

Be dressed for action and
have your lamps lit



The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

August 7, 2022

St. Matthew's Episcopal Cathedral

Prelude

Opening Hymn

#636 "How firm a foundation"

Gathering

The Lord is in his holy temple;

Let all the earth keep silence before him.

–Habakkuk 2:20

He raises the poor from the dust,

He lifts the needy from the ash heap.

He makes them sit with nobles,

And inherit a seat of honor;

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,

And He set the world on them.

–1 Samuel 2:8

Scripture

We sit.

Like a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night,

may the holy scriptures guide us

that we may hear your word with clarity and hope.

The word of the Lord endures for ever.

First Reading

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more! Bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation— I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove your evil deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: If your sins are like scarlet, will they become like snow? If they are red like crimson, will they become like wool? If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land, but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Word of God, word of strength.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm

50:1-8,23-24

The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken; *

he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty, *

God reveals himself in glory.

Our God will come and will not keep silence; *

before him there is a consuming flame, and round about him a raging storm.

He calls the heavens and the earth from above *

to witness the judgment of his people.

“Gather before me my loyal followers, *

those who have made a covenant with me and sealed it with sacrifice.”

Let the heavens declare the rightness of his cause; *

for God himself is judge.

Hear, O my people, and I will speak: “O Israel, I will bear witness against you; *

for I am God, your God.

I do not accuse you because of your sacrifices; *

your offerings are always before me.

Consider this well, you who forget God, *

Lest I rend you and there be none to deliver you.

Whoever offers me the sacrifice of thanksgiving honors me; *

but to those who keep in my way will I show the salvation of God.”

Second Reading

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith, with Sarah’s involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.” All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Word of God, word of strength.

Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn

#692 “I heard the voice of Jesus”

The Gospel

Luke 12:32-40

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night or near dawn and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. “But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Sermon

The Very Rev. Brian K. Gross

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God,

who called forth the world by his word

who called forth a nation through the Red Sea

who called forth the prophets and martyrs into history

who calls us forth to live in faith.

We believe in Jesus,

who came to set the world aflame

who came to us with burning faith

who came to heal in the temples and the synagogues

who came to accept baptism of suffering

who came again from the suffering, living anew

who comes again, a model for humble faith.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

who brings us together for the great feast

who brings first the poor, the crippled, and the blind

who brings us to the city God has prepared for us

who brings us together

who first brought us faith.

We believe that we will be healed of our fractures and fissures.

We believe that we will be set free from the fallenness of this world.

We believe that God has more planned for us.

We believe that we will be united in God’s blessing for all time.

We believe that even when our belief stumbles upon the stones of doubt,

God restores our faith. Amen.

Prayers

God of blessing, you fling the stars into the heavens and show us more blessings than we can count, and you hear our prayers.

We pray for your world, wounded and scarred: heal earth's body, and lead us to care.

We pray for your church, divided and distressed: unite us in mission, and grow us in love.

We pray for the lost, the forgotten, the lonely: gather them in and help us shelter them.

We pray for the addicted: save them and strengthen them.

We pray for those who have no hope: give them faith in you.

We pray for the greedy: make them generous.

We pray for the poor: sustain them and give them hope.

We pray for all those whose burdens we carry in our hearts, and offer them up to you, especially __: heal, comfort, and guide them, make them whole.

We commit ourselves to building a faith on the foundations of hope, forgiveness, and love.

When we pursue violence rather than understanding,
help us to let go of the stones of anger and rage.

When we choose religious and nationalistic prejudice rather than compassion,
help us to let go of the stones of hardened hearts.

When we would strike out in physical or emotional violence rather than do the work of healing,
help us to let go of the stones of fear.

When we prefer to live as enemies rather than work together for the well-being of the human family,
help us to let go of the stones of aggression.

When we opt to give into cynicism and despair rather than embrace the truth of our goodness,
help us to let go of the stones of self-contempt.

When we might allow the work of justice and peacemaking to be done by others rather than to engage in it ourselves,
help us to let go of the stones of inertia.

