

16th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, September 28, 2025

Introduction to the day

Consideration of and care for those in need (especially those “at our gate,” visible to us, of whom we are aware) is an essential component of good stewardship. It is in the sharing of wealth that we avoid the snare of wealth. It is the one whom death could not hold—who comes to us risen from the dead—who can free us from the death grip of greed.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, rich in mercy, you look with compassion on this troubled world. Feed us with your grace, and grant us the treasure that comes only from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Amos 6:1a, 4-7

A reading from Amos.

The prophet Amos announces that Israel's great wealth is a cause not for rejoicing but rather sorrow, because God's people have forgotten how to share their wealth with the poor. The wealthy will be the first to go into exile when judgment comes.

PSALM: Psalm 146

The LORD gives justice to those who are oppressed. (Ps. 146:6)

SECOND LESSON: 1 Timothy 6:6-19

A reading from 1 Timothy.

Timothy is reminded of the confession he made at his baptism and of its implications for daily life. His priorities will be different from those of people who merely want to be rich.

GOSPEL: Luke 16:19-31

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable in which the poor one is “lifted up” and the rich one is “sent away empty.” Jesus makes it clear that this ethic of merciful reversal is not new but is as old as Moses and the prophets.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - A Tale of Two Worlds

The only thing the rich man and Lazarus have in common is that they both have died. Death, after all, doesn't respect income. We can imagine that Lazarus succumbed to his hunger and the rich man perhaps choked on his own abundance. But despite their differing statuses on earth, it is poor Lazarus who gets a first-class ticket to the loving embrace of father Abraham.

The rich man, stripped of his money, prestige, and influence, is flung down into the filth and rot he had long avoided in life. The rich man's failure was not that he had money, owned possessions, or enjoyed a good meal; it was that he was not attentive to the suffering at his doorstep. And when he did at last see Lazarus—finally acknowledging his existence—all he could think about was himself.

Through this provocative story, Jesus is teaching his disciples and us to pay attention to the needs of the people around us. He is urging us to look and see Lazarus in our own world.

Who is Lazarus among us? Who are the hungry people at our own doorstep? Who are the ones we can name but perhaps cannot see? They might be a person with no reliable shelter or food, someone of a different race or religion, or a neighbor alone and lonely. They may even be a rich individual with all the means in the world but no real substance. What would our world look like if we truly acknowledged and embraced them?

When we recognize and serve the Lazaruses of our world, we not only extend compassion; we also encounter Jesus. His healing presence is in the midst of human suffering. Once we start looking for Lazarus, we start finding Jesus too.

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

We pray for the church, that it would remain faithful to the gospel, always striving to serve the needs of those who are oppressed and rejecting the complacency that comes from wealth. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We pray for creation, that the nations work together to protect and restore the earth, preserving the beauty of the planet for future generations and honoring the gift of your creation. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We pray for those in positions of authority, that they govern with justice and compassion, recognizing the dignity of all people and working to promote peace and prosperity for all. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We pray for people in any need especially Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Wanda Neuman, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. Give them your assurance and courage when the path forward is not clear. Liberate us from all that binds us, lift us up when we are bowed down, and show us your love. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We pray for this congregation, that we would be strengthened to build a world where all can thrive. Incite us to advocate for fair wages and just policies, and guide us in building a community of mutual support. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We remember in thanksgiving the faithful departed. Inspire us by their example to love and serve our neighbors, and bring us to eternal life. God of grace,
receive our prayer.

We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

BLESSING (WOV p. 53)

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

DISMISSAL (WOV p. 53)

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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