



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
The Seventeenth Weekend After Pentecost
Holy Eucharist, Rite III
September 26, 2020

THE PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Celebrant At the close of this day we gather to worship God;
All **at journey's end we give thanks for the road travelled and the open door.**
We offer to God our tiredness and our expectancy;
we rejoice in a God who welcomes us just as we are.
Here and now we might entertain angels unaware;
here and now we can meet Christ in one another.

PRAYER FOR PURITY

Celebrant Let us pray.
All **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE (*spoken*)

Celebrant Eternal God, Maker of the skies above, lowly Christ, Lover of the earth and its people, unfettered Spirit, Giver of gracious gifts,
All **you are present among us.**
O hidden mystery, sun behind all suns, soul within all souls, in all we touch, in all we meet,
you are present among us.
As bearers of your image, we come to be reshaped;
dependent on your mercy, we ask to be made new.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.
Merciful God, you gave your only Son to be both a sacrifice for sin and an example for godly life; help us gladly to receive all that has been done for us and follow in his footsteps; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON*Genesis 1:1-5*

Colin Hoover

When God began to create the heavens and the earth— the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God’s wind swept over the waters— God said, “Let there be light.” And so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

Lector The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

THE PSALM*Psalm 25:1-8**A prayer for forgiveness and guidance and expression of trust in the Lord.*

- ¹ To you, O God, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- ² Let none who look to you be put to shame;*
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.
- ³ Show me your ways, O God, *
and teach me your paths.
- ⁴ Lead me in your truth and teach me, *
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
- ⁵ Remember, O God, your compassion and love,*
for they are from everlasting.
- ⁶ Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; *
remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O God.
- ⁷ Gracious and upright are you; *
therefore you teach sinners in your way.
- ⁸ You guide the humble in doing right, *
and teach your way to the lowly.

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THE GOSPEL

Matthew 21:23-32

In response to a question about authority, Jesus tells a parable of two sons who obeyed their father differently, and he indicates that it is the same with those who are apparently obedient and disobedient in this age. Both John the Baptist and Jesus offered their message of repentance and the hope of the kingdom to all. It was the seeming outcasts who most genuinely responded. Then and now it is not a popular idea to suggest that such persons have priority over those who are established in their religion. Action is the test of obedience.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching. They asked, “What kind of authority do you have for doing these things? Who gave you this authority?”

Jesus replied, “I have a question for you. If you tell me the answer, I’ll tell you what kind of authority I have to do these things. Where did John get his authority to baptize? Did he get it from heaven or from humans?”

They argued among themselves, “If we say ‘from heaven,’ he’ll say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But we can’t say ‘from humans’ because we’re afraid of the crowd, since everyone thinks John was a prophet.” Then they replied, “We don’t know.”

Jesus also said to them, “Neither will I tell you what kind of authority I have to do these things.

“What do you think? A man had two sons. Now he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’

“‘No, I don’t want to,’ he replied. But later he changed his mind and went.

“The father said the same thing to the other son, who replied, ‘Yes, sir.’ But he didn’t go.

“Which one of these two did his father’s will?”

They said, “The first one.”

Jesus said to them, “I assure you that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering God’s kingdom ahead of you. For John came to you on the righteous road, and you didn’t believe him. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Yet even after you saw this, you didn’t change your hearts and lives and you didn’t believe him.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you Lord Christ.**

SERMON

The Rev. Deacon Steve Seely

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Celebrant Let us affirm our faith in the Triune God, the One who was, and is, and is to come.

All **We believe in God above us,
Maker and Sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon, of water and earth, of male and female.**

**We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
born of a woman, servant of the poor, tortured and nailed to a tree.**

**A man of compassion, he died forsaken; he descended into the earth
to the place of death.**

**On the third day he rose from the tomb; he ascended into heaven
to be everywhere present;
and his kingdom will come on earth.**

**We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire, life-giving breath of the church,
spirit of healing and forgiveness, source of resurrection and eternal life. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Mason Hoover

Officiant

In turning to the ways of God our lives are saved from the grip of the Evil One, and the humility of love lightens our path. We offer our prayers, responding, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Intercessor

For the grace to move from grumbling to shared responsibility, from accusation to a search for truth, from humiliation and shame to God's compassion and mercy. In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Church of the Holy Communion, D.C.; Diocesan Youth Ministry; Diocesan Young Adult Ministry; and the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Adelphi; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may bear witness to the wonderful works of God, so that our children and the generations to come may walk in the path of faith and announce the mystery of faith through their lives; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

