

Ephraim Moravian Church
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 20, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

Order of Service

Welcome and Announcements

"Take It All In" - by Lachrisa Grandberry & Alissa Rhode

Call to Worship: "I will extol you, my God and King, and bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable." *Psalms 145: 1-3*

Hymn #521 (v. 1, 3-4): "Sun of Righteousness Arise"

Sun of righteousness arise; dawn upon our clouded skies
Shine within your church today, that the world may see and say
"Have mercy Lord!"

Heal division, love renew; help us all to turn to you
Mighty Shepherd, gather near all your sheep oppressed by fear,
Have mercy, Lord!

Open gates for souls to find your true way, with heart and mind.
Come with all your gentle might, bringing light to darkest night,
Have mercy, Lord!

Prayers of the Church / The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 20: 1-16

"I am Light" - by India Arie

Reflection

Sermon

"Lovely Day" - by Bill Withers, Skip Scarborough

Benediction

The "Jig" Fugue, in G Major - by J.S. Bach

Reflection: "It's Not Fair!" - by Pastor Dan Olson

Very early in my pastoral ministry I was often annoyed at a policy of the Bishop and Synod in which I served. Salary guidelines were established each year which dictated the level of compensation to be paid to pastors based on years of experience. I wondered what experience had to do with anything. After all, I was fresh out of seminary and had the latest and best training and education. I certainly knew what I was doing and was very good at it.

How is it that these creaky fifty-year-old men should be paid more than me, given my vast amount of knowledge? It was only the passage of time, and the accumulation of my own experience, that I came to understand what it was all about.

We can understand the anger of the workers in the parable of the landowner. Those hired at the beginning of the day had worked their fingers to the bone, only to discover that those who had worked only an hour were paid the very same wage. They thought they had been treated very poorly and had been stiffed by the landowner. It's not always easy to see that God makes the sun shine on the good and bad alike. When envy shuts our eyes, as it clearly does from time to time, we must listen with our hearts, difficult as it may be.

The labor relations in God's kingdom have no regard for ranking people. Jesus said the last shall be first and the first shall be last. In Christ's kingdom every person is of equal value no matter how much we've worked in the vineyard. We cannot work our way into God's Kingdom in the first place. It is a gift to us, pure and simple. We can be eternally grateful that it is not our decision to determine who receives God's gift of Grace.

Pastor - Dawn Volpe
Music Director - Mr. Colin Welford
Guest Soloist - Ms. Lachrisa Grandberry
Lay Reader - Mrs. Sherry Moore

