

# MORNING PRAYER

## Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 15, 2020



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### GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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# Morning Prayer for Proper 27

## Opening Sentence

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Phillipians 1:2*

## The Invitatory and Psalter

V: Lord, open our lips.

R: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

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.

Alleluia

## Venite Psalm 95:1-7

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!

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.

## The Psalm or Psalms Appointed

### Psalm 66 *Jubilate Deo*

<sup>1</sup> Be joyful in God, all you lands; \*  
sing the glory of his Name; sing the glory of his praise.

2 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! \*  
because of your great strength your enemies cringe before you.

3 All the earth bows down before you, \*  
sings to you, sings out your Name."

4 Come now and see the works of God, \*  
how wonderful he is in his doing toward all people.

5 He turned the sea into dry land, so that they went through the water on foot, \*  
and there we rejoiced in him.

6 In his might he rules for ever; his eyes keep watch over the nations; \*  
let no rebel rise up against him.

7 Bless our God, you peoples; \*  
make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holds our souls in life, \*  
and will not allow our feet to slip.

9 For you, O God, have proved us; \*  
you have tried us just as silver is tried.

10 You brought us into the snare; \*  
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

11 You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; \*  
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay you my vows, \*  
which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; \*  
I will give you oxen and goats.

14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, \*  
and I will tell you what he has done for me.

15 I called out to him with my mouth, \*  
and his praise was on my tongue.

16 If I had found evil in my heart, \*  
the Lord would not have heard me;

17 But in truth God has heard me; \*  
he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, \*  
nor withheld his love from me.

### **Psalm 67** *Deus misereatur*

1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, \*  
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.

2 Let your ways be known upon earth, \*  
your saving health among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.

4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, \*

for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations upon earth.

<sup>5</sup> Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*

let all the peoples praise you.

<sup>6</sup> The earth has brought forth her increase; \*

may God, our own God, give us his blessing.

<sup>7</sup> May God give us his blessing, \*

and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

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.

## The Lessons

### First Lesson:

#### Judges 4:1-7

<sup>1</sup>The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died. <sup>2</sup>So the Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. <sup>3</sup>Then the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly for twenty years.

<sup>4</sup>At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. <sup>5</sup>She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgement. <sup>6</sup>She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, 'The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, "Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. <sup>7</sup>I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'

Here ends the Reading.

### Psalm 123

<sup>1</sup>To you I lift up my eyes, \*

to you enthroned in the heavens.

<sup>2</sup>As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, \*

and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,

<sup>3</sup>So our eyes look to the Lord our God, \*

until he show us his mercy.

<sup>4</sup>Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy, \*

for we have had more than enough of contempt,

<sup>5</sup>Too much of the scorn of the indolent rich, \*

and of the derision of the proud.

## Epistle:

### 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! <sup>4</sup> But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; <sup>5</sup> for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. <sup>6</sup> So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; <sup>7</sup> for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup> For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Here ends the Reading.

### **You are God** *Te Deum laudamus*

You are God: we praise you;  
You are the Lord; we acclaim you;  
You are the eternal Father:  
All creation worships you.  
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,  
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:  
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
The glorious company of apostles praise you.  
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.  
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.  
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you;  
Father, of majesty unbounded,  
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,  
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory,  
the eternal Son of the Father.  
When you became man to set us free  
you did not shun the Virgin's womb.  
You overcame the sting of death  
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.  
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.  
We believe that you will come and be our judge.  
Come then, Lord, and help your people,

bought with the price of your own blood,  
and bring us with your saints  
to glory everlasting.

## **Gospel**

### **Matthew 25:14-30**

<sup>14</sup>For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup>to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup>In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup>But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup>After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." <sup>22</sup>And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." <sup>24</sup>Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." <sup>26</sup>But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## **A Reflection**

### **Love Is Risky Business**

The Rev. Canon Frank Logue

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? You would try something pretty risky, right? After all, if you knew you wouldn't fail, why try something easy? What risky thing would you do? Would you write the Great American Novel or sail around the world? Would you tell someone, "I love you," or would you find

the courage to leave? Would you go back to school to finish that degree or would you call your mother or father and say, “I’m sorry for the pain I caused you. When can we get together again?”

If failure were not an option, human history would have been marked with more bold attempts at both greatness and villainy. Failure is all too real and many bold plans have never gotten past the stage of dreams.

There are all kinds of risks and all kinds of rewards, but there is a common reason why we are naturally risk averse—fear. Fear is a natural, healthy reaction that can keep you safe. Healthy fear of fire prevents you from getting burned. Unhealthy fear of fire can also keep you from enjoying the simple pleasure of making your own s’mores on a campfire.

There has to be a balance between fear and reward. Those with no fear fill our cemeteries at an early age. At the other extreme, too much fear is unhealthy and paralyzing. Fear keeps hope locked in a room of doubt.

