

Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost

October 22, 2023

Prelude

Barbara Merryman

Welcoming Music

Welcome

Jennifer Gillis-White

Call To Worship

Let us worship the Holy One who forms us as a people, a community, and a world!

God knows our name and looks upon us with pleasure.

Let us hear, see, and know the ways of the Lord.

God reveals Godself to us in magnificent and gentle ways.

Let us proclaim the glory, goodness, and graciousness of our Great God!

God is worthy to be praised!

Introit

Come and Touch Our Hearts

Opening Prayer *(In unison)*

Revealing God, you show us the way of life, lead us with love, and move us to compassion. May our hearts be transformed by your Spirit and by your Truth. Let our actions and attitudes demonstrate your kingdom. May justice and peace be our hope. Let repair, restoration, and reconciliation be our aim. Make your presence among us known. Let us prepare to receive it. Amen.

Opening Hymn

Glorious Things of You Are Spoken vv. 1, 2, 4

Two-Minute Message

Jennifer Gillis-White

Prayer of Confession

When we cloud the air with senseless words,

God have mercy.

When we bend your ear for our own greed, ignoring the needs of others,

God have mercy.

Prayer of Confession (continued)

When we silence the cries for justice of those around us,

God have mercy.

When we ignore the voice of the Christ in our midst,

God have mercy.

When we fail to praise you with our words and actions,

God have mercy. Amen

Assurance of Grace

God clears the air, untangles the listening, lifts the tongue, pays attention, ignites our hearts—by free and festive forgiveness.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:15-22

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax[a] to Caesar or not?”

¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

²¹ “Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.