

The Liturgy of the Word
The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 27, 2020
Grace Episcopal Church

Opening

Officiant Christ has no body on earth now but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world; yours are the feet with which he walks to do good; yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world. *Theresa of Avila*

Prelude *Sonata No. 2, Allegro* J.S. Bach

Opening Acclamation and Collect for Purity

Celebrant Blessed be the one, Holy and Living God.

People **Glory to God forever and ever. Amen.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

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.

Song of Praise *A Song of Creation, part two* EOW 25

Glorify the Lord, all you works of the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

In the high vault of heaven, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Let the earth glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O mountains
and hills, and all that grows upon the earth, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O springs of water, seas, and streams, *
O whales and all that move in the waters.

All birds of the air, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Glorify the Lord, O beasts of the wild, *
and all you flocks and herds.

O men and women everywhere, glorify the Lord, *
sing praise and give honor for ever.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Lesson

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Reader A reading from prophet Ezekiel.

The word of the Lord came to me: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die. Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 25:1-8

Reader Let us say together this portion of Psalm 25

1 To you, O Lord, 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 Lord,
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 Lord, 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 Lord.

7 Gracious and upright is the Lord;
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

8 He guides the humble in doing right
and teaches his way to the lowly.

The Second Lesson

Philippians 2:1-13

Reader A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death -- even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Sing ye faithful, sing with gladness

Hymnal 492

The Gospel

Matthew 21:23-32

Reader A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

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

The Nicene Creed

BCP 358

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Anthem

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

Elizabeth Poston

The Prayers of the People

Intercessor:

Holy God, Creator of both heaven and earth, you have spread your abundance throughout the ends of the earth. We lift our prayers to you, O God.

You are the hope of all creation.

We pray for Donald, our president, the leaders of the nations, and all who make decisions as the peoples of the earth clamor for resources. Inspire us to do justice, preparing the way for your glorious reign. We lift our prayers to you, O God;

You are the hope of all creation.

Send your Spirit to disturb and challenge us, that we may wisely share the fruits of the earth, and pattern our common life in ways that honor your creation and promote sustainable communities and ecosystems. We lift our prayers to you, O God;

You are the hope of all creation.

Teach us to grieve with you, O Christ, the loss of all the beauty that is being killed, and give us the will to protect species in danger of extinction. May we embrace your charge to watch over and care for all the creatures of the earth. We lift our prayers to you, O God;

You are the hope of all creation.

For all who live in poverty, sickness, loneliness and grief, that you will wipe the tears from their faces. We pray especially for Steve, Judy, Bethann, Will, Breezie, Julie, Dwight, Angela, James and Barbara, Ann, Trevor, Emily, Ted, Deb, Michael, Chuck and Jason and their children, Tom, Jeanette, Jane, Bo and Mary Minor, Helen, Nancy, Charlotte, Tyler, Jeff, Rebecca, J.R., Marcia, Peggy, Jean, William, Timothy, Donald, Robert,

Cooper, Sally, Charles, Jonathan, Steven, John, Libby, Elaine, Jean, Barbara, Elizabeth, John, Joyce, Jim, Mary Ruth, and Ann;

We pray for Wil, Jake, Kevin, Tripp, Mike, Alexander, Russel, Logan, Jim, Sean, Evan, and all of our Armed Forces, here and abroad;

We pray for Bren who is deployed as a nurse in the pandemic.

We pray for Angela, who is with child.

We pray for all whose homes are in peril or uprooted because of climate change, for all displaced because of hurricanes, fires or other disasters.

We pray for all who remain on the front lines of this pandemic: for health care providers, those who grow and process food, staff grocery stores, provide transit, transport supplies, care for the young and the aged and those who are sick. We pray for all suffering from illness, those who have died, and all who grieve as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We lift our prayers to you, O God;

You are the hope of all creation.

We remember before you those who are dying and those who have died, Give us strength in your victory over death to grow into your way of love, which does not know despair but sows seeds of hope. We lift our prayers to you, O God;

You are the hope of all creation.

