

# Morning Prayer

## Proper 12A, Pentecost 8

July 26, 2020

### Prelude

### Announcements

### Opening Hymn

*To God be the glory*

Voices Found 108

1 To God be the glo - ry, great things he has done! So loved he the  
2 O per - fect re - demp - tion, the pur - chase of blood! To ev - ery be -  
3 Great things he has taught us, great things he has done, and great our re -

world that he gave us his son, who yield - ed his life an a -  
liev - er the pro - mise of God! The vil - est of - fen - der who  
joic - ing through Je - sus the son; but pur - er and high - er and

The musical score is written for voices and piano. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, with piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics are arranged in three lines, with the first line containing three numbered verses. The second line continues the lyrics, and the third line concludes the hymn.

tone-ment for sin and o - pened the life-gate that all may go in.  
 tru - ly be - lieves, that mo - ment from Je - sus for - give-ness re - ceives.  
 great-er will be our won - der, our rap-ture, when Je - sus we see.

*Refrain*

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the peo - ple re - joice!

O come to the Fa - ther, through Je - sus the son,

and give him the glo - ry! Great things he has done!

## Confession of Sin

*The Presider says*

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

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth our praise, to hear God's holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship, let us keep silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by God's infinite goodness and mercy.

*Silence is kept.*

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the 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.**

*The Presider then says*

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

## The Invitatory and Psalter

*Presider* Lord, open our lips.

*People* **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.**

God is the Rock of our salvation;  
**O come let us worship.**

### **Jubilate: Psalm 100**

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

**Know this: The Lord himself is God; \***  
**he himself has made us, and we are his;**  
**we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving;  
go into his courts with praise; \*  
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

**For the Lord is good;**  
**his mercy is everlasting; \***  
**and his faithfulness endures from age to age.**

### **Psalm 105:1-11,45b**

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD and call upon his Name; \*  
make known his deeds among the peoples.

<sup>2</sup>**Sing to him, sing praises to him, \***  
**and speak of all his marvelous works.**

<sup>3</sup>Glory in his holy Name; \*  
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

<sup>4</sup>**Search for the LORD and his strength; \***  
**continually seek his face.**

<sup>5</sup>Remember the marvels he has done, \*  
his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,

<sup>6</sup>**O offspring of Abraham his servant, \***  
**O children of Jacob his chosen.**

<sup>7</sup>He is the LORD our God; \*  
his judgments prevail in all the world.

<sup>8</sup>**He has always been mindful of his covenant, \***  
**the promise he made for a thousand generations:**

<sup>9</sup>The covenant he made with Abraham, \*  
the oath that he swore to Issac,

<sup>10</sup>**Which he established as a statute for Jacob, \***  
**an everlasting covenant for Israel,**

<sup>11</sup>Saying, "To you will I give the land of Canaan \*  
to be your allotted inheritance."

<sup>45b</sup>**Hallelujah!**

**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 Reading**

Genesis 29:15-28

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

<sup>15</sup>Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?” <sup>16</sup>Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup>Leah’s eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. <sup>18</sup>Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.” <sup>19</sup>Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.” <sup>20</sup>So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

<sup>21</sup>Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.” <sup>22</sup>So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. <sup>23</sup>But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. <sup>24</sup>(Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) <sup>25</sup>When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?” <sup>26</sup>Laban said, “This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. <sup>27</sup>Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” <sup>28</sup>Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

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

### **Canticle B: A Song of Pilgrimage**

*Ecclesiasticus 51:13-16, 20b-22*

*The Reader, the People’s Respondent, and the People*

Before I ventured forth,  
even while I was very young, \*

I sought wisdom openly in my prayer.

**In the forecourts of the temple I asked for her, \***  
**and I will seek her to the end.**

From first blossom to early fruit, \*  
she has been the delight of my heart.

**My foot has kept firmly to the true path, \***  
**diligently from my youth have I pursued her.**

I inclined my ear a little and received her; \*

I found for myself much wisdom and became adept in her.

**To the one who gives me wisdom will I give glory, \*  
for I have resolved to live according to her way.**

From the beginning I gained courage from her, \*  
therefore I will not be forsaken.

**In my inmost being I have been stirred to seek her, \*  
therefore have I gained a good possession.**

As my reward the Almighty has given me the gift of language,\*  
**and with it will I offer praise to God.**

**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.**

## **Second Reading**

Romans 8:26-39

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

<sup>26</sup>The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

**Hymn**  
*How great thou art*

LEVAS 60

1. O Lord my God, when I in awe - some won - der Con - sid - er  
 2. When through the woods and for - est glades I wan - der And hear the

1. all the worlds\* thy hands have made, — I see the stars I hear the roll - ing\*  
 2. birds sing sweet - ly in the trees, — When I look down from loft - y moun - tain

1. thun - der, Thy pow'r through - out the u - ni - verse dis - played. —  
 2. gran - deur, And hear the brook and feel the gen - tle breeze. —

Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior, God, to Thee: — How great Thou

art, — how great Thou art! — Then sings my soul, my Sav - ior, God, to

Thee: — How great Thou art, — how great Thou art! —

**Third Reading**

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

A Reading from Matthew.

<sup>31</sup>[Another parable Jesus put before the crowds:] “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;<sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”



<sup>33</sup>He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

<sup>44</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup>on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.



<sup>47</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup>when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup>So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup>and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup>“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup>And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

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

## **Sermon**

### **The Apostles' Creed**

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**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**

*Presider* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Presider* Let us pray.

*The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People*

**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 forever. Amen.**

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

**R. And grant us your salvation.**

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

**R. Let your people sing with joy.**

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

**R. For only in you can we live in safety.**

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

**R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

**R. Your saving health among all nations.**

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

**R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

**R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

### *The Collect of the Day*

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### *A Collect for Peace*

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *A Collect for Renewal of Life*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; 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.**

## **Intercessions and thanksgivings**

*Presider* Let us bring before the Lord the prayers that dwell in the heart of our community, responding, “Hear us, good Lord.”

*Intercessor* Spirit of Wisdom, guide our tongues, that we may speak of your marvelous works and rejoice in your bountiful gifts of forgiveness and new life; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Righteous Governor, assist our leaders in discerning truth from deception, and good from evil, so that they may exercise their office with integrity, and be signs of hope to the people of our country and world; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Source of strength, be with us in our weakness, and help those who live in the dark corners of hopelessness, so that your love may reveal a greater light and dispel the fears that visit every heart; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Bearer of our sins, remove the dust that blinds us to our shortcomings, so that in admitting our wayward thoughts and actions we may turn toward your mercy and receive your forgiveness; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Creator of the universe, who brings us joy in the diversity of all that the eye can behold, make us ever grateful for the splendor of your making, and ever protective of its fruits; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Sun of Righteousness, bring the dead into the brilliance of your light, [especially \_\_\_\_\_]. Make us thankful for the intercession of your saints; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Bound together in the love of Christ, we continue our prayers, remembering before you our Bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Julio, Moises, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig. We pray for all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams and those in formation; and our brothers and sisters worshipping at Canterbury House, UM, St James', Dexter; and St Cornelius, Cabarate, in the Dominican Republic. We give you thanks for all the blessings and mercies we have received [especially for Kelly's preaching, \_\_\_\_\_]. We pray for those who are sick, or in any distress or trouble [especially \_\_\_\_\_].

*Silence is kept.*

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; for this we pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Presider* In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we desire to offer our praise and thanksgiving. We present to you our souls and bodies with the earnest wish that we may always be united to you. And since we cannot now receive you sacramentally, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. We unite ourselves to you, and embrace you with all the affections of our souls. Let nothing ever separate us from you. **Amen.**

*The Presider then says*

My brothers and sisters, I invite you- wherever you are- to take into your hands the gifts you offer today. Gifts of food, gifts of money, gifts of whatever form, and join me as we offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good our vows to the Most High.

Let us pray.