Great ships were not built to cling to the coastline. They were created to cross oceans. Few great discoveries were made by playing it safe. There is also no risk-free way to fall in love or to raise children. And there is no risk-free way to mend broken relationships and make amends for past hurts.

In our Gospel reading for this morning, Jesus tells a parable of risk and rewards and the responsibility that comes with great gifts. In the parable, a very wealthy landowner entrusts his servants with vast sums of money. A talent was a measure of gold worth roughly fifteen years’ wages for a day laborer. The life expectancy of the time for common laborers was such that making it to forty was never a sure thing, even though many lived longer. Fifteen years’ wages was more than half of what you might expect to make in a lifetime—maybe all you hoped to make in a lifetime. Each talent in this parable is that kind of wealth.

The master gives one servant five talents, another two, and the last a single talent. Now, this is where the parable gets hard to hear. The problem is that we have a word, “talent,” that means “ability” or “skill”. Singing, for example, is a talent. So, when we hear of a servant given one talent and another given five talents, it sounds like we are talking about abilities or skills, and then the parable immediately sounds different.

This is not a coincidence. Our English word, “talent,” comes to its current meaning through the preaching of the Middle Ages. In that time, when the English language as we know it was being forged, this parable was being preached. In preaching the story, congregations were told how these servants were given these large sums of money to watch over for their master. As the preaching went on through the centuries, it became easier to directly see the talents in this parable representing God’s gifts to us, posing the question, “What have you done with the talents God entrusted to you?” This created the meaning of our word, in which “talent” refers to our God-given gifts and abilities.

For the first hearers of the parable, it was clear that it was large sums of money with which the master entrusted his servants. The one in whom the master put the greatest trust made a vast sum of money, but

to do so, he had to put at risk seventy-five years' wages for a day laborer. If his plan for using the money entrusted to him failed, that servant could never have hoped to pay back his master.

The parable tells of three persons entrusted with great responsibility. Even the one who was given the care of a single talent was entrusted with much. Each of them would have to risk much if they wanted to show a return on investment.

In the parable, the first two servants doubled the master's money. Each was rewarded with more money. Not money for themselves; they didn't get a big payday. Each was given more money to invest for their master. The reward for faithfulness was more responsibility. Then came that fateful last servant. He, not too diplomatically, tells the master, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours."

This last servant risked nothing. He took what was entrusted to him and hid it. It was safe. There was little risk in digging a hole and hiding the loot. There was also no potential gain. And for not taking any risk with the money entrusted to him, the servant gets the worst possible punishment as his reward.

Jesus taught that the heart of the Good News is love. Our world was created for love, which means the freedom to do great evil as well as good. There is no other way. God gave us choices and through our choices, we can get hurt and we can hurt others. A universe where real love is an option is a risky place, as pain and suffering are not only possible, but likely. And yet, this world of choice founded on love is also what makes possible all the noble acts of self-sacrifice. This world is not only a world of pain and suffering, but also a world of generosity, kindness, and self-sacrificial love.

God invested so much love in you through Jesus' life and ministry, his death and resurrection. You can never repay that love. The good news is that you don't exactly have to pay Jesus back, as much as pay it forward. God is not looking for a return on investment in quite the same way as the hard landowner in the parable. Jesus calls on a muscular faith that is put to work and so grows stronger.

At the heart of this parable is really faith and trust that when we step out in faith, God will not leave us alone. This is like the Apostle Peter asking if he can walk out on the water to join Jesus. Jesus calls him out of the boat. This is Peter stepping out in faith. But once on the waves, with his whole life at risk, Peter is paralyzed by fear and begins to sink. Then Jesus rescues Peter. Christ was with him on the water; he couldn't fail.

Living the Gospel always involves risk. Risk is inherent in saying, "I love you," or in asking for forgiveness, or in offering to reconcile with someone who hurt you. God has shown you great love and asks only that you share that love with others. When you take the risk to love, it is the grace of God working through you that does the heavy lifting. Living into the love of God happens through concrete actions toward others as we give as we have been given, and forgive as we have been forgiven.

How might you share the love of God with someone today? Who do you need to ask for forgiveness? Who do you need to forgive? In whom might you invest the love that God has shown you? What would you risk for love if you knew you couldn't fail?

Amen.

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## The 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.

## The Prayers

V: The Lord be with you.

R: *And also with you.*

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

## Suffrages B

V. Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;

R. Govern them and uphold them, now and always.

V. Day by day we bless you;

R. We praise your name for ever.

V. Lord, keep us from all sin today;

R. Have mercy upon us, Lord, have mercy.

V. Lord, show us your love and mercy;

R. For we put our trust in you.

V. In you, Lord, is our hope;  
R. And we shall never hope in vain.

*Collect of the Day*

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*A Collect for Sundays*

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*A Prayer for Mission*

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.

*Here may be sung a hymn.*

*Authorized intercessions and thanksgivings may follow.*

Let us bless the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14*

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