



LAST SUNDAY

Sunday, November 25, 2018, 8:30 & 10:45 AM

Mount Olive Lutheran Church & School

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Pastors John J. Petersen & Luke Ulrich | Principal Silas Born | Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Welcome! In the name of our risen Savior we welcome you to Mt. Olive and thank you for worshipping with us. If you are a guest, please fill out a **“Get Connected!”** card (found in front of you in the hymnbook rack). We invite you to come and worship with us again soon. **Large Print** copies of the order of service from the ELS Hymnary are available from the usher stand in the back of the sanctuary. **For the Hearing Impaired:** Our facility is equipped with a hearing assistance system. Please ask an usher for a receiver.

Explanation of the Week: *“The day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night” (1 Thess 5:1-11). The arrival of the bridegroom will be sudden and unexpected. Therefore you are to be watchful and ready like the five wise virgins. “For you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming” (Matt 25:1-13). The lamps are the Word of Christ. The oil in the lamps is the Holy Spirit, who works through the Word to create and sustain the flame of faith in Christ. The foolish are those who do not give proper attention to the working of the Holy Spirit in baptism, preaching, and the supper, and so their faith does not endure. The wise, however, are those who diligently attend to these gifts of the Spirit, and who therefore have an abundance of oil. The flame of faith endures to the end. By God’s grace they are received into the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth created by the Lord for the joy of His people (Is 65:17-25).*

Order of Service, Rite One (p. 41). This order of service, known as the “Bugenhagen Order,” grew out of the Lutheran Reformation. It was provided for use in the churches of Denmark and Norway in 1537 by Johannes Bugenhagen, Martin Luther’s pastor. Minor revisions were made to this service in 1685 and 1889 before it was translated into English for **The Lutheran Hymnary** (1913). The service printed here comes directly from the **Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary** (1996).



I. The Service of Preparation

(We prepare ourselves for worshiping God by acknowledging our unworthiness to stand before Him, and by receiving His forgiveness through absolution (forgiveness). We respond with thanks and joy.)

~Prelude — Preservice music & opportunity for prayer

*(See “Prayers for Worship”
—ELH p. 40)*

~Opening Prayer

(ELH p. 41)

P: O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear Your holy Word. We pray You to open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and death, and to grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ’s sake. Amen.

~Opening Hymn 100, vv. 1, 2, 4, 7 *The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us*

~Confession of Sin — *Admitting our sinfulness to God*

(ELH p. 41, II)

P: Let us confess our sins to God and pray: We poor sinners confess to You, O God, not only that we have been conceived and born in sin, but also that throughout life we have often and in many ways offended You, our Lord and Maker, in thought, word and deed, so that You could with perfect justice reject and condemn us for all eternity. Therefore we come before You with sorrow of heart, in dread and terror of Your holy justice and of everlasting death. Our sins are a grievous foe, which we should hate in every way as long as we live. O merciful God, You still grant us in this hour to be reminded of Your fatherly goodness. According to the promise of Your Word we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, and implore You, dearest Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your only-begotten Son, our Brother, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised again for our justification: Forgive us all our sins through faith, which the Holy Spirit increases in our hearts to full assurance.

C: We therefore pray You, O Lord, through Your servant to declare to us the forgiveness of all our sins. We poor sinners are willing to forgive all who have offended against us. We earnestly desire to grow in true godliness. Help us, O God, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

~ **Kyrie Eleison** – “*Lord, Have Mercy*”

(ELH p. 42-43)

C: ♪ **O God the Father in heaven, have mercy upon us. O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us. O God the Holy Ghost, true Comforter, have mercy upon us.**

~ **Absolution** — *God’s declaration of forgiveness*

(ELH p. 43, II; Mk 16:16)

P: Hear the holy and comforting Word of our Lord: Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Lift up your hearts! By the authority of God and of my holy office I forgive you all your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

~ **Gloria in Excelsis Deo** — “*Glory to God in the Highest*”

(ELH p. 44-45; Luke 2:14, John 1:29)

P: Glory be to God in the highest

C: ♪ **And on earth peace, good will toward men. All glory be to God on high Who hath our race befriended! To us no harm shall now come nigh, The strife at last is ended; God showeth His good will to men, And peace shall dwell on earth again; O thank Him for His goodness!**

~ **Salutation** — *The people’s blessing for the pastor’s work*

(ELH p. 45)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: ♪ **And with your spirit.**

~ **Collect** — *The congregation’s prayer of the day*

(ELH p. 45; p. 165 #135)

P: Lord God, heavenly Father, send for Your Son we pray, that He may lead home His Bride, the Church, that we with all Your saints may enter into Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: ♪ **Amen.**

II. The Service of the Word



(After receiving the forgiveness of sins, we thanked God by singing His praises and praying to Him. He now increases our faith through His holy Word which we hear through the Lessons and especially through the Sermon where God’s Word is applied to our lives today.)

~Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 65:17-19 “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

~Epistle Lesson

I Thessalonians 5:1-11 Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you, for you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people are saying, “Peace and security,” destruction will suddenly come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape. But you, brothers, are not in the dark so that this day takes you by surprise like a thief, for you are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness. So then let us not sleep like everyone else, but rather let us remain alert and sober. To be sure, those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. You see, God did not appoint us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are also doing.

~Holy Gospel Lesson

Matthew 25:1-13 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take any oil with them; but the wise took oil in their containers with their lamps. While the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, ‘No, there may not be enough for us and for you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were away buying oil, the bridegroom came. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. Later, the other virgins also came and said, ‘Lord, Lord, let us in.’ But he answered, ‘Amen I tell you: I do not know you.’ Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

C: ✪ God be praised for His glad tidings.

~**Apostles' Creed** — *Confession of faith*

(ELH p. 46)

P: Let us confess our holy faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed:

C: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting. Amen.

~**Chief Hymn 544** *Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying*

~**Sermon Text**

Luke 18:9-14 Jesus told this parable to certain people who trusted in themselves (that they were righteous) and looked down on others: "Two men went up to the temple courts to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give a tenth of all my income.' "However the tax collector stood at a distance and would not even lift his eyes up to heaven, but was beating his chest and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' "I tell you, this man went home justified rather than the other, because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

~**Sermon Theme**

"Two Different Ways of Salvation"

- 1. The Pharisee's Way of Salvation*
- 2. The Tax Collector's Way of Salvation*

~**The Prayer of the Church**

(ELH p. 48-49)

P: Everlasting and merciful God, we beseech You in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:

C: To have mercy upon us and to hear our prayer.

P: Look in mercy upon Your Church. Protect it and sanctify it by Your truth. May Your Word be taught in its purity and Your Sacraments be rightly administered. Grant unto

Your Church faithful pastors who shall declare Your truth with power and shall live according to Your will. Send forth laborers into Your harvest and open the door of faith unto all unbelievers and unto the people of Israel. In mercy remember the enemies of Your Church and grant to them repentance unto life.

C: O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, hear us in the truth of Your salvation.

P: Let Your protecting hand be over our country and over all who travel. Prosper what is good among us and bring to naught every evil counsel and purpose. Protect and bless Your servants, the President of the United States, the Governor of this state, our judges and magistrates and all in authority. Fit them for their high calling by the gift of Your Spirit of wisdom and fear, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

C: Hear, O Lord, and have mercy! Lord be our helper.

P: According to Your promise, O God, be the defender of the widow and the father of the orphan. Relieve and comfort the sick and the sorrowful (especially our brother/sister ____ who is ill/grieving). Graciously help those who are assaulted by the devil and who are in peril of death. Be the strength of those who are suffering for the sake of Christ's holy name. Grant that we may live together in peace and prosperity. Bestow upon us good and seasonable weather; and bless us with upright Christian counsel in all that we undertake.

C: O Lord, be with all in trouble. Hear their prayers to the honor of Your Name.

P: We especially commend to Your care and keeping this Your congregation which You have bought with a great price. Keep from us all offenses and bind us together in the unity of Your holy love. Grant that the little ones who are baptized in Your name may be brought up in Your fear. At Your table give to those who there commune with You peace and life everlasting.

C: Let all rejoice who trust in You; let them shout for joy because You defend them.

(Special petitions are included)

P: In Your mercy look upon.....In Christ's name we pray.

C: Lord, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

P: Be merciful, O God, to all, according to Your great love in Christ Jesus, our Lord. When our final hour shall come, grant us a blessed departure from this world, and on the last day, a resurrection to Your glory.

C: Amen. Grant us Your peace, O Lord!

~Lord's Prayer

(ELH p. 49; Mt 6:9-13)

C: 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.

