21st Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, October 18, 2026

Introduction to the day
In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
Let us pray.
Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 45:1-7
A reading from Isaiah.
The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the LORD has anointed to end Israel's exile. The LORD makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this LORD as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the LORD claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

PSALM: Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]
Ascribe to the LORD honor and power. *(Ps. 96:7)*

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
A reading from 1 Thessalonians.
Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:15-22
The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.
After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Undivided Loyalty

When Jesus holds up a coin in the marketplace and asks the Pharisees and Herodians, "Whose head is this and whose title?" (Matthew 22:20), he is asking a question not about money, taxes, or the Roman Empire—at least not directly. It is likely that the emperor's title, printed on that coin, proclaimed the emperor's divinity: an implicit question of loyalty. And when Jesus asks his hearers to give "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (v. 21), he invites his hearers to decide where they will place their loyalty. What will they give to God? What belongs to the emperor?

We might ask ourselves the same question: Where do we place our loyalty? Where do we place our trust? In Jesus, we see an example: Jesus is loyal to us. Jesus is loyal to us when he teaches. Jesus is loyal to us when he bends down to wash his disciples' feet. Jesus is loyal to us when he goes to the cross, dies, and rises again for us and for our salvation. Jesus is always loyal to us. Jesus is generous with us in pouring out grace upon grace for us. And we respond to Jesus' loyalty and generosity with loyalty and generosity of our own.

Throughout our lives, we are empowered by the loyalty and generosity of Jesus to give to God the things that are God's. We offer our resources for the good of our neighbors. We offer our time, investing in the work of the gospel in our communities and beyond. And we offer our very selves, pledging our undivided loyalty to Jesus, who is loyal to us first.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

Living and true God, you inspire us to share the message of the gospel. Give your spirit of love to seminarians and those beginning their lives in ordained ministry. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

We give you thanks for the majesty of our oceans. Protect the abundant life within them and sustain all those who work to preserve them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We seek your wisdom in all things. Direct all who hold positions of authority around the world, that they act with compassion, seeking the good of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for all people who work in dangerous or degrading environments. Grant them safety and courage, and heal all those who are injured, sick, or suffering especially Chris Burchat, Natasha Gagnon-Burchat, Claude Jeannotte, Glenda Panke, Joanne Robinson, Bernadette Schueneman, Heather Schruder, Linda Schruder, Harold Warlich, Roy Zadow, those in long term care facilities and senior residences.. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We ask your blessing on those who do the quiet, unseen work of the church Encourage them in their work of faith and labor of love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We thank you for our ancestors who have been called home to you . Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

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

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Announcements:

Sunday, October 18 - 21st Sunday after Pentecost
9:00 AM – Bonnechere - HC
10:30 AM - Grace – HC - Sunday School
Helpers: Greeter: June Barsalo, Reader: Lori Jessup;
Communion Assistants: Lori Jessup and Stacey lance.
3:00 PM - Reformation Event at Rankin Recreation Centre.

Monday October 19
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM - Grace Quilters
4:00 PM – Confirmation
5:00 PM – Messy Church Youth Group

Tuesday, October 20
10:00 AM – Bible Study
7:00 PM – Property Committee

Wednesday, October 21
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM – Cuddles and Hugs
7:00 PM – Community Choir

Thursday, October 22
9 to 11:30 AM – Toy Bus
10:00 AM – Grace Choir

Sunday, October 25 - Reformation Sunday
9:00 AM – Bonnechere - HC
10:30 AM - Grace – HC - Sunday School
Helpers: Greeter: Gavin Pape; Reader: Brian Weckwereth;
Communion Assistants: Ellen Weigold and Karen Sell.
Worship & Music Meeting following worship

Groups or Committees wanting to include information in the **November newsletter**, it is due this week. Thank you.