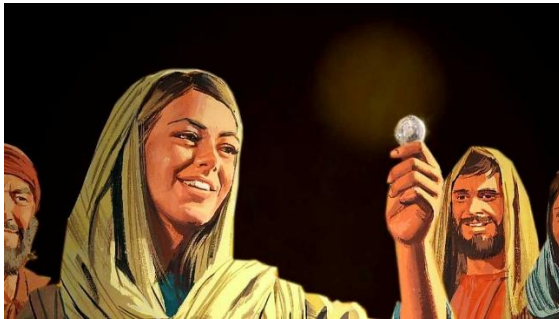


**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2025**  
**FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER**  
**PENTECOST**  
**LUKE 15:1-10 | “JOY IN HEAVEN”**



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(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431  
\*Please stand if comfortably able  
and respond with words in **bold** print  
Unless otherwise noted, all scripture texts  
are from the **Common English Bible (CEB)**

**SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS**

**Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28** Sobering words of judgment are heard in today's text with its vivid depiction of the devastation, chaos, and gloom that result from invading armies.

**1 Timothy 1:12-17** The first of a cycle of semicontinuous readings over the next six weeks, we hear Paul reminiscing about the mistakes of his past and his experience of divine mercy.

**Luke 15:1-10** The Lucan parables of the lost sheep and lost coin – both emphasizing the rejoicing that occurs when sinners repent.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**PRELUDE: “Nearer, My God, to Thee”**

**arr. Sandra Eithum**

**PENNIES FOR MISSION:**

**Deaconess Parish Nurse Ministries**

**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired Psalm 51)**

One: Let us enter the presence of our God with a renewed heart and a right spirit.

**Many: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your**

**steadfast love.**

One: Let us speak, hear, and embrace truth and the wisdom of God.

**Many: Strengthen and empower us, O God, according to your steadfast love.**

One: Let us hear joy and gladness. Restore our crushed spirits.

**Many: Revive us again, O God, according to your steadfast love.**

**\*INVOCATION:**

Maker of Heaven and Earth, we rejoice in your presence. In you, we find joy and strength, comfort and courage, truth and insight. Speak to us again. Reveal your power in and through us. Show us your glory and be glorified in our worship. May your glorious light shine through hidden spaces. May your blessed darkness make space for rest. Fortify us for this journey and make us instruments of your kingdom. Amen.

**\*OPENING HYMN: 379**

**“Come, We Who Love God’s Name”**

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

**Holy God, you seek us when we are lost. You do not turn away from those who others minimize and**

**demean. Help us to recognize the belovedness of every human being and all your creation. Give us courage and curiosity to engage with those that others would ignore or isolate. Let us rejoice on earth as your rejoice in heaven as we make restoration, redemption, and reconciliation abound among us. Amen.**

**\*WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, the Holy One seeks you and rejoices when you turn from the ways of the world that minimize and marginalize the community God has prepared for us. We can be builders of a future that celebrates the kingdom of God alive and rejoicing on earth.

**\*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 twice)  
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS: Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28**

<sup>11-12</sup> At that time, this people, yes, this very Jerusalem, will be told in plain words:

“The northern hordes are sweeping in  
from the desert steppes—

A wind that’s up to no good, a gale-force wind.  
I ordered this wind.

I'm pronouncing  
my hurricane judgment on my people."  
<sup>22</sup> "What fools my people are!  
They have no idea who I am.  
A company of half-wits,  
dopes and donkeys all!  
Experts at evil  
but klutzes at good."  
<sup>23-26</sup> I looked at the earth—  
it was back to pre-Genesis chaos and emptiness.  
I looked at the skies,  
and not a star to be seen.  
I looked at the mountains—  
they were trembling like aspen leaves,  
And all the hills  
rocking back and forth in the wind.  
I looked—what's this! Not a man or woman in sight,  
and not a bird to be seen in the skies.  
I looked—this can't be! Every garden and orchard  
shriveled up.  
All the towns were ghost towns.  
And all this because of God,  
because of the blazing anger of God.  
<sup>27-28</sup> Yes, this is God's Word on the matter:  
"The whole country will be laid waste—  
still it won't be the end of the world.  
The earth will mourn

and the skies lament  
Because I've given my word and won't take it back.  
I've decided and won't change my mind."

## **RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 14 Page 626-627**

### **EPISTLE: 1 Timothy 1:12-17 The words of Paul Thanksgiving**

<sup>12</sup> I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength because he considered me faithful. So he appointed me to ministry <sup>13</sup> even though I used to speak against him, attack his people, and I was proud. But I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and without faith. <sup>14</sup> Our Lord's favor poured all over me along with the faithfulness and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> This saying is reliable and deserves full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I'm the biggest sinner of all. <sup>16</sup> But this is why I was shown mercy, so that Christ Jesus could show his endless patience to me first of all. So I'm an example for those who are going to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup> Now to the king of the ages, to the immortal, invisible, and only God, may honor and glory be given to him forever and always! Amen.