When we turn away our sight from the needs of those in our midst rather than respond as we are able,
help us to let go of the stones of blindness.

Let us pray together:

O Tender God, in the journey that is before us these stones weigh our spirits down. Grant that we be open to the wisdom, insight, and grace to cast these stones into pillars of faith, into the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Amen.

The Peace

May the Peace of God be always with you.

And also with you.

We greet each other in the name of Jesus.

Invitation to the offering

In gratitude, let us offer all that we have and all that we are for the love of Christ, the foundation and root of our faith.

Hymn

#685 "Rock of ages"

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift our hearts to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of eternity, we give you thanks and praise that you ground us in the geology of time and anchor our faithfulness to the towers of creation that surround us.

You meet us as you met Isaac and Jacob in the tents of our transience and prepare us as you prepared Abraham for the city of joy. You stack pillars of faith who mark the path of sacred story: people who passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, people who watched the massive stone walls of Jericho fall on the way to the promised land.

We make ourselves strangers and foreigners to you, yet you greet us in your son.

In Jesus, you set us free from our sickness and when we are bent over, you stand us up straight upon the rock of salvation. In his death on the pillar of the cross, and in his resurrection, you bring us home to be the people of your possession.

And so we gladly thank you, with all the angels and the company of heaven, saying the hymn of your unending praise

Holy, holy, holy Lord, 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.

Loving God, you pour yourself out from the temple, down the rock beds into the high desert of our lives to quench our thirst.

You feed us with holy food that we may never hunger again.

In the evening before he died, Jesus was at the table with the twelve followers.

While they were eating, Jesus took bread and thanked God for it.

He broke off pieces, gave them to his followers and said,

“Take this bread and eat it. It is my body.”

Then he took a cup of wine, thanked God for it, and gave it to them. He said,

“Each one of you drink of it. This wine is my blood,
which will be poured out to forgive the sins of many
and begin the new agreement from God to his people.”

Great is the mystery of faith.

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

God of steadfast love, send down upon us your gifts of wisdom, knowledge,
and faith, of healing, discernment, and trust, that your Church may be built up in the
likeness of your Son.

Come among us now through the power of your Spirit, among the cornerstones of the
church, that we may be transformed into your image, and that these gifts of bread and wine
may become for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Holy God, as we know your son, in the power of your spirit, to be present in this bread and wine,
open our eyes to see your presence in the places and people you make known in your glory: People
who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths
of lions, quenched raising fire; people who were mocked, who suffered chains of imprisonment;
people who wandered in deserts and mountains, who gave birth, made bricks, offered coins, fed the
hungry, and wrote letters – all these, commended for their faith, who humbled themselves yet are
exalted in your kingdom. Draw us with them and our whole creation into voices of praise, as living
stones, crying out in a rumble of your praise, until we are ever one with you,
God, our savior, and our friend. **AMEN.**

The Lord’s Prayer

We pray in the words Jesus taught.

**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 Bread

The leader breaks the Bread. Silence is kept.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body for we all share in the one bread.

God’s gifts for God’s people.

The Communion

The Holy Eucharist is the central act of worship in The Episcopal Church. All are welcome.

Thanksgiving

We stand.

Let us pray.

**In gratitude, O God, we have come to your table, into your presence, into your house. For all
that you have done for us, the bread, the wine, the Word, the song,**

for bringing us to lean on the pillar of Jesus Christ, we offer our thanks and praise.

**We are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people
and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with
Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and
rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.**

Amen.

Recessional Hymn

Insert “Great is thy faithfulness”

Sending

It is God who has firmly set the pillars of the universe.

Go now, rejoicing in the shelter of the rock.

We go in peace to love and serve. Alleluia!

Postlude

Sources

This liturgy is prepared to complement the “Pillars of Faith” sermon series from *A Preacher’s Guide to
Lectionary Sermon Series: Thematic Plans for Years A, B, and C* (p. 232). Westminster John Knox Press.
Kindle Edition.

All prayer texts are drawn from a wide variety of resources: