

OCTOBER 30, 2022  
21ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
Reverend Michael Fleming

Celebrant: As we gather this new day, we remember that this sacred space and the places we call our homes are located on the unceded territory of the Anishinaabe people.

All: **May we continue our journey together in a spirit of hope, trust and reconciliation.**

Fr. Michael: In Luke's gospel, Jesus called together his disciples and a large crowd of men, women and children together to a level place. There, he touched, healed and taught. Then he said, "Blessed are..." In that place and at that time, he named the blessed – the living saints of the Church.

People: **O God, call us together as you did those so long ago to discover your blessed people. Today, in this time and in this place, gather us.**

Fr. Michael: Let us remember, confess, celebrate and embody all the blessed saints of the Lord, those living and those who have died.

People: **Today, in this time and in this place, gather us.**

(Sydney Fowler. The Blessed Ones United Church of Christ adapted by RMF)

Celebrant: As community called, community gathered, we pray,

All: **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: And now with all the saints in heaven and all the saints gathered here on this good earth, we proclaim, " Glory to God in the highest,

All: **and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Almighty God, whose chosen servants Abraham and Sarah obeyed your call, rejoicing in your promise, that in them the whole family on the earth is blessed; give us faith like theirs, that in us your promises might be fulfilled, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: God of all hope, we come to you in the midst of a world fraught with trouble. Although the darkness is powerful, open our eyes Lord to the light of your presence. Give us strength and faith to stand against the voices of division and violence. Through your Spirit, remake us into your hope-filled disciples, discovering lives attuned to your wonder, and sparking within ourselves and others a desire to know you more and more. This we pray in the name of the one who comes to us, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, Friend and Brother.

All: **Amen.**

(Reverend Nancy J, from “wandering through life and other such nonsense” re:Worship)

Reader: A Reading From The Prophet Isaiah

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah! “The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the Lord. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood! Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. “Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: “Prepare the way”, the prophets call, “make ready the highways of our God.” We long to walk on the sidewalks in God’s kingdom of peace. Prepare our hearts, for God’s realm opens up a new day and we yearn for the time when the wolf and the lamb will live together in harmony and peace. We dream of a world transformed by God’s love and we rejoice for God’s Spirit is in our midst.

All: **Amen** (from re:Worship 2021)

Reader: Our Psalm for this new day is Psalm 32: 1-7

Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,

All: **and whose sin is put away!**

Reader: Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt,

All: **and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

Reader: While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,

All: **because of my groaning all day long.**

Reader: For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;

All: **my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

Reader: Then I acknowledged my sin to you,

All: **and did not conceal my guilt.**

Reader: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."

All: **Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.**

Reader: Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; \*

All: **when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

Reader: A reading from Paul's second letter to the church in Thessalonica  
Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of everyone of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring. To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfil by his power every good resolve and work of faith, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-4, 11-12

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: Jesus invites us to step into the land of humble service. When we stand at the edge of our own hunger and thirst, the Spirit invites us to sit at the table of Grace.  
Alleluia!

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. Luke (St. Luke 19:1-10)

People: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Fr. Michael: This is the very Gospel of Christ.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### Sermon

Zacchaeus was a wealthy man. He was a tax-collector by profession in Jericho and used his power and influence on the community to accumulate much property but very little honour. As a lackey to the Roman occupiers – that was what everyone called him – he was despised by all and was thus ostracized in his city – people would cross the street when they saw him coming just so they would not walk on his shadow – now, that's shunning!

One morning, he noticed people gathering on the side of the road leading from Bethany to Jerusalem and asked a passerby what was happening. "Jesus from Nazara is heading to Jerusalem and will be passing right here, ....here in Jericho. How wonderful it will be to even just see him pass by" someone said. Now, Zacchaeus had heard about this Jesus – that he was a healer, teacher, miracle-worker; that he was a prophet in the tradition of Isaiah and Jeremiah; that some even thought he was the long-awaited Messiah of God; and people spoke of his message of hope and peace and equity. Filled with curiosity, Zacchaeus left his counting-house and tried to stand close to the front of the crowd gathered because he was a small man in stature and would not be able to see anything from the back of the crowd. When people saw who it was who was trying to get to the front, they closed ranks and would not let him pass – indeed, they pushed him farther and farther back until he was sandwiched between the crowd and a large sycamore tree.

