

Holy Eucharist

October 8, 2023

Zoom link:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=ei94MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz0>

9

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Proper 22A: the 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

Opening Hymn

Blessed be the God of Israel

Hymnal 444



1 Blessed be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free;
2 He from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has given;
3 On pri - son - ers of dark-ness the sun be - gins to rise,



he vis - its and re - deems us, he grants us lib - er - ty.
a Sa - vior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven.
the dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes.



The pro - phets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
Be - fore him goes his her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
He guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.



God shall ful - fill his prom - ise and bring his peo-ple peace.____
the pro-phet of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of Day.____
O bless our God and Sa - vior, with songs that nev - er cease.____

Presider Blessed be + God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Presider begins the Collect for Purity

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

The following is sung, all standing as they are able

Song of Praise

Awesome God

Chorus Book 1

Our God is an awe - some God; He reigns from

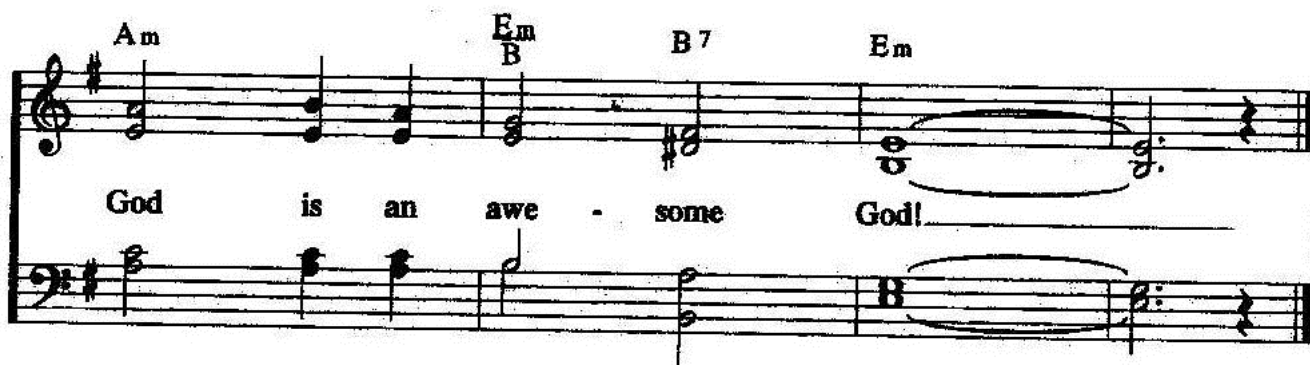
Chord symbols: Em, C, G/B, G, D/F#

heav-en a - bove With wis - dom, pow'r and love. Our

Chord symbols: Em, Em/D, C, G/B, G

God is an awe - some God! Our God! Our

Chord symbols: Am, Em/B, B7, 1 Em, 2 Em



Collect of the Day

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

First Reading

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

A Reading from the book of Exodus.

¹God spoke all these words:

²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³You shall not murder.

¹⁴You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵You shall not steal.

¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

¹⁸When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, ¹⁹and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." ²⁰Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin."

Reade The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 19

to be prayed responsively, beginning with the men

- ¹The heavens declare the glory of God, *
and the firmament shows his handiwork.
- ²**One day tells its tale to another, ***
and one night imparts knowledge to another.
- ³Although they have no words or language, *
and their voices are not heard,
- ⁴**Their sound has gone out into all lands, ***
and their message to the ends of the world.
- ⁵In the deep has he set a pavilion for the sun; *
it comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber;
it rejoices like a champion to run its course.
- ⁶**It goes forth from the uttermost edge of the heavens**
and runs about to the end of it again; *
nothing is hidden from its burning heat.
- ⁷The law of the LORD is perfect and revives the soul; *
the testimony of the LORD is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.
- ⁸**The statutes of the LORD are just and rejoice the heart; ***
the commandment of the LORD is clear and gives light to the eyes.
- ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean and endures for ever; *
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold, ***
sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.
- ¹¹By them also is your servant enlightened, *
and in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹²**Who can tell how often he offends? ***
cleanse me from my secret faults.
- ¹³Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not get dominion over me; *
then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.
- ¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart**
be acceptable in your sight, *
O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.

