



Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity Ordinary Time

1928 BCP Morning Prayer

**Sunday, October 26, 2025 + 10 AM
St. John's Chapel, Del Monte**

Welcome to St. John's Chapel!

We are glad that you are worshipping with us this morning and pray that your experience here is a blessing to you. If you are a visitor, please fill out a Connection Card (pew rack) and place it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher. Let this bulletin be your guide through the service; it includes everything you need.

***We are in Ordinary Time** and the liturgical color for this part of the year is green. Green really fits this season because it is all about growth in the Spirit and being nurtured. It is the kind of growth and nurturing that creates abundant fruit. In fact, in St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians, Paul tells us that if we welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, then the Spirit will produce fruit in us. "The fruit of the Spirit," he says, "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22–23). Through baptism, these virtues, these gifts of the Spirit, are planted in our soul. It is during this season of Ordinary Time that we work on cultivating the gifts of the Spirit.*

Please stay for coffee in the Parish Hall after the service.

Throughout the service the People read the words in bold italics.

PRELUDE

All stand as able

HYMN 285 1st Tune

The God of Abraham praise (v.1-3)

With vigor; may be sung in unison

1 The God of A - braham praise, Who reigns en - throned a - bove;
2 He by him - self hath sworn: I on his oath de - pend;
3 There dwells the Lord, our King, The Lord, our Right - eous - ness,

An - cient of ev - er - last - ing days, And God of love;
I shall, on ea - gle - wings up - borne, To heav'n as - cend:
Tri - umph - ant o'er the world and sin, The Prince of Peace;

To him up - lift your voice, At whose su - preme com - mand
I shall be - hold his face, I shall his power a - dore,
On Si - on's sa - cred height His king - dom he main - tains,

From earth we rise, and seek the joys At his right hand.
And sing the won - ders of his grace For ev - er - more.
And, glo - rious with his saints in light, For ev - er reigns. A-men.

OPENING SENTENCES

The people standing as able. The Officiant shall begin the Morning Prayer by reading the following

The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

SEASONAL SENTENCES: Trinity

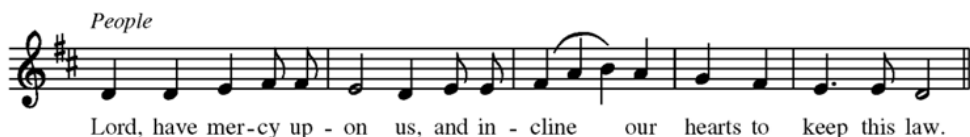
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Rev. 4:8

All kneeling as able, the Officiant says

THE DECALOGUE

GOD spake these words, and said: I am the LORD thy God; Thou shalt have none other gods but me.



Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them;

People sing response

Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy God in vain;

People sing response

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.

People sing response

Honour thy father and thy mother;

People sing response

Thou shalt do no murder.

People sing response

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

People sing response

Thou shalt not steal.

People sing response

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

People sing response

Thou shalt not covet.

After the 10th Commandment



Lord, have mer - cy up - on us, and write all these thy laws in our



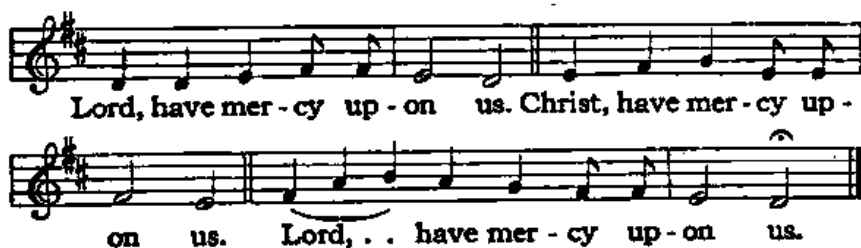
hearts, we be - seech thee.

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two

commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

KYRIE



Then the Officiant says

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that, through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

GENERAL CONFESSION

Then the Officiant shall say

Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

To be said by the whole congregation, all kneeling

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own

hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind In Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

People kneeling as able, the Officiant says

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant us absolution and remission of all our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

All standing as able

Officiant O Lord open thou our lips.

People *And our mouths shall show forth thy praise.*

Officiant Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

People *As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Officiant Praise ye the Lord.

People *The Lord's name be praised.*

VENITE, EXULTEMUS DOMINO

Standing, sung or said by all together



O come, let us sing unto the Lord; * let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; * and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God; * and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are all the corners of the earth; * and the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it; * and his hands prepared the dry land.

