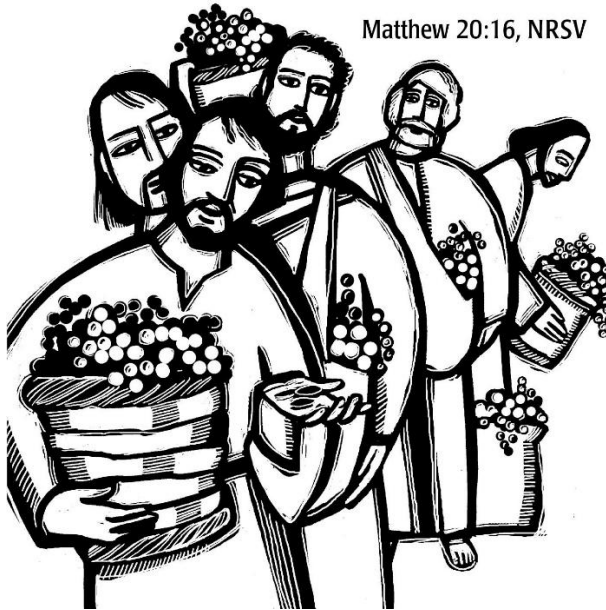


18th Sunday after Pentecost
September 27, 2026

So the **last**
will be **FIRST**,
and the
first
will be **LAST**.

Matthew 20:16, NRSV



Zion Lutheran Church
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Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

Lord Whose Love Through Humble Service

One License #243357

For the Beauty of the Earth

One License #105787

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who pours love into our hearts
and healing upon the earth.

Amen.

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

**we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.
Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love
to others.
Turn our hearts back to you.
Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.
Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Hear this good news:
We have peace with God through † Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.
Amen.

HYMN

Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading RED ELW #401
(Vs. 1, 2 & 3)

- 1** Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading,
fashion us all anew.
It's your leading that we're needing,
help us to follow you.

Refrain

Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.

- 2** Come to teach us, come to nourish
those who believe in Christ.
Bless the faithful, may they flourish,
strengthened by grace unpriced. *Refrain*

**3 Guide our thinking and our speaking
done in your holy name.
Motivate all in their seeking,
freeing from guilt and shame. *Refrain***

Text: Wilson Niwagila; tr. Howard S. Olson, b. 1922

English and Swahili text © Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, Tanzania, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

One License #04994

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

KYRIE - *In Peace*

RED ELW page 138

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above,
and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Almighty and eternal God,

you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10—4:11

After Jonah's short sermon in 3:4, the Ninevites all repented and God decided to spare the city. Jonah objected to this and became even more angry when God ordered a worm to destroy a plant that was providing shade. The book ends with a question that challenges any who are not ready to forgive: You, Jonah, are all worked up about a bush, but shouldn't I be concerned about a hundred and twenty thousand Ninevites?

¹⁰ When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶ The LORD God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the

bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?"

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 145:1-8

¹ I will exalt you, my God and king,
and bless your name forever and ever.

² **Every day will I bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.**

³ Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!
There is no end to your greatness.

⁴ **One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.**

⁵ I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.

⁶ **They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,
and I will recount your greatness.**

⁷ They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.

⁸ **The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:21-30

Paul writes to the Philippians from prison. Though he is uncertain about the outcome of his imprisonment, he is committed to the ministry of the gospel and calls on the Philippians to live lives that reflect and enhance the gospel mission.

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ 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, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ 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 ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

PLEASE RISE FOR THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Open Our Eyes, Lord BC #176

**Open our eyes, Lord,
We want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch him
And say that we love Him.
Open our ears, Lord,
Help us to listen,
Open our eyes, Lord,
We want to see Jesus.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 20:1-16

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about God's generosity, challenging the common assumption that God rewards people according to what they have earned or deserve.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ 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?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ 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.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² 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.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON ON THE STEPS

SERMON

- 1 Great God, your love has called us here
as we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonored, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
your call to hear, your love to find.**
- 2 We come with self-inflicted pains
of broken trust and chosen wrong,
half-free, half-bound by inner chains,
by social forces swept along,
by powers and systems close confined
yet seeking hope for humankind.**
- 5 Great God, in Christ you set us free
your life to live, your joy to share.
Give us your Spirit's liberty
to turn from guilt and dull despair,
and offer all that faith can do
while love is making all things new.**

Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936

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CCLI #2419103

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great.

**Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else
you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.**

Amen.

THE PEACE

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

Be Thou My Vision

One License #242715

OFFERING HYMN

***Create in Me a Clean Heart* RED ELW #186**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with your free Spirit.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of creation,
you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you;
make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts
in service to you and in love to our neighbors,
today and always.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

Amen.

The God of grace

✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Lord of All Hopefulness RED ELW #765
(Vs. 1 & 3)

- 1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy:
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
- 3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Text: Jan Struther, 1901-1953

Text © Oxford University Press 1931.

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DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Praise to the Lord the Almighty

One License #242719



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Church ArtPro

Account #73982207—6/30/2026



Weekly Announcements

Please keep these family, friends and members in your

prayers: Dilshad and Sonya Perani, Gary Revier and Deb Otto

Welcome Guests!

Please sign the visitor book in the entrance to the sanctuary.

We are glad you are here!

Hunger Jar for the month of September is designated to Sibley County FoodShare.

Zingo-Bingo

Thank you to everyone one who participated in the Zingo-Bingo event. Over \$5,000 was raised!

Sunday, October 4 our worship service will be held at the Four Seasons Park in Arlington. Rain or Shine!

Zion Lutheran Church services can be viewed on:

YouTube at

www.youtube.com

Search: Zion ELCA Arlington MN

www.zionarlington.org

Worship Assistants

September 27

Usher: Peg Kamps, Cindy Quast
 Brad & Brenda Danielson
 Greeter: Jerry & Diane Ebersviller
 Acolyte: Jazmyne Wark
 Reader: Mary Sylwester
 AV Team: Tim Michaelis &
 Jeremiah Vazquez

October 4

Usher: Larry Gieseke, Larry Klunder
 Kevin Kamps, Adilyn Kamps
 Greeter: Larry Gieseke
 Acolyte: Cooper Heeren
 Reader: Laurie Stern
 AV Team:
 Altar Guild: Wayne & Ann Werner
 Bread Maker: Larry Schiroo

Date	Weekly Operating Offerings	Weekly Operating Goal	Debt Retirement	ELCA Missions	Hunger Jar	Parking Lot
9/20/2026	\$6,660.00	\$4,038.31	\$ 175.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 21.00	\$1,585.00
Zingo Bingo						\$1,000.00
Zingo Food						\$ 540.00
Zingo Silent Auction						\$2,498.00
Zingo Donations						\$1,000.00

Pr. Gretchen will be out of the office
 Sunday, September 27 – Tuesday, September 29
 For the Fall Theological Conference
 If you have a pastoral need please contact:

Pastor Joy Bruder
(United Methodist Church/Arlington)
952-261-4474



Zion Lutheran Church ELCA

This Week at Zion:

Sunday, September 27	9:00a	Worship
	10:00a	Sunday School
	10:15a	Harvest Supper Meeting
Wednesday, September 30	4-5:30p	6 th , 7 th & 8 th Grade Confirmation
	6:30-8p	9 th Grade Confirmation
Thursday, October 1	10:00a	Adult Bible Study
Sunday, October 4	9:00a	Creation Service at Four Seasons Park
	10:00a	Sunday School

Sunday, September 27 – Tuesday, September 29 Fall Theological Conference

LSS Meals on Wheels Monday—Friday 9:00a—12:00p

Pastor Gretchen Pierskalla

952-237-1060

pastor@zionarlington.org

Hours for the week of September 27

Wednesday, September 30 – 12p-3:30p

October 1 – 11a – 1p

Stacy's Office Hours

Monday—Thursday, 2:30p-5:00p