**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**September 20, 2020**



*“When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'” (Matthew 20:5-7)*

Minister: Rev. Jason Evans

First Free Methodist Church

2625 N. Center Rd.

Saginaw, Michigan 48603

Phone: (989) 799-2930

Email: saginawfmc@gmail.com

[www.saginawfirstfmc.org](http://www.saginawfirstfmc.org)

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

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**The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.**

**Prelude**

**Greeting/Announcements**

L: Let the hearts of those who seek God rejoice

**P: We will open ourselves to the presence of the Lord**

L: When we eat, we are reminded of God’s provision

**P: When we drink pure water, we will give thanks**

L: Daily we are strengthened for the tasks God sets for us

**P: We benefit from God’s generosity**

L: Be guided by God’s law and statutes

**P: Let all the people worship with joy**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken” #670 (vv.1-4)

**Glorious things of thee are spoken**

**Zion, city of our God**

**He whose word cannot be broken**

**Formed thee for his own abode**

**On the Rock of Ages founded**

**What can shake thy sure repose?**

**With salvation's walls surrounded**

**Thou may'st smile at all thy foes**

**See the streams of living waters**

**Springing from eternal love**

**Well supply thy sons and daughters**

**And all fear of want remove**

**Who can faint while such a river**

**Ever flows their thirst t'assuage?**

**Grace, which like the Lord, the giver,**

**Never fails from age to age**

**Round each habitation hov'ring**

**See the cloud and fire appear**

**For a glory and a cov'ring**

**Showing that the Lord is near**

**Thus they march, the pillar leading**

**Light by night and shade by day**

**Daily on the manna, feeding**

**Which he gives them when they pray**

**Savior, since of Zion's city**

**I, thro' grace, a member am**

**Let the world deride or pity**

**I will glory in thy name**

**Fading is the worldl’s best pleasure**

**All his boasted pomp and show**

**Solid joys and lasting treasure**

**None but Zion's children know**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: God of Hope, we like many have lived through bleak times. We get distraught and feel abandoned. But you have proved in times past that help is on the way. We are reminded by scripture that death does not have the last word. We know you are our advocate and our deliverer. You, oh God, will supply our need. Remind us of your faithfulness as we look to you, and pray together the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father​**

**And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.**

**As it was in the beginning​**

**Is now and ever shall be**

**World without end**

**Amen. Amen**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Exodus 16:2-15

 The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

 Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.”

 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?”

 And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him--what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.”

 Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.’”

 And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.”

**Prayer of Confession**

L: We are called to share God’s kingdom with all people, but often we are jealous of God’s mercy. We seek wealth and power for those like us, while ignoring the hardship of the oppressed. For the times we feel entitles to more, let us confess…

**P: Merciful God, who welcomes every soul into your kingdom, we seek your forgiveness. We judge your children with self-contrived standards. We rank those we dislike below ourselves. We deal harshly with those who don’t listen to our ideas. We overlook the sins of our friends, and those who think like us. Help us to be integrated with your better way. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 105

**P: O give thanks to the LORD, call on God’s name, make known God’s deeds among the peoples. Sing to God, sing praises to God; tell of all God’s wonderful works. Glory in God’s holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Seek the LORD and God’s strength; seek God’s presence continually. Then God brought Israel out with silver and gold, and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled. Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it. God spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. They asked, and God brought quails, and gave them food from heaven in abundance. God opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river. For God remembered God’s holy promise, and Abraham, God’s servant. So God brought God’s people out with joy, God’s chosen ones with singing.**

**\*Hymn of Affirmation:** **“**Nearer, Still Nearer” #478 (vv.1-4)

**Nearer still nearer, close to Thy heart**

**Draw me, my Savior, so precious Thou art**

**Oh fold me, oh fold me, close to Thy breast**

**Shelter me safe in Thy haven of rest**

**Shelter me safe in Thy haven of rest**

**Nearer, still nearer, while life shall last,**

**Till safe in glory my anchor is cast;**

**Through endless ages, ever to be**

**Nearer, my Savior, still nearer to thee,**

**Nearer, my Savior, still nearer to thee**

**New Testament Scripture Lesson**: Philippians 1:21-30

For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you.

 Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing.

 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well--since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

**Special Music:** Micki Marin

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson**: Matthew 20:1-16

 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.

 When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’

 They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’

 When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’

 But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response: “**God of Grace and God of Glory” #720 (vv.1-4)

**God of grace and God of glory**

**On Thy people pour Thy power**

**Crown Thine ancient church's story**

**Bring her bud to glorious flower**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**For the facing of this hour**

**For the facing of this hour**

**Lo! the hosts of evil round us**

**Scorn Thy Christ, assail His ways!**

**Fears and doubts too long have bound us**

**Free our hearts to work and praise**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**For the living of these days**

**For the living of these days**

**Heal Thy people's warring madness**

**Bend our pride to Thy control**

**Shame our wanton, selfish gladness**

**Rich in things and poor in soul**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal**

**Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal**

**Set our feet on lofty places**

**Gird our lives that they may be**

**Armoured with all Christlike graces**

**In the fight to set men free**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**That we fail not man nor Thee**

**That we fail not man nor Thee**

**Invitation of Offering**

L: God has treated us all equal, sharing all with everyone. Let us live with gratitude, rejoicing when all receive God’s goodness and mercy. Be generous with your love and materials, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow**

**Praise Him, all creatures here below**

**Praise Him above, ye heavenly host**

**Praise Father Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**Amen.**

**Prayer**

**Closing Hymn**: “Heaven Came Down” #371 (vv.1,3)

**O what a wonderful, wonderful day**

**Day I will never forget**

**After I'd wandered in darkness away**

**Jesus my Savior I met**

**O what a tender, compassionate friend**

**He met the need of my heart**

**Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling**

**He made all the darkness depart**

**Heaven came down and glory filled my soul**

**When at the cross the Savior made me whole**

**My sins were washed away**

**And my night was turned to day**

**Heaven came down and glory filled my soul**

**Now I've a hope that will surely endure**

**After the passing of time**

**I have a future in heaven for sure**

**There in those mansions sublime**

**And it's because of that wonderful day**

**When at the cross I believed**

**Riches eternal and blessings supernal**

**From His precious hand I received Heaven came down and glory filled my soul**

**When at the cross the Savior made me whole**

**My sins were washed away**

**And my night was turned to day**

**Heaven came down and glory filled my soul**

**Benediction**

L: God is resurrecting all peoples and all of creation. Our current situation will pass. It is better to rejoice and live, making the best of these times. Do not grumble and complain. Assist and rejoice in the faith of others, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.