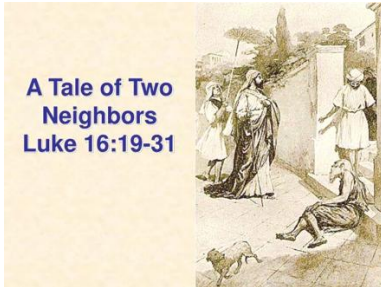


As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.

May we together experience the presence of God

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord



**A Tale of Two
Neighbors
Luke 16:19-31**

Prelude – Welcome - Announcements

This week, we have a powerful story of reversal, the world turned upside-down. Or rather, right side up. This parable is what Mary sang about in the Magnificat way back at the beginning of Luke's Gospel. The poor are filled with good things, and the rich are sent away hungry; brought down the powerful and lifted up the lowly. Today we will read it acted out in the parable Jesus told to those who were ridiculing him because they loved money more than God's kingdom.

Today's lesson is kind of an Advent message here at the end of September—a teaser, perhaps, of that glorious season to come. This means we are looking to God's promised future, even as we work to make today look as much like that promise as we can.

Yet, while life after death is an element of our parable today, this is less a story of heaven and more a call to holy living. It is an invitation to listen to the prophets and the law and to live as though the kingdom was already among us.

Today, Let us sing of the promise; as we cling to the hope of the kingdom and the relationships of the kin-dom where we are truly one in the Spirit.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come and worship!

We will praise the One between, within, and over.

Trust in the One who co-creates the was, the now, and the will-be.

Our hope is in the One who creates expansive love calling us to do the same.

Follow the One who never breaks covenant.

We follow the One whose extravagant love calls us to co-create justice for the oppressed, feed the hungry, unlock prisons, and welcome strangers, orphans, and widows.

Praise the One whose justice is grace-full and inclusive.

We praise the Spirit that spans the ages. Amen!

PRAYER OF PETITION

God help us to change.

To change ourselves and to change our world.

To know the need for it.

To deal with the pain of it.

To feel the joy of it.

To undertake the journey without understanding the destination.

The art of gentle revolution. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

We Hear God’s Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 16:19-31

New Revised Standard Version

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham.[a] The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.[b] 24 He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus in like manner evil things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ 27 He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ 29 Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ 30 He said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

Children’s Sermon

FAITH HYMN

“Message”

Joys/Concerns

PRAYER OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

(inspired by Luke 16: 19-31 and 1 Timothy 6: 6-19)

Lord, your word tells us that there is great good in godliness combined with contentment; that as we brought nothing into this world, so we can take nothing out of

it. Help us, dear Lord, to be content with what we have; to seek heavenly treasures rather than those things of this world which rust corrodes and moths consume. Grant that we might be people who share the wealth that you have provided; that we might be ones who share both the bread and wine of earth and the bread and wine of heaven...

Lord hear our prayer...

Father, we especially pray today for those who like Lazarus are ignored or neglected and left to suffer in our world; those who live in poverty within our town and province, and those who lie in great suffering at the gates of our nation...

O God, bind your people together and make us bright and shining witnesses to your compassion and your grace as they are revealed in the law and the prophets and in Christ Jesus, the one you raised from the dead...

Lord hear our prayer...

Hear too, we pray, the petitions and the intercessions of our hearts for those who govern and are in authority; for those who lost in sin and despair; for those who need healing; and for those who seek to serve as Jesus served. We especially hold before you today (bidding prayers).

Lord hear our prayer...

We ask these things and we give you our thanks and praise, and our minutes and our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray as one family, saying Our Father...

Offertory (UM Hymnal 95) Doxology Offertory Prayer

God of justice and mercy, we come to worship you this day as ones who, on the great balance scale of your creation, are more like the rich man in the Gospel story than we are Lazarus. The parable Jesus tells reminds us that the chasm between rich and poor is hard to cross in the life to come, but not so for us this day, as we strive to see God's kingdom at work in our world. As we offer gifts today, may we do so striving to be those blessed to be a blessing. In Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen. (Luke 16:19-31)

Departing Hymn

Benediction

As we leave this place, may our eyes be opened to those who lie at our gates. With the love of Christ within us, may we see the hungry and the hurting, the abused and the forgotten. And may we seek to share the blessings we have been given. In the name of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, may we go out and live the Kingdom. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**