Second Reading

Philippians 3:4b-14

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi.

^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Reader The Word of the Lord.


People **Thanks be to God.**

All then stand as they are able.

Sequence Hymn

Help us, O Lord, to learn

Hymnal 628



1 Help us, O Lord, to learn the truths your word im - parts: to
 2 Help us, O Lord, to live the faith which we pro - claim, that
 3 Help us, O Lord, to teach the beau - ty of your ways, that



stu - dy, that your laws may be in - scribed up - on our hearts.
 all our thoughts and words and deeds may glo - ri - fy your Name.
 yearn - ing souls may find the Christ and live a life of praise.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 21:33-46

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

[Jesus said,] ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to

collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."



⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?"

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

Marion VanLoo

All then stand as they are able.

Nicene Creed

Presider Let us affirm the faith of the Church using the words of the Nicene Creed.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

All remain standing as they are able.

Prayers of the People

Presider Sisters and brothers, children of God, the law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul! So let us appeal to our Lord God, saying, “Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.”

Intercessor Lord our God, you command us to have no other gods before you: give your Church such singleness of mind that we might not be distracted by the rubbish of our lives, but may strive to know Christ and the power of his resurrection. Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, **O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.**

Silence is kept

Lord our God, you command us to bear not false witness against others: Help us to live in peace with one another. In a world of harmful rhetoric, may we use our words to encourage and love—especially those whom we consider different. Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, **O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.**

Silence is kept

Lord our God, you command us to keep a holy Sabbath: make us generous stewards of this planet that it may be renewed and refreshed. Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, **O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.**

Silence is kept

Christ Jesus, you are ruler of all things in heaven and earth. Hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all a

burning heart for our congregation, and all things necessary for our common life, and the embrace of the ministries with which you have gifted everyone. Bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church. Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, **O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.**

Silence is kept

Lord our God, you command us to covet nothing that belongs to our neighbor: give us kind and generous hearts for those with whom we share our neighborhoods. May a loving spirit rule this region. We thank you, whose loving spirit gives us all we need, [especially for _____].

Silence is kept

Lord our God, you desire that your people be not afraid: Give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care. Pour on [_____ and all] the sick, suffering, and struggling the abundance of your mercy. Bless them with goodness and healing through Jesus the Christ..

Silence is kept

Lord our God, you have made us your own: may we, and those who have run the race of faith before us, attain the resurrection from the dead [especially_____]. We ask this through the abundant mercy of your Son. Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, **O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.**

Presider For what other people and situations shall we pray today?

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

The Presider says to the people

Let us confess our sins to God.

All remain standing, or kneel, as they are able.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.**

**We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

A Priest stands and says

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.
Amen.

All then stand as they are able.

Peace

Presider The peace of Christ be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

The People then are seated.

Announcements

Holy Communion

Presider Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High.
Psalm 50:14

Representatives of the congregation bring the people's offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts, to the Presider.

The people stand while the offerings are presented and placed on the Altar

Offertory Hymn

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The people remain standing as they are able