That we may bend the knee of our hearts to those who live in despair and great need, knowing that they are Christ to us, a gift of the Holy Spirit who fills us with compassion, and transforms the way we live; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who work at night, staying aware while others sleep, guarding our streets, and healing the sick, that they may labor in safety and receive the rest that prepares them for another round; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our President, his advisors, the members of Congress and the Supreme Court, that they may be honest and vigilant in their duties, knowing that their decisions affect the people of our land, and of the nations of the world; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died and now reside on another shore and in a greater light, that their faith may inspire our own, and their generosity encourage the way in which we use our gifts; let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayer.

(Please add your intercessions and thanksgivings, silently or aloud.)

The Officiant will add a concluding collect.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Celebrant God has promised forgiveness to all who truly repent, turn to Christ in faith and are themselves forgiving. In silence we call to mind our sins.

Silence

Deacon Let us confess our sins.

All **Merciful God, we have sinned
in what we have thought and said,
in the wrong we have done,
and in the good we have not done.
We have sinned in ignorance:
we have sinned in weakness:
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry.
We repent and turn to you.
Forgive us, for our Savior Christ's sake,
and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen.**

THE ABSOLUTION

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.** Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

THE PEACE

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **And also with you.**

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS

PRAYER FOR A BIRTHDAY

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants *she/he/they* begin another year. Grant that *she/he/they* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *his/her/their* trust in your goodness all the days of *his/her/their* life(ves); through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR AN ANNIVERSARY

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right indeed, it is our joy and our salvation, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise through Christ your only Son.

You are the source of all life and goodness; through your eternal Word you have created all things from the beginning and formed us in your own image; male and female you created us.

When we sinned and turned away you called us back to yourself and gave your Son to share our human nature. By his death on the cross, he made the one perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world and freed us from the bondage of sin. You raised him to life triumphant over death; you exalted him in glory. In him you have made us a holy people by sending upon us your holy and lifegiving Spirit.

Therefore with the faithful who rest in him, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

All glory and thanksgiving to you, holy Father; on the night before he died your Son, Jesus Christ, took bread; when he had given you thanks, he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this to remember me."

After supper he took the cup; when he had given you thanks, he gave it to them and said: "Drink this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this as often as you drink it, to remember me."

So, we shout in humility and awe:

Glory to you, Lord Christ;

your death we show forth;

your resurrection we proclaim;

your coming we await;

Amen! Come Lord Jesus.

Therefore loving God, recalling your great goodness to us in Christ, his suffering and death, his resurrection and ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate our redemption with this bread of life and this cup of salvation. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which we offer through Christ our great high priest.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine which we receive may be to us the body and blood of Christ, and that we, filled with the Spirit's grace and power, may be renewed for the service of your kingdom.

United in Christ with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, O God, in songs of everlasting praise.

**Blessing, honor and glory be yours,
here and everywhere,
now and for ever. Amen.**

As Christ teaches us we pray:

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

(a period of silence is kept)

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

Behold you are:

may we become what we receive.

THE COMMUNION

You may be seated. The Celebrant will bring the bread to your seat.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Celebrant Give thanks for all God's goodness:

All **God's love shall last for ever.**

Generous and faithful God, you have fed us at your table. May the nourishment we have received enable us to enrich the lives of others wherever we may go from here.

Whether the future be dark or bright, the road be smooth or rough, whether our cares be light or heavy, our song be strong or weak, keep our hearts warm and our hands open, our lives ever embracing and ever embraced by your love. Amen.

THE BLESSING & THE DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE

Questions for Reflection

The tax collectors and prostitutes, who were commonly known to be sinners, recognized God's righteousness in John the Baptist and Jesus, while the religious authorities (the elders) did not. Do you know of any comparable examples today?

Household Prayer: Morning

Almighty God, give me the mind of Christ: drive away any selfish ambition, fill me with compassion and love, and make me a humble servant, that all I do and all I desire may be pleasing to you; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Lord, in my accomplishments this day, make me humble; for my failures, give me consolation. In your steadfast love, uphold me, and for my sins, forgive me, that I may know your mercy and walk in the way of your salvation. Amen.

SOURCES

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