~Offering & Hymn 543, vv. 1, 2, 4 **Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers**

*(The members of Mt. Olive give offerings as a joyful response to what God has given them. These offerings support the work of Gospel ministry in our community and around the world. **Visitors:** Please do not feel obligated to participate in this offering. We ask you to fill out a "Get Connected!" card and place that in the offering plate.)*

Collect — *In appreciation of God's gifts*

(ELH p. 57 I)

P: Let us give thanks and pray: We thank You, Lord God the Father, that You have given Your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. We thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You have borne in Your sacred body all our sins, and by Your blood have blotted out all our transgressions. We thank You, Lord, the Holy Spirit, that You have created in our hearts true faith, that we know of nothing to trust for our salvation except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. O God, grant Your grace, that we may perfectly believe that all our sins are forgiven for the sake of the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so enlighten us by Your Holy Spirit, that, in the power of our Redeemer's death, we may day by day put off sin, and never forsake the Lord Jesus Christ, until we see Him face to face in life eternal. We ask it all in Christ's name.

C: ♪ Amen.

~ **Benediction** — *Final blessing for God's people*

(ELH p. 59; Num 6:24-26)

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C: ♪ Amen, amen, amen.

~ **Closing Hymn 542** *In Heaven Above*

~ **Closing Prayer**

(ELH p. 59)

P: O Lord, we render unto You our heartfelt thanks that You have taught us what You would have us believe and do. Help us, O God, by Your Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to keep Your Word in pure hearts, that we thereby may be strengthened in faith, perfected in holiness, and comforted in life and death. Amen.

~**Postlude** — Opportunity for prayer & to greet one another!

(See "Prayers for Worship"
—ELH p. 40)

Preacher: Seminarian David Choi/ Liturgist: Pastor Luke Ulrich

Organists: 1st: Cassie Johnson / 2nd: John Baumann

LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE/LORD'S SUPPER ATTENDANCE:

Sunday: 8:30am, 305/244; 10:45am, 235/180. Monday: 27/20

GIVEN LAST WEEK FOR THE LORD'S WORK: \$13,808.40



NEEDED EACH WEEK TO MEET ANNUAL BUDGET: \$17,400

Romans 12: 1 Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy and pleasing to God—which is your appropriate worship.

*Did you know you can give your offering online? Just go to www.mtolivelutheran.org and click on the link, "donate on line." If you would like to continue using your assigned envelope, just **write the word "online" on the envelope and drop it in the plate** during the offering.*

SERVING OUR LORD THIS WEEK:

Greeters: 1st Service: Dean & Cathy Kluge,
Keith Anderson, Peggy Harstad

2nd Service: Robert & Ruth Heidenreich,
Dan & Joanne Maas

Ushers: 1st Service: Tom Bode (captain), Eli Bode,
John Schauer, John Pfeffer, Jerris Barents

2nd Service: Chris Kind (captain), Larry Rude,
Luke Buelow, Mark Olson, William Enz

Offering Counters: Dan Gerdts, Joe Meyer

Altar Guild: Carol Petersen, Sherri Bukowski

WEEK AT A GLANCE: November 25, 2018—December 2, 2018

Sunday, November 25	8:30AM 9:40AM 10:45AM 7:30PM	Divine Service No classes (Thanksgiving Weekend) Divine Service No Artemis Video Gaming Co-ed Recreational Volleyball
Monday, November 26	10AM 6:30PM 7:30PM	Veterans Bible Study Divine Service Evangelism Committee
Tuesday, November 27	8AM 11AM 7PM	Women's Bible Study - <i>Job</i> Funeral Service (Dennis Davis) MOMs Bible Study, Library
Wednesday, November 28	8:05AM 9AM 3PM 4PM 7PM	CDS Chapel Bible Class Youth Choir Confirmation Senior Choir
Thurs., Nov. 29	8:30AM	MOMs Bible Study, at Peace
Fri., Nov. 30		
Sat., Dec. 1	9:45AM-3:15PM	New 2You Volunteers
Sunday, December 2	8:30AM 9:40AM 10:45AM 1PM 7:30PM	Senior Choir Divine Service/Holy Communion Bible Class/Sunday School/BIC Divine Service Encourage One Another Co-ed Recreational Volleyball

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Calls Accepted: Adam and Mandy Pavelchik have notified us that they have accepted our calls to serve as principal and 6th grade teacher, respectively. We thank God for guiding them in this decision, and we pray that He would soon provide a new principal and teacher for Peace Lutheran School in Kissimmee, FL.