It was then that he knew what to do – scrambling up the tree, he found a resting-place where three branches met and sat down. He had a commanding view but felt hidden enough to safely watch for the holy man's arrival.

Soon, he heard a buzz of excitement from the gathered townsfolk. "Here he comes", someone called out and the crowd surged forward. Parents lifted their children onto their shoulders so they might say in years yet to be, "I saw Jesus....yes I did". Zacchaeus stood and wrapping one arm around the thickest branch, leaned out to be just a little closer but also high enough up the tree that no one would notice him. And then.....they came....a ragtag group who surrounded one man who was quite ordinary in appearance – he didn't seem to be anyone special, not at all like what Zacchaeus had imagined him to look like. Yet, there was a certain *je ne sais quoi* which sprang to life within him as Jesus came closer and closer. Lost in his fascination, he did not even notice when Jesus stopped near where the branches of the tree bowed and cast a welcoming shadow against the heat of the day. And then – no, he must have been dreaming. Shaking his head, Zacchaeus looked down and saw, then heard, Jesus speak his name: "Zacchaeus, come down for I must share rest at your place". The crowd drew back and followed Jesus' gaze into the tree and saw the despised tax-collector for the first time. In the silence, Jesus again spoke -"My friend, come down

and walk with me.” And that’s what Zacchaeus did – he walked with Jesus even though he did not understand at all why this was happening to him.

Reaching his house, Zacchaeus ordered wine and bread while Jesus told his followers to wait in the courtyard. He wanted, he told them, time alone with Zacchaeus. When it was just the two of them, Jesus looked at the tax-collector and Zacchaeus knew that Jesus understood his loneliness, shared his feeling of aloneness and simply assured him that he was loved. In response, Zacchaeus promised to give half of everything he owned to the poor of the town and to compensate any who he had gouged in the collection of taxes – not merely repay them but repay them four times over. How different this man was to both the rich young man and the tax-collectors he had met on the journey – people so wrapped up in themselves, their position, reputation and possessions that they were truly blind men walking...

When all was said and done, Jesus and Zacchaeus went into the courtyard where Jesus said, “Today, one who was lost has been found; one who was imprisoned by possessions has been freed; the Kingdom of my Father just drew a step closer.”

Jesus continued on his way to Jerusalem, knowing full well what lay ahead for himself. Zacchaeus stayed behind and fulfilled his promise – he repaid everyone, he set up shelters and soup kitchens in the city, he turned farms he owned over to the town so crops could be grown which would either feed the community or be sold to provide financing for further gospel works. In time, Zacchaeus found he no longer felt tied to Jericho and, hearing of the cruel fate of his friend, went to Jerusalem and joined the grieving community of followers of the one who said, “I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he will be with me.” This man, once lost but now found, once blind but now seeing with kingdom vision was to faithfully follow the Jesus Way until his death many years later.

The Zacchaeus story has a number of things for us to think about both as individuals and as community: let me put them to you and leave them with you...

How do we see one another in our village, in our faith community – who do we judge and why?

Do I, do we, have the courage of Zacchaeus to leave everything behind to follow Jesus where he leads?

Do I, do we have the persistence to carry on through both sunlight and bitter storms so that the Kingdom of God might flourish where we plant it here?

Do I, do we walk humbly with God, as Micah tells us, “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” ?

Some things to think about as we move forward into God's future for us. Amen

Fr. Michael: As people of hope and inheritors of God's promise, we affirm that

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Reader: As we stand or sit or kneel, let us pray.... Gracious and loving God, we come to you this day in the name of Jesus. We come, not as strangers or foreigners, but as your children. We thank you this day for your faithfulness, mercy and grace. You've never turned us away and you've never failed us. You've never failed to fulfill your promises to the world. In our times of trouble when the road seems so long, you've been right there with us, helping us through and for this we give you thanks.

We pray for the needs of your people today. Each of us carries within ourselves persons and situations which seem to be overwhelming and unbeatable and so we reach out to you.

We pray for those who hold power and authority in our world, remembering especially today those elected to our city government and our school boards, that they may seek only the common good. We pray that whatever decisions they make may be done in the spirit of reconciliation and for the benefit of all.