Doxology

Great Thanksgiving

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

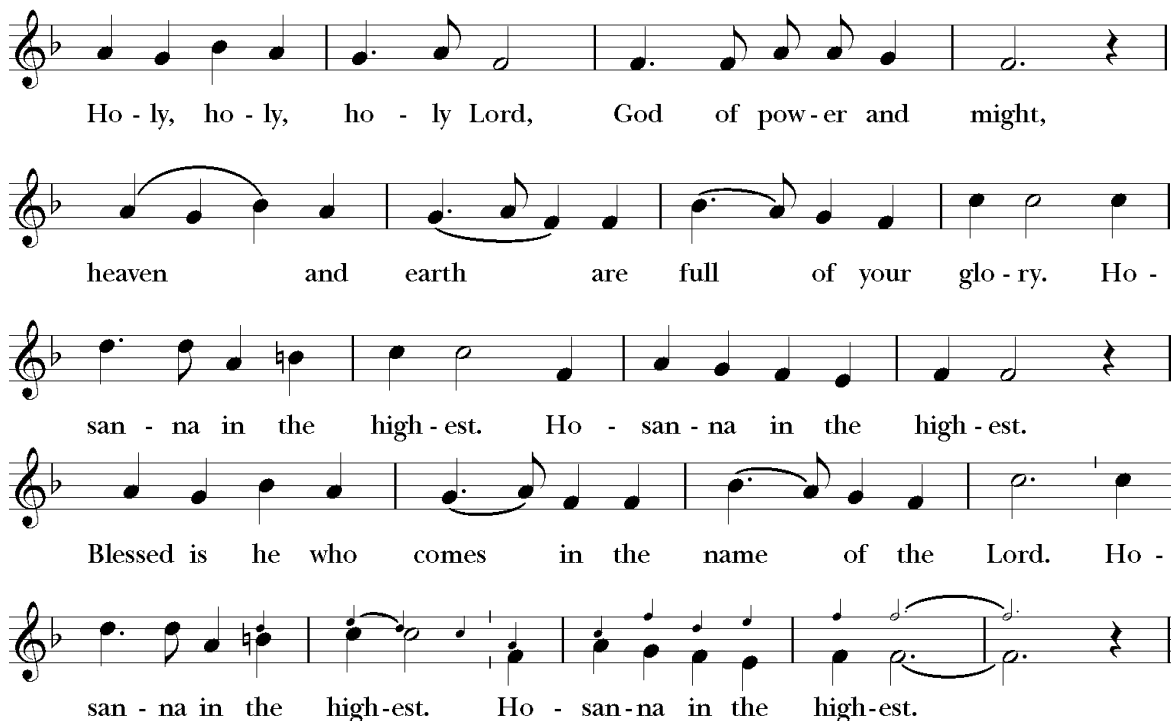
The Presider proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

For you are the source of light and life; you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The people continue to stand, or kneel as they are able.

The Presider continues

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and

eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them **+** by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him.

Sanctify us **+** also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

The Presider then continues

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

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,

forever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

The Presider says

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God.
Holy food for holy people.

All are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

Remaining seated, the following is sung after the table has been cleared.

Communion Hymn

Hymnal 313

Let thy blood in mercy poured

1 Let thy Blood in mer - cy poured, let thy gra - cious
Bo - dy bro - ken, be to me, O gra - cious Lord,
Refrain
of thy bound-less love the to - ken. Thou didst give thy-

self for me, now I give my - self to thee.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line. The melody is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The lyrics are: 'self for me, now I give my - self to thee.' The music consists of six measures. The first measure has a whole note chord (B-flat, D, F) with the lyrics 'self for me,'. The second measure has a half note (G) with 'now'. The third measure has a half note (A) with 'I'. The fourth measure has a half note (B) with 'give'. The fifth measure has a half note (C) with 'my - self'. The sixth measure has a whole note (D) with 'to thee.'

The Presider then says

Let us pray.

Presider and People

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,
 you have graciously accepted us as living members
 of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
 and you have fed us with spiritual food
 in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
 Send us now into the world in peace,
 and grant us strength and courage
 to love and serve you
 with gladness and singleness of heart;
 through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

May God give you Grace never to
 sell yourself short:
 Grace to risk something big for something good.
 Grace to remember that the world
 is too dangerous for anything but truth
 and too small for anything but Love.

