

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10-11 October 2020

The SERVICE of HOLY COMMUNIONORGAN PRELUDE *“Trumpet Tune”* Jeremiah Clarke

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRAYER CONCERNS & THANKSGIVINGS

OPENING SENTENCE

Stand *Celebrant* Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
People **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

Celebrant 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.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION of SIN

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:8,9*

(Kneel) Most merciful God,

All: **we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*The priest offers Absolution.**Stand* A SONG of PRAISE*Magna et mirabilia*

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Refrain: **We sing the praises of your Name,
for you only are the Holy One.**

Cantor: O ruler of the universe, Lord God,
great deeds are they that you have done, *
surpassing human understanding.
Your ways are ways of righteousness and truth, *
O King of all the ages. *refrain*

Who can fail to do you homage, Lord,
and sing the praises of your Name? *
for you only are the holy One.

All nations will draw near and fall down before you, *
because your just and holy works have been revealed. *refrain*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.
Amen. *refrain*

The COLLECT of the DAY

Officiant God be with you.*All* **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

silence is held.

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, that we may continually be given to good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Isaiah 25: 6-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has

spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL **Psalm 23** *read responsively, observing the verse*

The Lord is my shepherd; *
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; *
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul; *
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his Name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; *
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; *
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

EPISTLE READING

Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

“Day by Day”

M. How

Stand GOSPEL READING

Matthew 22: 1-14

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ, according to St. Matthew.
Glory to you, O Christ.

✚ Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

The Gospel of Christ.
Praise to you, O Christ.

MEDITATION

Stand The NICENE CREED

Officiant: We believe in one God,
All: **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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.

Give to the departed ☩ eternal rest;
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others. *silence is held*

The Celebrant offers a concluding Collect.

THE CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

Celebrant: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give our thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Celebrant continues

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blest is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues.

Memorial Acclamation:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

At the Fraction

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. 2x
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

The PRAYERS of the PEOPLE - Form III

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Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for Justin the Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael our Presiding Bishop;
 Kevin our Bishop and all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for Donald the President; Thomas our Governor, Sarah our Mayor and all
 who govern and hold authority in the nations and communities of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on _____ and all who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

The LORD'S PRAYER

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Celebrant: Eternal God, heavenly Father,

All: **you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.**

Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING and DISMISSAL

response: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE STUDY - "Zooming" through the Bible" has moved to Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm. Join us one day, or each week as your schedule allows. This week we continue with the book of Job in the Old Testament. How does a person of faith deal with calamity? A Zoom invitation is sent to the Parish e-list each week.

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA - Thank to all who helped prepare, set up, serve and clean up our annual fund-raiser.

HARVEST HAM DINNER - Tuesday, October 20th with take-outs only. We need your help in selling tickets before hand so we know how much food to order and prepare. See Sue Erb or Zach Wyckoff for info and tickets. Adults \$12; Children (under 10) \$8.

TAKE A HIKE - Sunday afternoon, Fr. Ed will lead any who wish to join him to Columcille the PA "Megalith Park" south of Stroudsburg. trails through the woods, a labyrinth, a stone 'beehive' chapel, plus a 'stand' of megaliths (boulders). Meet at the Church at noon. Back whenever we want to. Bring a mask, of course, a snack or two and a bottle of water, or thermos of (tea?)

Sunday, October 25th, we'll hike around Prompton Lake. Let Fr. Ed know if you'd like to join him on either of these outings. Let us revel in the beauty of God's Creation.

IN MEMORIA - The annual Hallowe'en Organ Concert will be transformed into a 'service' of memorial for the now 230 Thousand who have died in the US due to Covid-19. A 'live' Zoom will be broadcast on All Saints' Day, Sunday, November 1st at 3:00pm.

The PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

For those who need God's comfort and care: Richelle Stephens; Addison; Walter Barbe; George Varites; Rob O'Connor; those affected by wildfires and hurricanes.

Thanksgiving for the life of Theresa Hunt.

Celebrating with the Cliff family for the marriage of Norah and David.

