Last week we finished reading from the Prophet Jeremiah and today I’d like to introduce to you the prophet, Joel. Not much is known about this Prophet. Most scholars agree that Joel was highly educated, perhaps a member of the priesthood, and that he lived in or around Jerusalem. In Joel 1:1 he states that his prophecy is “the word of the Lord.” He is mentioned nowhere else in scripture.

Several dates have been proposed, ranging from the time before the exile (835-796 BC) to the postexilic period after or during the restoration of the wall of Jerusalem (400 BC) but no date is given in the text.

The Book of Joel is a liturgical work in two parts. In the first part (Joel 1:2-2:17), the prophet directs the community to convene a service of complaint and petition to God, initially because of the threat of a plague of locusts (1:4-20) and then because of the terrifying prospect of the day of the Lord (judgment day.)

In the second part (Joel 2:18-3:21), the mood has changed dramatically because the people have repented. God promises salvation and over and over again assures the people that their prayers have been heard. The day of the Lord has become a day of salvation because the people trusted in their God. The last verses of our reading (vv. 28-32) proclaim the renewal of humankind through the gift of the Lord's spirit. SO THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS FOR ALL OF US!! Just as in Matthew 3:2, "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven has come near."

Now we can read this text from Joel. We can understand how God is saving the people and keeping the locust away.

FIRST TESTAMENT LESSON: Joel 2:23-32

²³ Children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the LORD your God, because he will give you the early rain as a sign of righteousness; he will pour down abundant rain for you, the early and the late rain, as

before.

²⁴ The threshing floors will be full of grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and fresh oil.

²⁵ I will repay you for the years that the cutting locust, the swarming locust, the hopping locust, and the devouring locust have eaten— my great army, which I sent against you.

²⁶ You will eat abundantly and be satisfied, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has done wonders for you; and my people will never again be put to shame.

²⁷ You will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God—no other exists; never again will my people be put to shame.

²⁸ After that I will pour out my spirit upon everyone; your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.

²⁹ In those days, I will also pour out my spirit on the male and female slaves. ³⁰ I will give signs in the heavens and on the earth—blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood before the great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ³² But everyone who calls on the LORD's name will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be security,

as the LORD has promised; and in Jerusalem, the LORD will summon those who survive. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER: Beginning with a time for personal silent prayer.

God, the constant guide and teacher of all of us, we thank you for helping us discover our weaknesses and our character flaws. We are stubborn and selfish mortals who need to repent. Yet, no matter what, you love us and find joy when we do confess our failures to you. May we open our hearts to others and do what is right in the world in your Holy Name.

Initiating Spirit, you never leave us in the lurch. You have done wonderful things which your people Israel saw with their own eyes. You are the refuge of all who come to you and their relief. You give your people strength. And we are grateful.

Heavenly Parent of all parents, receive our prayers for others through Jesus Christ whom you sent to be an elder brother to a great family of siblings.

Founder of the church, you have built us on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself the cornerstone. Preserve and extend this structure through us like living stones, being built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to you through

Jesus Christ. Make us your prophets, speaking your word of judgment, and evangelists also proclaiming the Good News of salvation to all people who will hear.

Today we pray for all your people in the world that they may be safe from harm and receive comfort when they are ill or hurt. We pray for all those on our prayer list. We pray for healing because we know Jesus is the great physician and we can pray in his name as we pray his prayer together . . .

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.

PRAYER RESPONSE: NCH 772

**Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten,
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
God alone fills us.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

We are invited to repay the grace we have received with our resources, time, abilities, compassion from a deep and wide place of gratitude. These gifts are for prophesies, dreams, and hopes of the future from all your children. [include directions for receiving in the particular church.] Be generous, my friends, with repaying, repraising, repairing,

***UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING:**

God, you who have everything, we bring our offering and enter your spirit. This is your generosity to us — we can share with you in the giving and receiving of gifts. May these be blessed for each use, and may we be blessed by letting go plenty and learning need. Amen.

***BENEDICTION:**

May you be blessed by the least expected people,
recognize plenty after empty,
and feel an incognito inner urge
to be the Spirit's lungs and tongues.

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"**

POSTLUDE: "Finale" C.L. Koch

PRAYER LIST: Urban Baum, David Seneczyn, Warren Neff, Carol White, Cheri Schutzenhofer, Theo Mally, Jane Reiss, Sandy Fort, Becky Ballard, Rosemary Williams, Larry Wagner, Penny Wagner, Ginny Ganschinietz.