And the blessing of God Almighty, +
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 be with you, and remain with you this day and
 always. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn
Higher ground

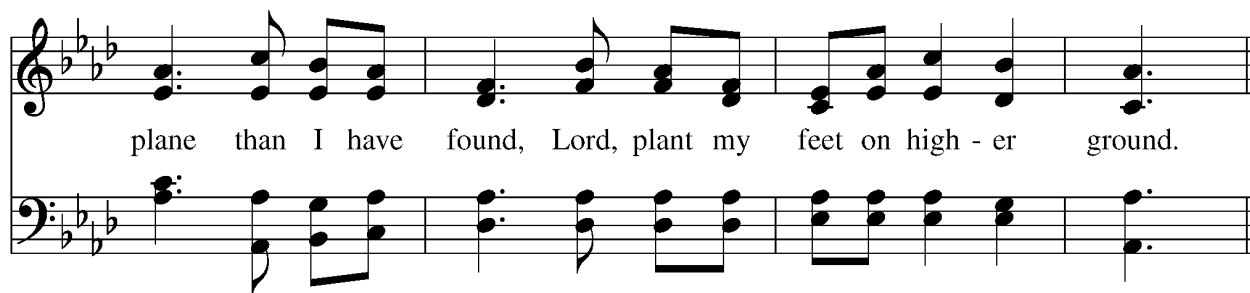
LEVAS 165

1. I'm press - ing on the up - ward way, New heights I'm
 2. My heart has no de - sire to stay Where doubts a -
 3. I want to live a - bove the world, Though sa - tan's
 4. I want to scale the ut - most height, And catch a

1. gain - ing ev - ery day; Still pray - ing as I on - ward bound,
 2. rise and fears dis - may; Though some may dwell where these a - bound,
 3. darts at me are hurled; For faith has caught a joy - ful sound,
 4. gleam of glo - ry bright; But still I'll pray till heav'n I've found,

1. "Lord, plant my feet on high - er ground."
 2. My prayer, my aim is high - er ground. Lord, lift me
 3. The song of saints on high - er ground.
 4. "Lord, lead me on the high - er ground."

up, and let me stand By faith, on heav - en's ta - ble - land; A high - er



plane than I have found, Lord, plant my feet on high - er ground.

Dismissal

Minister And now, my sisters and brothers, I bid you go out as did St Barnabas, the Encourager. Go out in joy and in peace, to love and serve our Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

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This week in prayer

Please remember these persons and congregations in your prayers this week:

Our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises (TEC); Elizabeth, Donald and Craig (ELCA)
and for all priests, deacons, Ministry Teams, and those in formation

Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

October 8 The Anglican Church of Korea

Diocese of Michigan Cycle of Prayer:

October 8 Church of the Resurrection, Clarkston; Advent, San Pedro, St Andrew's, Santo Domingo, DR

St Barnabas Cycle of Prayer: Katherine, Pat, Anabelle, Georgia, Grace

and our continuing prayers for: Bob, Carlos, Jim M, Mardi, Robert, Selenah

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Faith in Action continues to provide leadership in collecting donations of food to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. **The need is great** for our support and help. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to [Nancy](#) who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. **The next Food Drive is next week, October 15.** Please contribute as generously as you can.

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Upcoming Commemorations

- Oct 08 William Dwight Porter Bliss, Priest, 1926; and,
Richard Theodore Ely, Economist, 1943
- 09 Robert Grosseteste, Bishop, 1253; and,
Wilfred Thomason Grenfell: Medical Missionary, 1940
- 10 Vida Dutton Scudder, Educator, 1954

- 11 Philip, Deacon and Evangelist
- 12 Edith Cavell, Nurse, 1915
- 14 Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky, Bishop and Missionary, 1906

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Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

There’s something about the Ten Commandments that engages my Inner Child. Not a fun, playful Inner Child, but a child who is very keenly invested in rules: Children naturally are interested in rulemaking, rule-keeping, and rule-enforcement. When I read the Ten Commandments, my Inner Child engages: Almost subconsciously, I begin comparing my life (or the lives of others if I’m feeling judge-y!) with these laws, weighing how we measure up.

The children’s faith formation curriculum *Godly Play* has a lesson about the Ten Commandments. The lesson is called the “Ten Best Ways to Live.” The lesson acknowledges life is complicated, and it is not always possible to live this way; parents get divorced, we lie, we covet, we make mistakes.