Funeral services for Mr. Dennis Davis will be Tuesday, November 27, at 11AM at Mt. Olive. Visitation is at the Mankato Mortuary on Monday, November 26, from 5-7PM and 1 hour before the funeral at Mt. Olive. A lunch will be served in the social hall following

the funeral service. Committal will take place at Pilgrims Rest Cemetery. May God comfort his family through this time of mourning.

Building Committee Updates

1. There are now four handicap parking spaces marked by the southwest corner of the school.
2. Due to demolition and construction activities, the cry room will be unusable until the new narthex is completed. In the interim, the fireside room is available to parents and children when privacy is desired; the changing table and supplies have been moved to the handicap bathroom across the hall from the kitchen. The fireside room is also available to mothers and young children between services while Sunday school and Bible study are in session. The Bible Information Class will be held in the school library during this time.
3. Sidewalks, curb and gutter work have begun as the weather allows and are scheduled to be completed soon. Weather permitting, the first lift of asphalt for the parking lot will be installed the week of Thanksgiving.
4. The next evidence of progress within the building program will be construction of a temporary wall at the back of the sanctuary. This wall will ensure the safety and integrity of that side of the sanctuary and will enable us to continue to use the sanctuary for the majority of the construction period. Demolition of the office spaces behind the temporary wall will begin shortly after its construction.
5. The temporary wall will require the removal of the chairs at the back of the sanctuary, but those chairs will be relocated to new positions throughout the sanctuary so that there will be no reduction in seating capacity.
6. Expect the next update early in December. Please continue to be patient with the inconveniences of construction and prayerful that all is done according to God's will for His congregation.

Give the gift of warmth: donate gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves for Wellcome Manor children ages 0-8 and their moms, as well as the men of Maxfield Place. The collection is **November 26 through December 7**. Drop gifts off at the church or at the classrooms. Call the church office if you have questions.

Come join us for an Advent supper: The Bethany Women's Auxiliary will be serving a "Pulled Pork Dinner" on Wednesday, **December 5**, from 5:00 until 6:15 PM in the Mt. Olive social hall. The meal will include pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, baked beans, cole slaw, fruit, and assorted desserts. Donations will go toward supporting Bethany's piano replacement efforts.

Attend the ELS Ottesen Museum's annual Christmas Open House. This year's theme is "The Norwegians Become Americans: Adopting the English Language and American Customs in Norwegian-American Homes and Churches". Sing Christmas hymns new to the 1913 Lutheran Hymnary, learn about early 20th century Christmas trees, and try both Norwegian and American style Christmas treats. The Open House is from 2:30 to 5:30PM on Tuesday, **December 11**, 2018. The ELS Ottesen Museum is located at 4 Browns Court in Mankato.

Schedule your photo shoot for the Mt. Olive Picture Directory! Photos will be taken on **January 6, 9, 12, and 13**. Times vary and are limited, so please hurry to find the best slot for you! Go to our website and click on the banner to schedule your appointment, or go to this link: <http://signup.com/go/NBMjaTw>. If you need help signing up, you can call the church office at 507-345-4966.

Complete a time and talents survey. You can do this on-line on our website, using iPad that are located in the narthex, or just the old-fashioned way with a paper copy. We are humbly requesting all members to fill out the form so we can have a better understanding of how best to suit the many needs at Mount Olive.

Do you use "online giving" for making your offerings? Notify the church office if you will not need an offering envelope box in the future, as this saves us the expense of providing envelopes. Thank you.

Volunteers Needed to Assist with Basketball Practices: Mt. Olive Lutheran's Boys B Team is in need of volunteers to help oversee stations during their basketball practices for this school year. Practices are held from 4:15 to 5:30PM at Mt Olive on Mondays and Thursdays. Individuals would not need to commit to every practice, but any help would be greatly appreciated. Coaches will do the instructing for the stations. Please contact Mr. Zibrowski at mrz@mtolivelutheran.org if you're interested. Thank you.

Happening at Bethany Lutheran College

Peter Kjeer Engineering Scholarship Fundraiser, December 3, 7-9PM, at Viking Village. There will be games, raffle prizes, and some of Peter's favorite foods. Donations and pledges are encouraged!

The Annual Christmas at Bethany Concerts: Thursday and Friday, **December 6 and 7**, at 5PM; Saturday, **December 8** at 1 and 5PM; and Sunday, **December 9**, at 3PM in Trinity Chapel. The concert will include participation by the Concert Band and Chamber Orchestra directed by Benjamin Faugstad, the Mary Martha Singers and Handbell Choir directed by Ann Fredrickson, and the Concert Choir directed by Dennis

Marzolf. Advance reservations are encouraged. Seating is general admission. Tickets are available now from Fine Arts Coordinator Susan Harstad at 507-344-7365, and online at blc.edu/christmas-at-bethany. Tickets are free, with a free-will offering received during the concert.