For those celebrating birthdays this week: Are we missing anyone?

The SHARING of HOLY COMMUNION

After the Blessing, those who wish to remain to receive the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood are welcome to remain.

- + MASKS - must remain in place throughout the celebration, except when individuals partake of the wafer and wine.
- + SOCIAL DISTANCING of SIX FEET - Please observe distancing while proceeding to receive the elements. Remember that "Slow, Meditative and Prayerful Solemnity" are hallmarks of the Spiritual Life, especially in approaching the Divine Presence in the Sacrament.
- + INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS - are provided on separate trays. Consecrated wafers are provided in paper containers. Consume the wafer, then dispose the paper container in the basket provided. Then proceed to the right for individual disposable cups of consecrated (golden) wine and (purple) grape juice. Take a cup and when consumed, place the empty cup in the basket provided.
- + RETURN - to your seats when finished for the concluding Prayer.

GRACE CHURCH
Pentecost 17 - Proper 23-A (RCL)

Honesdale, PA
11-12 October 2020

+ 2 +

Isaiah 25: 1-9
Psalm 23
Philippians 4: 1-9
Matthew 22: 1-14

+ + +

It seems today to be all about feasting.

The Church at Caesarea Philippi rejoicing, dancing, singing;

the mountain celebration with the prophet Isaiah,
fine wine flowing and rich food laid out;
in the Psalm a warm stew beside the fireplace,
an overflowing cup after a days hike through the valley;
and finally a wedding banquet with Jesus.

All seems wonderful and joyous.

Except.

Isaiah is preaching hope amidst death;

The Psalmist sits with his enemies;
we're not certain what's happening in Caesarea Philippi,
that Paul tells them to stop it and rejoice in God's blessings.

And a wedding gone sour.

The wedding guest list had to be changed.

"How many people can we invite?"

"We were going to wait until the house was done

and we could have a large celebration out in our yard.

But we want to make sure Mom will still be around."

So a 125 guests were reduced to 25 family members in the Church,

and 40 others watching on a projector screen in the Parish Hall.

Even our back-packer in Psalm 23 had his problems -

the hiker's enemies are sitting there, too.

What happens when their cups runneth over?

A duel in the alley-way,

or they begin to laugh forgetting why they were enemies
ending the night with Karaoke songs and claps on the back,

And the problem with Isaiah's prophecy of hope

is that the mountain of blessing is in the midst of death:

words of hope we read in our Burial Services,

where we also are promised that God will wipe away all tears.

Isaiah, let me recall to you, says that

God will destroy the shroud of death that covers all people;
death will be swallowed up forever.

I quoted a few weeks ago the Prayer Book saying,

"In the midst of life we are in death,"

and yet even we of faith may say

"In the face of death we have eternal life."

Maybe in today's context, we might say,

“In the midst of celebration, there is more to the story.”

There is an unusual balance in the reading of the Psalms.

When Jesus is hanging on the Cross, he recites Psalm 22:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me...
All who see me laugh me to scorn;”

with words echoed by the people on the street,

“He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; *
let him rescue him, if he delights in him.”

And after these words of Psalm 22, is our beloved Psalm 23.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.”

A balance between enemies and death in one Psalm

and enemies and feasting together in the next.

Back to our wedding guests:

maybe it is not a bad thing for guest lists to be cut short.

But do as I preach, not as we did.

True confession, Sue and I had over 300 at our wedding,

we invited the parish, as I was their beloved Organist,

my Choir, and college friends who just wanted to witness

that Sue was actually going to accept me for the rest of her life -

“ ’til death do us part.”

But honestly, think of how many thousands upon thousands of dollars
are spent needlessly on our celebrations.

When I was still a parish organist, one wedding we did

had 1,000 attending the reception -

the flowers at the reception must have cost \$2,000!

And there were Godiva chocolates at each of the 1,000 seats,

and the Scotch on the bar (not that I know) was Chevas Regal!

Though the joy was I got to play our brand new organ

with a professional brass quartet,

as the bride was a French Horn major at Michigan State,

and her mother one of the leaders of our organ committee.