O come, let us worship and fall down, * and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is the Lord our God; * and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; * let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; * and with righteousness to judge the world, and the peoples with his truth.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, * world without end. Amen

Standing as able. Then shall follow a Portion of the Psalms. And at the end of the Psalm, shall be sung or said the Gloria Patri.

PSALM 34:1-8 *Benedicam Dominum*

Reader: We will read Psalm 34 responsively by the whole verse.

1 I will alway give thanks unto the Lord; * his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; * the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O praise the Lord with me, * and let us magnify his Name together.

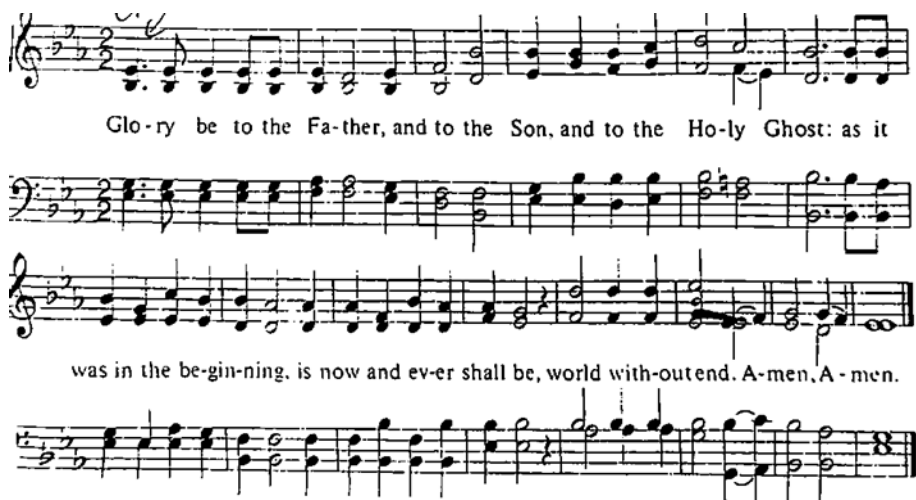
4 I sought the Lord, and he heard me; * yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.

5 They had an eye unto him, and were lightened; * and their faces were not ashamed.

6 Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him; * yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him, * and delivereth them.

8 O taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is: * blessed is the man that trusteth in him.



The people sit

FIRST LESSON: Jeremiah 30:12-22

Reader: A reading from the 30th chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, beginning at the 12th verse.

For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable,
and thy wound is grievous.

There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest
be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.

All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee
not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an
enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for
the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins
were increased.

Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is
incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity:
because thy sins were increased, I have done these
things unto thee.

Therefore all they that devour thee shall be
devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of

them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.

For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.

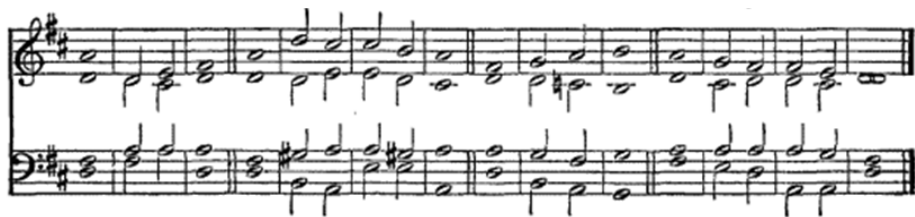
And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.

And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Reader: Here endeth the First Lesson.

Standing as able, sung or said by all together

BENEDICTUS ES, DOMINE



Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers:*
praised and exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou for the Name of thy Majesty:*
praised and exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou in the temple of thy holiness:*
praised and exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou that beholdest the depths, and
dwellest between the Cherubim: * praised and
exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou on the glorious throne of thy
kingdom: * praised and exalted above all for ever.

Blessed art thou in the firmament of heaven: *
praised and exalted above all for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the
Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be, * world without end. Amen.

The people sit

SECOND LESSON: Titus 2

Reader: A reading from the 2nd chapter of the
book of Titus, beginning at the 1st verse.

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and

godly, in this present world;
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious
appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus
Christ;

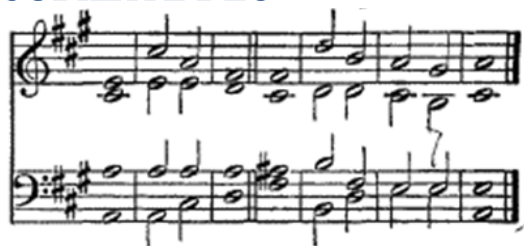
Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us
from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar
people, zealous of good works.