What’s essential is this: God did not make these rules as the play of some kind of divine arbiter. Rather, the Ten Commandments (and all the moral codes in Scripture) point to God’s love for us: God knows we, as humans, have a propensity to operate in ways that are small and selfish –and ultimately sabotage our living good and joyful lives in community.

These commandments remind us of the best ways to live: Giving us guidance how on to live in right relationships with God and one another.

- Do you think of a spiritual life as rules to follow or guidelines on the best way to live? If it is the latter, how would your spiritual life change if your perspective shifted?
- How would you write a summary of the best ways to live, as informed by Scripture and your own spiritual journey?

Psalm 19

Poetry often has a turning point or “hinge” written into it. It appears the poem is going in one direction and – surprise! – the poet pivots taking the reader in a new and unexpected direction. Psalms are ancient poems. They were once songs – music long lost, we receive them as poetry today. Psalm 19 begins as a meditation on God’s revelation in creation; it recalls those awe-full moments when humans experience the presence of the Divine in a glorious sunrise or a stunning grand vista. Then the poem pivots, reveling in the moral beauty of God’s revelation in Scripture. How are the two interconnected? It’s a question on which to meditate, not an answer to be known and explained. The poet of Psalm 19 experienced both in equal measure. Do you?

- How do you experience God’s revelation in nature? In Scripture? Are the two interconnected?

Philippians 3:4b-14

Fun fact: There are curse words in Scripture. They’ve gotten cleaned up, since their translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, but the original authors would emphasize their insights using the strongest of language.

In this passage, Paul explains how he regards all his religious societal privilege – and the “loss of all things” – in comparison to knowing Christ. In the original Greek, he uses a word stronger than “rubbish.” “Manure” might be another possible word one could use, to keep the translation family-friendly.

Translation trivia aside, Paul communicates the very clear set of values which organizes his perspective: Christ is his focus. Everything else is an off-putting distraction. Paul was writing this letter to the Philippians while sitting in prison, awaiting trial on trumped-up religious charges. He experienced the death-dealing ways of religious convictions held too tightly. Remember: “Christianity” (as the world religion we know today) did not exist at the writing of this letter. Rather, it was a group of (mostly Jewish) people whose lives had been transformed by the teachings and ministry of Jesus. They called themselves simply, “Followers of the Way.” While we cannot go back to this time and culture, there is much we can learn from it.

- What privileges or benefits do I hold onto too tightly? What distracts me from the joy-filled life following Jesus into living God’s dream for humanity?

Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus is on a tear. The tension is building between Jesus and the religious authorities, and Jesus makes it clear the life of faith is transformative and topsy-turvy: He has no patience for platitudes or religious self-deception. In the verses leading up to this parable, he has entered victoriously into Jerusalem (think Palm Sunday), cleansed the temple, and cursed a fig tree – And that’s only in the first half of this chapter! In the second half of this chapter, Jesus and the religious authorities are in an intellectual sparring match. The Pharisees are trying to get Jesus to say something on which they can bring him to trial. Jesus, for his part, tries to hold the chief priests and Pharisees accountable, challenging their hypocrisy.

It’s easy to think of the chief priests and Pharisees as the “bad guys” in Scripture. But the truth is, when Jesus was addressing the chief priests and Pharisees, he was addressing religious people – people who were making a real effort to live lives in obedience to God. Therefore, we – the sorts of people who read and write Bible studies – might have more in common with the Pharisees than we might think! When Jesus is talking to the Pharisees, I often wonder what Jesus is trying to teach *me*. This leads to some questions for reflection....

- Is there a challenging person (or persons) in my life that I dismiss out of hand? (Maybe they’re not religious enough or educated enough or...) What might God be trying to teach me through them? Is this an opportunity to learn to produce the fruits of the kingdom (as in v. 43), with the help of the Spirit?

This study was written by Jessica Frederick

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Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ,
and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world,
guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.



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