

Ante Communion Service: October 1, 2023: Proper 21A

Celebrant: Blessed be the One who creates all things.

People: **The Holy One's love is new every morning.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom 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 Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A moment of silence for self-reflection

Let us confess our sin against God and God's creation.

**Holy and merciful God, we confess that we have failed to honor you
by rightly claiming our kinship with all your creatures.
We have walked heavily on your earth, overused and wasted its resources,
taken for granted its beauty and abundance, and treated its inhabitants unjustly,
holding future generations hostage to our greed.
Have mercy on us and forgive us our sin.
Renew in us the resolve to keep and conserve your earth as you desire and intend,
with grateful and compassionate hearts, through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Let us pray together:

**O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people:
Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name,
and follow where he leads;
who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

First Reading

Ezekiel 18:1-4,25-32

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 25:1-8

Ad te, Domine, levavi

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.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

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

Second Reading

Philippians 2:1-13

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Matthew 21:23-32

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

Hymn

All the Way my Savior Leads Me

Acapeldridge

*1 All the way my Savior leads me; what have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy, who through life has been my guide?
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well; x2*

*2 All the way my Savior leads me; cheers each winding path I tread,
Gives me grace for ev'ry trial, feeds me with the living bread;
Though my weary steps may falter, and my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me, lo! a spring of joy I see; x2*

*3 All the way my Savior leads me; oh, the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised in my Father's house above:
When my spirit, clothed immortal, wings its flight to realms of day,
This my song through endless ages: Jesus led me all the way; x2*

Apostles' 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 of the People

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church,
those in need, and all of God's creation. In peace, we pray to you, Lord God. *Silence*

For this community, the nation, and the world;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For the peace and unity of the world;
That a spirit of respect may grow among nations and peoples.

For all who love and trust in God, that divisions may cease;
And that all may be one, as you and the Father are one.

For the just and proper use of your creation;
That we may treat your creation with the love of the Creator.

We honor and pray for our Indigenous neighbors.
That we may dwell together in respectful harmony.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.
Silence. Hear us, Lord; **For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. *Silence.*
We will exalt you, O God our King; **And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom. *Silence.*
Lord, let your loving kindness be upon them. **May they rest in your peace eternally.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.**

We pray together for Christ's presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.
I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart.
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you.
Amen.**

Celebrant: While we long to receive the sacrament of Christ's Body,

People: **We become the sacrament of Christ's Body.**

Celebrant: Let your lives be manna to feed our hunger for communion.

People: **The love we share becomes bread for the world.**

Blessing God's Blessing be with you, Christ's peace be with you,
the Spirit's outpouring be with you, now and always. Amen.

Dismissal Go in peace and hope and joy to love and serve God's creation. Alleluia, Alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Lord Bless You and Keep You [Lutkin]

Acapeldridge