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with
all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Reader: Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Standing as able, sung or said by all together

JUBILATE DEO



Be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands; * serve the Lord
with gladness and come before his presence with a
song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God; it is he that
hath made us and not we ourselves; * we are his
people and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving
and into his courts with praise; * be thankful unto
him and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious; his mercy is everlasting; *
and his truth endureth from generation to
generation

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, * world without end. Amen.

The people sit

THE GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 18:7-20

Reader A reading from the 18th chapter of Matthew, beginning at the 7th verse.

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Reader Here endeth the Gospel Lesson.

All standing as able

HYMN 694 *God be in my head*

Hymnal 1982

God be in my head, and in my un - der - stand - ing;

The first line of the hymn is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: "God be in my head, and in my un - der - stand - ing;"

God be in mine eyes, and in my look - ing;

The second line of the hymn continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "God be in mine eyes, and in my look - ing;"

God be in my mouth, and in my speak - ing;

The third line of the hymn continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "God be in my mouth, and in my speak - ing;"

God be in my heart, and in my think - ing;

The fourth line of the hymn continues the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "God be in my heart, and in my think - ing;"

God be at mine end, and at my de - part - ing.

The fifth line of the hymn concludes the melody and bass line. The lyrics are: "God be at mine end, and at my de - part - ing."

The people sit

SERMON

All stand as able and say together

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints: The Forgiveness of sins: The Resurrection of the body: And the Life everlasting. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS *Please be seated*

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthday Prayer

*Watch over your **child/children**, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their heart may your peace which passes all understanding abide all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Anniversary Prayer

God of peace, your love is generous and reaches out to hold us all in your embrace. We pray now for the couple(s) before us, committed to each other in love. Fill their hearts with tenderness. Stay with them as they travel through good times, through trouble, or through change. Bless their home, their partings, and their meetings. Make them worthy of each other's best and tender with each other's dreams. May they always trust in your love. Amen.

Prayer for Safe Travel

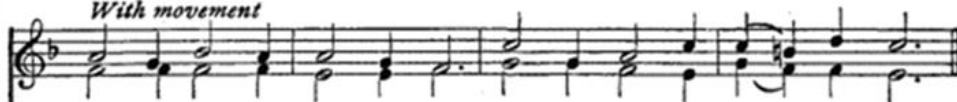
Living God, the creator of all there is and whose presence we find wherever we go: preserve those who travel; surround them with your loving care; guard them from all that may harm them: and bring them in safety and joy to their journey's end. Amen.

OFFERTORY

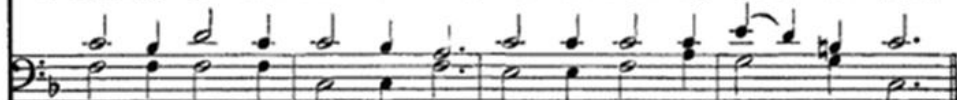
Officiant Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

HYMN 480 (v. 1 & 2) *Holy offerings, rich and rare*
Sung while seated

With movement



1 Ho - ly of - f'ings, rich and rare, Of - fer - ings of praise and prayer,
2 Hom-age of each hum - ble heart, Ere we from thy house de - part;



Pur - er life and pur - pose high, Clasp - ed hands, up - lift - ed eye,
Wor - ship fer - vent, deep and high, Ad - o - ra - tion, ec - sta - sy;



Low - ly acts of ad - o - ra - tion To the God of
All that child - like love can ren - der Of de - vo - tion



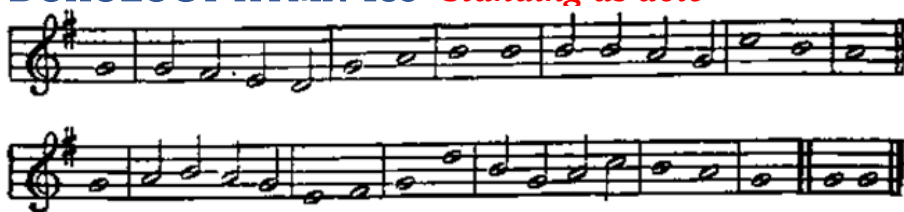
our sal - va - tion; On his al - tar laid, we leave them:
true and ten - der; On thine al - tar laid, we leave them:



Christ, pre - sent them! God, re - ceive them!
Christ, pre - sent them! God, re - ceive them! A - men.



DOXOLOGY HYMN 139 *Standing as able*



PRAISE God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

AMERICA HYMN 141, v. 4



4 Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King. Amen.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All standing as able, the Officiant takes the alms basin, stands in front of the altar, lifting the alms basin says

Officiant All things come of thee, O Lord, and of
thine own have we given thee.

