

WORSHIP NOTES

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost • October 9, 2011

The Season

We have been reading from the Gospel of Matthew since our journey through Ordinary Time began (June 19). The parables of Jesus figure prominently in Matthew; and thirteen of the twenty found in this Gospel are among the readings we hear in Year A. We heard five of these parables this summer, and today we conclude a series of five that began on September 11. We will hear three more at the end of the Church Year (November). These parables describe and explore the meaning of what life is like in God's kingdom. There are cautions and warnings as well as hope and promise for the church and the world. It all begins with an invitation . . . and a RSVP . . .

In Word . . .

Today is a feast of feasts! Isaiah describes a lavish banquet; it is the vision of the heavenly banquet, the great feast upon God's holy mountain for all people and all nations. The psalmist sings of the table that is prepared. In Jesus' parable, an extraordinary invitation is issued. It comes from a king and it involves a lavish feast for the wedding of his son. Who could refuse? The banquet is prepared, the invitations issued (and issued again). The king has done all that can be expected, and now it is up to the guests. The people originally invited decline, and others are invited to take their place. "Go therefore into the main streets and invite everyone you find . . ." Our parable does not end there; there is grace - all are invited and there is expectation - a response is required. God's gracious, persistent, constant and repeated invitation, calls us to change. We respond to God's call by living into that new life of grace with lives conforming ever more closely to Jesus' life. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The chosen are those who look carefully at their lives and decide to reach out and embrace the love and grace of God. In Christ we are given a new wardrobe (garments of salvation) to live into that new life of grace - compassion, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, love . . .

And Song . . .

9:00 (Traditional)

"Now We Join in Celebration" is by Joel Lundeen (1918-1990), a Lutheran minister, teacher, and accomplished organist. His publications include sermons, Bible studies, and devotional materials, and he was a member of the Hymn Texts Committee for the *Lutheran Book of Worship*. The tune, SCHMÜCKE DICH, is by Johann Crüger, one of the most distinguished composers of his time. He was appointed cantor and organist of St. Nikolai Church in Berlin in 1622, a post he held until his death in 1662. This is his most widely known tune, due in part to its association with "Soul, adorn thyself with gladness." The chorale has inspired many musical tributes including a prelude by Brahms.

10:30 (Contemporary)

"Gather the Faithful" is an original text written by Jeremy Young for the hymn tune SLANE. SLANE is an Irish folk tune first published in 1909. It is named for Slane Hill where it is said that St. Patrick defied a royal edict around 433 by lighting candles for the Vigil of Easter. It is the tune commonly used for "Be Thou My Vision." Another text written for this tune is "Lord of All Hopefulness" by Jan Struther.

Today's prelude, "The Peace of God," is based on our second reading, Philippians 4:1-9. Composer David Haas dedicated this piece, published in 2002, to "all who suffered from the events of September 11, 2001."