At Minnesota Valley Lutheran

MVL #GivingTuesday Match: Mark your calendar now for Tuesday, **November 27** to make a special contribution to MVL, and Thrivent Financial will double your impact! Donations will be doubled up to \$10,000 - that means #GivingTuesday could bring \$20,000 or more in support of Christian education at MVL. MVL is hosting an open house that day from 5:00-7:00PM for donation drop-offs, tours, refreshments, and entertainment. Donations can also be brought in during regular business hours to Treasure Haus in New Ulm, New 2 You in Mankato, and the New Ulm Thrivent office. If you can't make it physically, please consider giving digitally. Online donations can be made only on Tuesday, November 27, through InFaith's website (<https://bit.ly/2DDBthl>) or at mvl.org/giving-tuesday. You do not need to be a Thrivent member for your donation to be matched.

At Our Sister Synod

Come share "An Evening with Isaiah" on Sunday, **December 9**, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Nicollet. Registration will begin at 5PM, and desserts will be served at 5:30PM. The opening prayer and service will begin at 6:00PM. To save your spot, contact the church office (office@trinitynicollet.org) or call 507-232-3938, ext. 0.

On the narthex table are copies of the *Building On Our Mission* packets and the Time & Talents Survey; **sign-up sheets for** poinsettias, New2You and Sibley Park Holiday Lights; the **October edition of** *Thoughts of Faith*; **November editions of** the *Mission News & Helping Hands*, and the *ELS President's Newsletter*; the **December issue of** the *Olive Press*; the **December to March edition of** *Meditations Daily Devotions*; and **giving envelopes for** MVL memorials.

For all other new announcements, please pick up your copy of the December issue of the *Olive Press* today from the ushers.

Editor's Note: There is **no** children's Christmas Program practice on **December 9** (as indicated on the *Olive Press* December calendar). Children will have their Sunday School classes on December 9.

Seminarian David Choi + Sermon Text: Luke 18:9-14 + “Two Different Ways of Salvation”

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, please teach us your will through this text today, and may the Holy Spirit working through us with your holy words, help us to be aware of our sin. Please forgive us our sins. And give us humble hearts before you; we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Introduction: “Comparisons” are common in our life, although we don’t always speak about it. But our nature likes to make comparisons, and we often compare ourselves with others.

Our old Adam is always trying to compare itself with others. I am a musician and very good at playing piano, but look at him--he make no sense of music at all. I am the professional football player and have experiences in many games. Our team is always beating the other team. But look at that team--everyone on that team plays like rookies. There is no fun watching that game. I am a well-educated man, having a Masters or PhD degree, while the others in my group looks so dumb--how can I bear them?

We naturally build our own self-worth on comparisons with others’ weakness and try to satisfy our own conscience and enjoy it very much. The text today shows us two men in the temple praying to God. The Pharisee in the parable compared himself with the tax collector who knows he is a sinner before God. The Pharisee was confident about his own righteousness and prayed proudly, but the tax collector felt like he committed horrible sins every day and sincerely repented of his sin. In this parable, Jesus shows us two different ways of salvation, One man relied on himself for salvation, and the other relied on his God for salvation.

1. The Pharisee’s Way of Salvation

In the human eyes, the life-style of the Pharisee was very successful. He considered the Jewish religion tradition very seriously. He kept on praying to the Lord, fasting every day and was willing to offer one tenth of his income for serving others. People respected the Pharisee so much that he himself believed that he was righteous in front of God. He had such a strong belief about his own merit that he had no doubt that through all his good works and efforts, he could earn merit and could boast in front of God! “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers.....” You can tell through his prayer how prideful his heart was. He was actually not praying to God, but praying and worshiping himself, enjoying the good feeling comparing himself with others and said to himself “Hey, you are a nice and decent guy, fasting twice a week, paying tithes regularly”

Not only just this Pharisee pretended to be so decent and pious. Actually the Old Adam in us also enjoys worshipping ourselves too. We also enjoy others' praise and nice words. We also like pursuing a good reputation from others and crediting it to ourselves. We like to tell others how good our life is. Our old Adam likes saying, "You are a such nice person and always are doing so many good things, helping others with your offerings all the time, and never committing sin."