You see, even I struggle with celebrations

Mother Barbara Crafton reflected on today's Gospel:

I don't always know what [Jesus] thinks...

The people in the story Jesus tells of the wedding feast are as clueless as I am. Their priorities and obsessions get in their way as much as mine get in my way. They don't know what's expected of them, like the one who came to the wedding in his jogging suit, and so they take a guess and get it all wrong. This guy's fashion mistake had really bad consequences, but most of our mistakes get us into some kind of trouble, and some of it pretty serious. We raise plenty of Hell right here, without anyone needing to toss us anywhere fiery.

from *The Geranium Farm*, 2005

The question we need to ask ourselves is who am I in the story?
The host of the celebration who requires proper attire?
The ones watching from the street?
Those who refused to come?
Why would someone refuse to come to the celebration when invited?
And where are the bride and the groom in all of this?
And the priest? What is she thinking?

I'm with the guy in the jogging suit.
Oops!
I drive down the road, smoking my pipe in the car,
 get to the store, head across the parking lot,
 then turn back.
I've forgotten my nifty Tommy Copper mask – again!

There is a joy of living and working in a small town.
And a comfort in walking into the hospital
 with the wedding feast gate-keeper checking my temperature,
 and saying “How are you today, Fr. Ed?”
It's good to know my temperature is a standard 98.6,
 that Sarah knows me and welcomes me,
 and starts a conversation - even with masks on.

The guy in the Gospel didn't know the protocol.
Heck, he was just standing outside on the sidewalk
 and was told to come on in.
He didn't have time to walk back to his camel to get his head-dress.
And sadly he is punished for eternity, sent to a fiery death.

While we may be fairly safe up here in Wayne County,
 I am particularly concerned about sending messages.
We maintain the Bishop's protocols for administering Communion -
 but we are able to offer the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood
A Church nearby (with a larger parish than we have)
 require a 'reservation' an RSVP for the feast.
That is not a new thing, though as Episcopalians, the few the chosen,
 there's not much concern about a large gathering.
But as I said,
 it's not a new thing to make a dinner reservation for Communion
I grew up in New England,
 and our Church had souvenirs for their centennial -
 pewter coins which you were given if you came to worship
 the previous week, made your confession,
 and in a sense, confirmed your reservation for the feast.

We don't ever know, truth be told, what's going on -
in the Gospel stories, nor in life, for that matter.

What does this all mean?

Mother Crafton quotes the Gospel, and comments,

*Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot,
and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* Matthew 22:13

Oh, stop it, for heaven's sake [she says] - - if Jesus makes
one more offhanded remark about throwing people into
the fires of hell, I'm tossing my WWJD bracelet.

Actually, I don't *have* a WWJD bracelet. I so seldom know
What Jesus Would Do, and don't wish to insult him by
assuming he'll rubber-stamp whatever action I might be
leaning toward...

I don't always know what he thinks. He has surprised me
too many times for me to assume anything...

There are these days, just way too many questions about what is right,
what is necessary, and what is just plain ridiculous.

Let's be honest.

Everyone thinks they know what's what.

But with Jesus, and God, we should be right there with Mother Crafton.

We walk through a valley of the shadow of death.

Even when we are not in a pandemic, even in 'normal' times.

And yet at the end of the evening,
those of us of faith who struggle with what God is speaking to us,
those who carry the burden of the day,
can trust that God is waiting with the door open,
a fire burning on the hearth,
and a welcomed and welcoming feast prepared.

We may not know why we have been given an invitation -

Why would God invite me in?

But we do know as people of faith,

that God is standing there at the doorway to salvation.

And the prophet proclaims that

On God's mountain, the pall of death is pulled away -
a rich feast is waiting.

The challenge, I say, is that we must climb that mountain,
and not try to take the easy way around.

Take all these words as you will, and meditate on them, and

"Let the words of my mouth,
and the meditations of our hearts,
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, our God and our Salvation."

Psalm 19:14, adapted

AMEN.