We pray for the darkened world where hope seems lost, where peace is no more, where the future seems so uncertain, remembering especially the people of Ukraine as they continue to suffer at the hands of the Russian invasion of their land.

We pray for our diocese and especially today for Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; as well as The Area Parish of Mississippi Lake: St. James Church, Carleton Place St. James Church, Franktown, St. John's Church, Innisville, Christ Church Ashton, St. Bede's Church, Nolans Corners and The Venerable Brian Kauk and The Reverend Jonathan Askwith. We also pray for our Lutheran sisters and brothers on Reformation Sunday.

We hold before you Lord, those of our faith family who stand in need of your love and strength, remembering especially Richard, Beth, Roy, Zachariah, Howard, Irene, Marjorie, Sarah, Cheryl and Jeanette. We pray that we may stand before them and with them as true mirrors of your healing love.

Lord, help us to be instruments of your peace and heralds of your good news and all this we pray in the name of Jesus.

All: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: God hears us when we call upon him from wherever we are. Let us now turn to the Lord and pray,

People: **Your call for justice is so clear that we are amazed at how easily we fail to hear you over the din and confusion of everyday life. We want to cease doing evil; we want to learn more and more how to be good stewards and servants. Yet we rarely do all that we can to rescue, defend and plead for those in need. As you have sought us out, so we seek your pardon. Grant us courage, we pray, as persons and as a communion to bring about the justice you desire. Amen**

Fr. Michael: Sisters and brothers in the Lord, in Christ let us proclaim the good news that in Jesus we are forgiven; and not only forgiven, but freed to be the people God wants us to be. In the name of Jesus, I assure you that you are loved and free. Let us greet one another as liberated people on a pilgrimage into grace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: God of freedom, accept all that we offer you this day. May we embrace the law of your service and know the glorious liberty of the children of light; we ask this in Jesus' name.

All: **Amen**

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Celebrant: We give you thanks and praise, almighty God, for the gift of a world full of wonder, and for our life which comes from you. By your power you sustain the universe. Glory to you for ever and ever. You created us to love you with all our heart, and to love each other as ourselves, but we rebel against you by the evil that we do. In Jesus, your Son, you bring healing to our world and gather us into one great family. Therefore, with all who serve you on earth and in heaven, we praise your wonderful name, as we say,

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Celebrant: We give you thanks and praise, loving Father, because in sending Jesus, your Son, to us you showed us how much you love us. He cares for the poor and the hungry. He suffers with the sick and the rejected. Betrayed and forsaken, he did not

strike back but overcame hatred with love. On the cross he defeated the power of sin and death. By raising him from the dead you show us the power of your love to bring new life to all your people.

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

On the night before he gave up his life for us, Jesus, at supper with his friends, took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which is given for you." After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, said the blessing, gave it to his friends, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which is shed for you and for many, so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me."

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Gracious God, with this bread and wine we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus, and we offer ourselves to you in him. Send your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts, that we may know the presence of Jesus in the breaking of bread, and share in the life of the family of your children.

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Celebrant: Father, you call us to be your servants; fill us with the courage and love of Jesus, that all the world may gather in joy at the table of your kingdom.

We sing your praise, almighty Father, through Jesus, our Lord, in the power of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

All: **Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: As now as our Lord has gifted to the Church, we pray,

People: **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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: "I am the bread which has come down from heaven", says the Lord.

People: **Give us this bread forever.**

Fr. Michael: "I am the vine, you are the branches".

People: **May we dwell in him as he lives in us.**

WE SHARE THE GIFTS ONE WITH ANOTHER.

All: **Thanks Be to God.**

Celebrant: The body of Christ

People: **Amen**

Fr. Michael: Heavenly Father, bring into perfection within us the communion we share in this sacrament. May the unity we know and share this day live in our community and our families. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Friends, I urge you to live lives worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love; make



every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bonds of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all....

Come to him, a living stone rejected by the world yet chosen and precious in the Lord's sight and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God and also members of the household of faith. Let us go into the world in peace and be dedicated to your service Lord. Let us hold fast to that which is good, render no one evil or evil, strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the needy and the afflicted and honour all people. Let us love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. And may God's blessings be upon us and remain with us always.

All: **Alleluia.**

Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.

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