Officiant God of our salvation, we falter before the demands of your word and turn away from your call to life. Pour out your mercy on us as you showed mercy to your people of old, that we may turn from our sinfulness and walk the path of self-emptying love made known in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Merciful and sustaining God, we have sinned against you.

**We confess our lack of gratitude for the beauty and bounty of your creation:
teach us to see that your earth sustains us and all that lives.**

We confess that we have misused your earth: grant us amendment of life.

We confess that we have been intemperate in our appetites: strengthen us in self-control.

We confess that we have taken the abundance of your world for granted: make us urgent now for its protection. Forgive and renew us now through our Savior Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, with whom you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

The Blessing

Postlude

Worship Leaders

Officiants	The Rev. April Berends, The Rev. David Burman
Preacher	Keith Davis
Lectors	Keith Davis, The Rev. Glyn Melnyk
Intercessors	Cathy and Jamie Stone
Violinist	Brian Cook
Organist	Patrick Rice
Director of Music	David Long
Singers	Steven Hinkle, David Long, Elizabeth Schrock, Janelle Wagoner, Trevor Wagoner
Video	Richard Lanham, Janelle Wagoner

Announcements

Join Us for Online Worship at 9am & 10:45am Sundays

During this time of Social Distancing, we will continue to stream videos for Morning Prayer worship on our [Facebook](#) page and [website](#) at 9am and again at 10:45am. Bulletins for each week's service will be sent along with the Grace Notes weekend issue, and will be posted on the website alongside the video for the service. If you miss the 9am or 10:45am video streams, you can always go back and watch later.

Clergy Outdoor Office Hours

This week, the Rev David Burman will be in the courtyard from 1:00pm to 4:00pm today, Sunday, September 20th. The Rev. April Berends will hold office hours on Tuesday September 29th from 8:30am to 11:30am. Wear a mask, and stop by for conversation or a prayer. Thanks to all who have visited so far; the priests of Grace have enjoyed catching up with you. As always, you may email either of the priests (aberends@saygrace.net or dburman@saygrace.net) to set up a time for a socially-distanced conversation.

Blessing of the Animals, October 3rd

In order to maintain our tradition of observing the feast of St. Francis, Revs. April and David will be in the pavilion on Saturday, October 3rd from 9:45am-noon to bless your animal companions. This will not be a formal worship service, but rather an opportunity to stop by for a greeting and a blessing. We bless humans, too! Wear a mask, make sure your pets are leashed or in appropriate carriers, and keep as much distance as possible.

Sacred Ground Dialogues around Racial Healing

The Sacred Ground dialogue circle on racial healing meets Wednesdays at 7pm via Zoom. Sacred Ground focuses on issues of race and racism and the difficult, transformative conversations that we need to have around these issues. Sacred Ground sessions invite participants to understand the racial history of this country and the church in order to faithfully respond to the challenges around race that surround us today. Unfortunately, this group has reached capacity. Stay tuned for additional offering on racial justice and other topics.

Morning Prayer and Compline

All are invited to escape from the madness and rest your mind and soul via Morning Prayer on weekdays and Saturday at 9:00 a.m., and services of Compline at 8:00 p.m. each evening. We all need reminders of essential realities that transcend the medical and political context in which we find ourselves.

Here are the links for Daily Morning Prayer and Compline:

[**Weekday Morning Prayer**](#)

[**Weekday Compline**](#)

Community Care in Anxious Times

Grace check-in team leaders are continuing to contact parishioners via phone, text and/ or email. Please take a moment to pick up or write back to let them know if you're okay and/or if you need help, pastorally or physically. The leaders of these groups will be in close communication with our priests and our network of volunteers. If you are a new member of Grace and we do not have your information in the directory, please fill out the New Member form [here](#) and let us know if you would like to be added to a check-in group. If you have an urgent pastoral need, please call the parish office at (423)243-3250 and leave a message on the **main line**. We will be checking these messages regularly even if we aren't in the office.