After which the people kneeling, the Officiant says

Officiant The Lord be with you.
Answer *And with thy spirit.*

Officiant Let us pray.

All kneeling as able, all pray together

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

SUFFRAGES

Officiant O Lord show thy mercy upon us.

Answer And grant us thy salvation.

Officiant O God, make clean our hearts within us.

Answer And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

COLLECTS AND PRAYERS

Collect for the Day

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of

our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

A Collect for Grace

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings, being ordered by thy governance, may be righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

*A Prayer for The President of the United States,
and all in Civil Authority*

O Lord, our heavenly Father, the high and mighty Ruler of the universe, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favour to behold and bless thy servant THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, and all others in authority; and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way. Endue them plenteously with heavenly gifts; grant them in health and prosperity long to live; and finally, after this life, to attain everlasting joy and felicity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

A Prayer for the Clergy and People

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; Send down upon our Bishops, and other Clergy, and upon the Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and, that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for all Conditions of Men

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into Morning Prayer the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who, are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate;

We pray especially for: Whitney, David and Jane, Sonny and Diana, Frank and A.J., Jill, Brighten, Randy, John S., Luke, Mackenzie's family and friends, Beverly, Gloria, Gail, Dan and Caitlin and Cassidy, Lila, Bill B., Geoffrey and Amy, Art and

Debbie, Danny, Logan, Nancy, Mousy and family, Christine and family, Connie, Jeremy, Carl, Zane, Bethany and family, Pete T., Bill S., Joanne, Mara Stephanie, Fr. Vincent Raj, Rocco, Claudette, Christina, Rori and Shane, Art C., Dean and Monica, James, Ron, Eva, Jane B., Peter, and all those whom we name in our hearts.

And for those in military service: Houessou Jonas, The Brown family, Alex Murray, The Birkelbach family, Walid Abou Chaar, Fouad El Hayek, Elizabeth Keller, Christine Puglia, The Riley family, The Logan Behr family, The Bingham family, The Elliot family, The Hollingsworth family, Zack and Ebony LeMaster, The O'Donnell family, and The Schaeffer family.

That it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A General Thanksgiving

All pray together

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of

grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

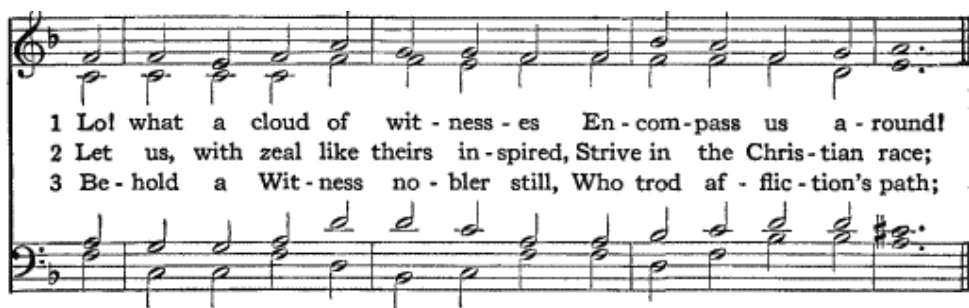
A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

The Officiant says

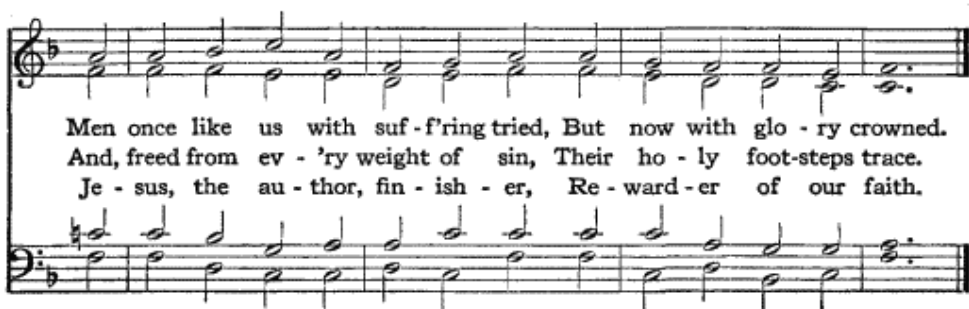
Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

HYMN 569 *Lo! what a cloud of witnesses*

Standing as able



1 Lo! what a cloud of wit - ness - es En - com - pass us a - round!
2 Let us, with zeal like theirs in - spired, Strive in the Chris - tian race;
3 Be - hold a Wit - ness no - bler still, Who trod af - flic - tion's path;



Men once like us with suf - f'ring tried, But now with glo - ry crowned.
And, freed from ev - 'ry weight of sin, Their ho - ly foot - steps trace.
Je - sus, the au - thor, fin - ish - er, Re - ward - er of our faith.

