

The LAST Sunday in PENTECOST, 2020
CELEBRATION of THANKSGIVING
Virtual Grace

Organ Prelude -

“Psalm 65”

Alec Rowley

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hello and welcome to “Virtual Grace”
from Grace Episcopal Church in Honesdale, PA,
as this week we celebrate as we are able the feast day of Thanksgiving.

I’m Fr. Ed, the rector of our parish.
We are sad to announce that for the time being, we are back to ‘lock-down.’
It was a joy for several months to be able to gather in person
and share in Holy Communion.
But as the numbers of Covid positives has risen in this second wave,
our doors are again closed.
And yet, we are glad to continue to offer these broadcasts of “Virtual Grace.”
So many of you have followed us in this way since March,
for which we give thanks.

Similarly, your continued donations to the ministry and mission
of Grace Church in these turbulent times, have been deeply appreciated.
We know so many people are struggling - financially, socially, personally,
especially as we enter the holiday season.
It our mission to aid any and everyone in whatever way we can,
to spread the Good News of Salvation
in whatever situation someone may find themselves.
If you are able to contribute to our ministry, we appreciate your help,
and your prayers.
And if you know of anyone who we should reach out to,
please do not hesitate to call me.

If you, or anyone you know, are in any pastoral need at all, call me, 24/7.
I am more than ready to come to your spiritual aid and visit you -
sadly, still with a mask!

Now, let us join our hearts and souls in praise to God,
knowing that our salvation lies only in our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
in this life and in the world to come.

Join with me, as you are able, in offering God praise with the canticle *Venite*, found in the Book of Common Prayer on page 82

INVITATORY PSALM

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God, *
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it, *
and his hands have molded the dry land.
Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

Let us pray:

Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

CONFESSION & ASSURANCE of PARDON

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14, 16

... as we confess our sins against God and our fellow sisters and brothers.

a moment of silence for reflection

Most merciful God, 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.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins through our savior Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, strengthen us in all goodness, ✚ and keep us in eternal life. Amen.

FIRST READING

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Here ends the Reading.

GRADUAL

from Psalm 65

- 5 Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness,
O God of our salvation, *
 O Hope of all the ends of the earth and of the seas that are far away.
- 6 You make fast the mountains by your power; *
 they are girded about with might.
- 7 You still the roaring of the seas, *
 the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.
- 8 Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble
at your marvelous signs;
 you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.
- 9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; *
 the river of God is full of water.
- 10 You prepare the grain, *
 for so you provide for the earth.
- 11 You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; *
 with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.
- 12 You crown the year with your goodness, *
 and your paths overflow with plenty.
- 13 May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, *
 and the hills be clothed with joy.
- 14 May the meadows cover themselves with flocks,
and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; *
 let them shout for joy and sing.

SECOND READING

Luke 17: 11-19

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Here ends the Reading.

MEDITATION

There is no need to enumerate why so many of us - all of us - are in the midst of despair today. A quarter of a million people just in America who had died since March. I have no idea about the rest of the world. Turmoil and insurrection in many countries throughout the earth. And today, I think of families who, I pray even with all my heart, are going to stay separated these holidays. Including in this is the sadness of not seeing and hugging grandchildren.

And while we have many complaints, even anger admittedly, at many things happening around us, we must be charitable Christian folk and complain about things, not about people. It is a hard thing to say. Someone asked me one time if I swear. Of course I do. When I hit my thumb with the hammer, words come out of my mouth that a priest should not be heard saying! It's not the hammer's fault, nor the fault of the company that forged that hammer.

In this day, we have to count our blessings, we must, like the Samaritan in today's Gospel, fall down in the dirt road on which we travel and offer praise at the feet of Jesus. A Samaritan, one ostracized by society, and leper to boot! He has lost his social standing, if he had any, lost all of his ability for family celebrations, and even being healed of his disease will still have to rebuild his life, his career, his family, his home. Yet, he falls down in the dirt and offers Jesus thanks and praise.

And we must do the same.

For what in these days are you thankful? What is around and in you to celebrate?

Nine months in and Sue has not killed me. Though there is a lot of muttering under the breath, and a few words which no priest nor his

wife of 40 years should be heard saying. But we are human, and we've survived 40 years. And for that I am grateful. We are experimenting with what retirement will be like.

I am grateful for Zoom, of all things. Our grandkids don't see us quite as often as they should, and over the holidays, we'll work on that. Some of our folk have been Zooming Bible Study - we've not had Bible Study at Grace Church in the 12 years I've been here! And you may not know it, but I've been teaching Diocesan trainings these past months on that format. And who knew that Sue and I (with Philip's great help) would be able to do a weekly worship service virtually? Not me! When Sue came up with the idea on a Friday morning to do our first for that first Sunday, I went into a panic, ran to my den, and a few hours later came downstairs and said, "OK, I think I know what I can do for a service." And how many 'hits' did we have for the annual Hallowe'en organ concert? Almost 200! We never get 200 people to come for my organ concerts!

That's just a few things. Then there are the 175 people that we know will receive a Thanksgiving Dinner this year (by take-out, sadly, not "Thanksgiving Together" as our program is called). Each week between 50 and 60 bags of food and supplies are handed out. Sue and I never know when we open our front door each day to get the mail what packages of donations we'll find. The Thanksgiving Together program has been blessed this year with over \$10,000, including grants which have paid for new stoves and a new refrigerator.

On a personal note - and this is where I invite you to take some time in quiet reflection - I'm thankful for several months when my sister, brother-in-law and I could spend time digging into our ancestors.

I am right here today excited that loved ones are to return home this week from trying weeks and months at rehabilitation. And yes, I am grateful that for a couple of months we have been able to offer the Blessed Sacrament to those who were comfortable to come into our Church. Years ago, I would have been disappointed to have 20 people at the late service. This fall I was overjoyed to have 20 people gather together, not counting all those who watch “Virtual Grace” with their loved ones in their den or living room. As I said last week, we will celebrate Christmas and sing carols, but it may be with your bunny pajamas in your living room with cocoa and sugar cookies instead of bread and wine.

Maria Von Trapp sang, “When the dog bites, when the bee stings, when I feel so sad, I simply remember my favorite things and then I don’t feel so sad.” My song today is not my favorite things - well, it is, placing Christmas lights in the rectory windows this past week as the Central Park decorations are put up, smelling turkey in the parish hall...

Oh, and cranberry relish ready to be made, and the seven batches of fruitcake... just some of my favorite holiday things. But my song is, “Now thank we all our God.” Oh, and I’m practicing the organ, because I’m sending you all a Christmas Eve carol sing! OK, you don’t have to sing, but you can hear the Christmas carols.

Words I give my Scouts, if you’ve not believed that God has given you a voice to sing, sing twice as loud and get even with Him! God has a sense of humor. Praise be!

Let us offer our words of faith using the Apostles' Creed.

The CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection ☩ of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS

A General Thanksgiving, BCP p. 8

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us.

We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side. We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.

Let us now pray together in the words which Christ himself taught us, saying:
Our Father...

BLESSING

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

Ephesians 1:17-19

The Lord bless you and keep you
The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift his countenance upon you, and give you peace.
Amen.

Organ Postlude - “*Nun danke alle Gott*” Martin Rinckhart/Johann Cruger

22 November 2020
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THANKSGIVING

22 November 2020