**\*GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 15:1-10**

**Occasions for celebration**

15 All the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to him. <sup>2</sup> The Pharisees and legal experts were grumbling, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “Suppose someone among you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them. Wouldn’t he leave the other ninety-nine in the pasture and search for the lost one until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he is thrilled and places it on his shoulders. <sup>6</sup> When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Celebrate with me because I’ve found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who changes both heart and life than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to change their hearts and lives.

<sup>8</sup> “Or what woman, if she owns ten silver coins and loses one of them, won’t light a lamp and sweep the house, searching her home carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> When she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Celebrate with me because I’ve found my lost coin.’ <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, joy breaks out in the presence of God’s angels over one sinner who changes both heart and life.”

**MESSAGE: “Why Did Jesus Tell These Two Parables?”**

Jesus is at dinner again and, as usual, the Pharisees are stalking him. I guess they are making lists of actions and words that Jesus does and says that are hypocritical or not in the Jewish laws. The Pharisees know all the laws and rules so its easy for them to point fingers.

At this dinner the Pharisees see men and women who, by the orthodox, were labelled as sinners. The Pharisees gave to people who did not keep the law a general classification. According to scholars, those sinners were called *the People of the Land*. There was a complete barrier between the Pharisees and the People of the Land.

The Pharisaic regulations laid it down. “When a man is one of the People of the Land, entrust no money to him, take no testimony from him, trust him with no secret, do not appoint him guardian of an orphan, do not make him the custodian of charitable funds, do not accompany him on a journey.” A Pharisee was forbidden to be the guest of any such man or to have him as his guest. He was even forbidden, so far as it was possible, to have any business dealings with him. It was the deliberate Pharisaic aim to avoid every contact with the people who did no observe the petty details of the law; such as, do not put cheese on your sandwich that has meat on it.

Obviously, they would be shocked to the core at the way in which Jesus kept company with people who were not only rank outsiders but sinners, contact with whom would necessarily defile. It's as if all the People of the Land had leprosy. To the Pharisees, sinning was contagious and incurable. We will understand these parables more fully if we remember that the strict Jews said, not "There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents," but "There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who is obliterated before God." They looked forward not to the saving but to the destruction of the sinner. Once people were labeled as sinners, there was no way to change their lot in life, even if they repented.

As we can see, Jesus looked at the People of the Land differently. In applications of both of the parables that Jesus told, the difference between the value system of Jesus' challengers and that of "heaven" which Jesus represents.

The Pharisees have put people in boxes, or specific pigeon cubes for the rest of their lives. According to the Pharisees, there is no repentance that can change the status of these people. The Pharisees are prejudiced and racist. Do we do that? At first glance of some people, do we immediately judge that person and label that person as someone you will stay away from. "Those people" have no value in our society. The coin that was found had value, as did the sheep that was found. But sinners?

What value do sinners have? Jesus answers, plenty. Every person has value. We are all created by God. We are all brothers and sisters and we ALL deserve as many chances as necessary to find God, follow Jesus, and repent our sins. That's the Good News of the Gospel. Amen.

### **RESPONSIVE HYMN: 23**

**"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER:**

Merciful Creator. You are above anything else in the world and beyond. We may feel as low as a bug in our world, but God lifts us up and says, "you are mine and I will never let you go." And we are grateful to have the life line.

Gracious God, you are with us through pain, illness, grieving; through storms, physically or emotionally. You never let us go even when we want to walk away, thinking we are hopeless sinners. We are never hopeless or forgotten as long as we keep God by our side.

Extravagant God, we thank you for sharing your son Jesus, with us. No more valuable gift can you give us but a man who can straighten all of us on our journey to your kingdom.

We pray all these things in the name of your beloved Son Jesus who teaches us to pray . . .

**OUR LORD'S PRAYER:**

**PRAYER RESPONSE: 772 "Nothing Can Trouble"**

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:**

Let us give generously and lovingly to support the  
ministry of the gospel—loving our neighbors as ourselves  
through sharing the abundant gifts of God.

**OFFERTORY: "Sweet Hour of Prayer" arr. Martha Kelsey**

**\*DOXOLOGY:**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

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

God our Provider, receive these gifts in gratitude from  
your people. We pray that these offerings meet the  
needs of the world and our community. May they serve  
as a public witness of our commitment to being your  
church. Amen.

**\*CLOSING HYMN: 459**

**"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"**

**\*BENEDICTION**

As you go,  
Rejoice that God knows you, recognizes you, and  
communes with you.  
Rejoice knowing that you have the power do do the  
same  
With all you encounter.  
Go, and rejoice!

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

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**POSTLUDE: "Jerusalem, My Happy Home"**

**arr Sandra Eithum**

**PRAYER LIST:**