I never commit the sins that other people do. People believe these illusory feeling about themselves and start to worship themselves. Furthermore , in the same way many other religions and cultures around us are always trying to draw us away from the Trinity God, either worship ourselves or other idols like some historical and religion figures and worldly things like money , reputation , achievement etc.

The Pharisee in this parable of Jesus believed that he could obey the law and obtain his own salvation. He believed his good works made him righteous before God, always fasting, offering his wealth. He assumed that doing all these things would make him decent and righteous. These ideas of this Pharisee are still very popular among modern day churches. Many churches' teaching emphasizes how many times you have to pray every day, how much money you should donate to your church, and how often you should go to the church services; otherwise, you can't earn the salvation and God will be angry with you. Well, I don't mean good works are bad, but we should check ourselves why we should do the good works. Is it to save ourselves or to thank God that we have already been saved?

This idea of work righteousness is found not only in Christian churches but also in all non-Christian churches. All pagan churches teach that man must save himself. Only true Christianity teaches that Christ did everything for our salvation, and we don't have to do anything.

The result of this work righteousness is that we have pride in own hearts and only believe in our own merit. This leads us to compare our "good works" with others, and we start to despise others in our hearts thinking "God, I thank you that I am not like other people--swindlers, unjust, adulterers, even like this tax-gatherer....". Like the Pharisee in the text, we can start believing our own goodness and have confidence in our own merit, always comment on other people's works and their qualities, and make ourselves prideful and arrogant. The result of the working righteousness minds will be self-righteousness.

Is that really possible for a man through his good works and his merit to earn salvation and make himself righteous before God? The Scriptures tell us this is impossible! In Romans 3:10 it is written "There is no one righteous ,not even one"; "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The law demands

complete perfection. But the fact is we daily commit sin so much that we should deserve nothing but punishment in God's standard, the punishment in hell.

2. The Tax Collector's Way of Salvation

Is there any hope for us? Yes it is the same hope as that of the tax collector; he trusted in his God. He trusted in the promised Savior who would live an holy life for us and die on the cross to pay for all human sin. When the Holy Spirit through God's words and His sacraments comes to sinners, we will recognize our sin and will realize our sinful nature, and then understand that our corrupted human flesh deserves nothing but punishment. We as sinful human beings can do nothing for our salvation. We can only look to the True Savior's help to rescue us from these terrible sins.

The tax collector in the text realized these facts. So he was standing some distance away from the sanctuary, and he was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven when he was praying to God. And at the same time he beats his breast saying "God, be merciful to me , the sinner!" which was in sharp contrast with the Pharisee on the other side. The tax collector was praying with a repentant and sincere heart , and acted very humble and inferior way in front of God, confessed his sin and looked for God' help.

Like the tax collector in this story, for the believers in nowadays' church, the Holy Spirit came to us through the Word and sacraments, and He is working inside of our believers' hearts. As the results of His work, we definitely will recognize our sin and repent before the Lord, our merciful Father. We will also look for the Savior's promise to rescue us from our sin and all the temptations from evil ones.

According to the text, even though we see ourselves are good, God is the real judge and will judge us based on His perfect standard which we will never live up to. We as poor sinners actually have nothing to boast about in front of Him because He knows all our sin-- nothing can be hidden by us. That is why our Savior Jesus Christ came to us for helping the sinners. "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:12).

Through Jesus' holy life and holy death, He obtained the salvation for all. He was punished on the cross for our sin, died and buried instead of us, so that we can be justified and declared righteous in God's eyes through faith in His only Son, in the same way the tax- collector was justified by Jesus, which was proved by Jesus in the text "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

Not only we are declared righteousness by God the moment when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, but also at the same time, we became God's adopted sons, and God the Father gives us the Sonship because of faith in Jesus Christ. Because of this truth,

we can boldly call the Almighty God “Abba Father”. What a priority we got from our Father in heaven through faith in his son Jesus Christ !

Conclusion: We became righteous not because of our works or our effort for obeying the law, but God proclaimed we are righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. That is why we have nothing to boast about in front of God and others. The Pharisee’s way of salvation is leading into death and condemnation, but the tax collector’s way of salvation is to repent and trust in God with all our heart and mind, which will lead us into the true salvation, “Jesus Christ”. Therefore, as we enter into this amazing grace, like the hymn teaches us, may the words from our mouths always be “Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon me!”