4 He, for the joy before him set,
And moved by pitying love,
Endured the cross, despised the shame,
And now he reigns above.

5 Thither, forgetting things behind,
Press we to God's right hand;
There, with the Saviour and his saints,
Triumphantly to stand.

DISMISSAL

Officiant Let us go forth into the world rejoicing
in the power of the Spirit.

People ***Thanks be to God.***

POSTLUDE

+ + + + +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Serving Today

Officiant: Carl Patience

Acolyte: Art Brost

Lay Reader: Jean Givetz

Usher: Chibby Ogbuka

Upcoming

- **Saturday, November 1, Diocesan Convention**
- **All Saints' Sunday, November 2, Holy Communion at 10 AM**
- **Sunday, November 9, Holy Communion at 10 AM**

Pastoral Emergency? Please call the church office (831) 375-4463, or to get in touch with Fr. Rick call (336) 613-2829.

The bulletins are completely underwritten by a private donation.

Staff

Priest-in-Charge: The Very Rev. Dr. Richard Miles

Organist: Mary Clare Martin

Parish Administrator: Cynthia Brown

Bookkeeper: Brieanne Goldberg

Sexton: Jose Martinez

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Senior Warden: Geoffrey Holland

Junior Warden: Art Brost

Treasurer: Monica Nathan

Clerk: Elizabeth Barratt

Jean Givetz
Amy Holland
Chibby Ogbuka
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Ministry Directors

Director of Readers: Monica Nathan

Director of Ushers: Chibby Ogbuka

Director of Acolytes: Art Brost

Altar Guild: Alice Bowhay, Jean Givetz, Gail

Strandberg, Marti Myszak, and Margee Bennett

Weddings: Margee Bennett and Cynthia Brown

Historians/Archivists: Richard & Elizabeth Barratt

The Nicene Creed, Week 4 of 8

To commemorate the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea (May-August 325), the Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter, bishop of Wisconsin, has written a series of reflections on the Nicene Creed and its relevance for contemporary Episcopalians. Over the coming weeks, we'll share his teachings, written mostly in a question-and-answer format.

Isn't one's faith about one's relationship with the living God and with God's children? Can't we say, "Love God and love your neighbor," and leave it at that?

That is indeed Jesus' summary of the law, and that is no small thing. However, in his context (the time's tradition and teachings), Jesus had received a great deal about the nature and purposes of God as a son of Israel. While there was no written creed as such, Jesus was part of a

people who held certain ideas, i.e., doctrines, about God and humanity. As a faithful Jew, he would have recited the Sh'ma found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

There is no sufficient knowledge of God without some sort of creed. 'God' is a meaningless word until it is given meaning. To say, "Just love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul" only begs the questions, "Who, or what, is this 'God' I am to love, and what does it mean to love this 'God'?" As for loving neighbors, who counts as my neighbor? Do strangers count? What about enemies? And why *should* I love them? And in what way, to what extent, and at what cost? Why is it so hard to do? Does it matter ultimately? Is there any divine reckoning for our failure and refusal to love? What does it mean to be human? And what kind of world do we live in?

Any answers to these questions are not obvious. That they seem obvious to many of us is because our imaginations have already been formed in a society shaped by the vision of Christianity reflected in the Nicene Creed, even if we have mostly forgotten the source of that shaping. And any answer to these questions takes us into the realm of belief and doctrine. The Creed is the basic Christian foundation for answering them. One might prefer other answers or make up one's own, but one cannot talk about "god," "love," "creation," or "human beings" without some sort of belief system, i.e., a creed.

It is inadequate to appeal to a simplistic pietism, whether in its more conservative or more liberal versions, that says, “Don’t bother me with doctrine, just give me Jesus.” We have no direct access to Jesus other than through the Gospels, which are heavily influenced by the interpretation (doctrine) of who Jesus is and why He matters. The Creed is the Christian guide to understanding the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in light of Jesus. It affirms that, while God will always remain beyond our understanding, when we look at Jesus, we see God. And that God has so loved humanity as to enter into our physical reality with our rebellion, our sin, our brokenness, our unlove, and untruth to deliver us.

Stay tuned for next week’s installment!

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