

# The Rev. Jay Lawlor preached “Our Invitation from Jesus” for 19th Sunday After Pentecost - October 15, 2017

*The Rev. Jay Lawlor visited Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, IN as guest priest on October 15, 2017.*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 23, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) returned to Saint Paul's Episcopal Church to serve as supply priest. He preached a [sermon](#) titled "Our Invitation from Jesus" and presided at the service of Holy Eucharist for the 19th Sunday After Pentecost. The Rev. Lawlor said in his sermon:

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When we, as the baptized Body of Christ, the Church, are at our best, the world sees and knows Jesus as he intends.”

*The Rev. Jay Lawlor*

Wedding receptions probably conjure up common images in most of our minds. There is music – often either a cover band or D.J., there is dancing – at different times the Electric Slide or the Macarena were in vogue. YMCA still seems a staple at many receptions. There are toasts, a meal (the choice of

chicken or steak still dominate), and wedding cake. The point is that we all pretty much know what to expect, more or less, when we attend a wedding reception.

The same could be said in Jesus's day. There were expectations as to how wedding banquets were prepared – and it usually had to do with social status. There were expectations as to the guest list – and it had to do with social status.

In the parable of the wedding banquet, Jesus again directs it his elite opponents – those who refuse to participate because they do not like the particular arrangements, and how the invitation to attend is extended to all – something almost unheard of in Jesus's time. And while the invitation is generously extended to all, this parable is also a hard lesson on what it means to accept the invitation. While choosing to accept the invitation and show up are part of the equation, Jesus is clear there are expectations about what needs to happen when we arrive.

Jesus tells us that we don't have to accept his invitation to follow him – to become a member of the Jesus community. We don't have to become members of the Body of Christ – the Church. We don't have to accept the Baptismal Covenant – promises we make as to how we will live our lives as disciples of Jesus. We can say 'no' to the invitation to be part of the expansive, inclusive, and loving banquet God has prepared for us in Christ Jesus.

Saying 'no' is okay. The way of Jesus isn't the way for everyone to connect with the Divine. But for those who say 'yes' – those who accept the invitation, Jesus expects us to live boldly into the transforming, healing, self-emptying love of God found in Christ Jesus. We can't just show up and then go on our way without constantly being transformed more into the image of Jesus as we love and serve others like Jesus did.

The invitation to follow Jesus was counter-cultural in his day. If accepted in the way Jesus intends, it is still counter-cultural in our day, too. When we, as the baptized Body of Christ, the Church, are at our best, the world sees and knows Jesus as he intends. But the Church, and we, not some distant institution, are the Church, can be negligent of mirroring society more than reflecting Jesus. It is in those moments where we risk showing up without putting on the proper wedding robe provided for us. [...]

The complete transcript of the Rev. Jay Lawlor's sermon is available at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/invitation-jesus-sermon-rev-jay-lawlor-20-pentecost-year-oct-15-2017/>

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