Loving God and merciful Creator, whose hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: we come to you with thanksgiving and praise. We offer to you this day our gifts of time, talent, and possessions, knowing that all we are, and all we have, is a gift from you. Please accept these gifts, and help us to reach out to others as you, our God, have reached out to us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### ***A Prayer of St. Chrysostom***

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: **Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.**

# Closing Hymn

LEVAS 158

*Make me a blessing*

1. Out in the high - ways and by - ways of life, \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Tell the sweet sto - ry of Christ and His love, \_\_\_\_\_  
3. Give as 'twas giv - en to you in your need, \_\_\_\_\_

1. Man - y are wea - ry and sad; \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Tell of His power to for - give; \_\_\_\_\_  
3. Love as the Mas - ter loved you; \_\_\_\_\_

1. Car - ry the sun - shine where dark - ness is rife,  
2. Oth - ers will trust Him if on - ly you prove  
3. Be to the help - less a help - er in - deed,

1. Mak - ing the sor - row - ing glad. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. True, ev - ery mo - ment you live, \_\_\_\_\_  
3. Un - to your mis - sion be true. \_\_\_\_\_

Make me a bless - ing, Make me a bless - ing,

Out of my life May Je - sus shine;

Make me a bless - ing, O Sav - ior, I pray,

Make me a bless - ing to some - one to - day.

## Dismissal and Blessing

*Presider* Go into the world, and know how much a tired and hurting world needs your strength and gladness. For there are deeds of compassion and courage that will never be done, unless you do them; and words of hope and healing that will never be spoken, unless you speak them.

And may the blessing of God, + Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, be with us, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Presider* Let us bless the Lord.

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

*Presider* 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*

**Postlude**

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**REGARDING OFFERINGS TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH**

**To make your regular offering to St Barnabas**, please mail your check to the church: 20500 W Old US-12, Chelsea MI 48118-1309. Mail is being collected daily.

**If you wish to make an offering online**, you can use this link provided by the Diocese to do so securely: <https://www.edomi.org/give/> Contributions given here will be transferred by the diocesan Treasurer to St Barnabas.

**CONTINUING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION**

Faith in Action is providing leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas.

**Needed right now:** 64-oz. juices, cereal (no Cheerios, please), baking mix, chips, shampoo, conditioner; cleaning products, and personal products are always needed, as these items cannot be purchased with food stamps. **You may bring your donations to FIA**, or to Nancy who will see that they get there.

Donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at [www.faithinaction1.org](http://www.faithinaction1.org), by [Facebook](#), or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118*.

**If you need help, please call FIA at (734) 475-3305**

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**Enrichment for Our Spiritual Journey**

**Join St Barnabas'** twice-weekly Zoom check-in! Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. Contact Bill or Marion if you need the link.

Watch Bishop Bonnie Perry's sermons, <https://www.edomi.org/whatsheaid/sermons/>

Watch Washington National Cathedral's live-streamed Eucharist and Daily Office services, <https://cathedral.org/calendar/>

Join in a short, weekly, meditation with Presiding Bishop Curry here: <https://episcopalchurch.org/habits-of-grace>

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### Upcoming Commemorations

- July 26 Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and, Charles Raymond Barnes, 1938
- 27 William Reed Huntington, Priest, 1909
- 28 Johann Sebastian Bach, 1750, George Frederick Handel, 1759, and Henry Purcell, 1695, Composers
- 29 Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany; and, the First Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in The Episcopal Church, 1974
- 30 William Wilberforce, 1833, and Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, 1885, Prophetic Witnesses
- 31 Ignatius of Loyola, Priest and Monastic, 1556
- Aug. 1 Joseph of Arimathea

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**Scripture preparation for August 2, 2020: Pentecost 9, Proper 13A**

**Genesis 32:22-31**

This story of Jacob wrestling resonates with divine power and mystery. It's an eerie scene—Jacob is at a turning point in his life, not sure how things will work out, and he's alone on a riverbank at night.

An unidentified figure shows up, and the two of them wrestle until dawn. Jacob holds on tight and refuses to let this person go until the person blesses him. And finally, as Jacob leaves the riverbank with both a limp and a blessing, he recognizes he's somehow been wrestling with *God*.

Phyllis Tribble and other Biblical scholars have used this story as a way to talk about the process of engaging with the Bible itself—we wrestle, we struggle with scripture, and we find God's blessing in that struggle. Sometimes, we're wounded when we encounter hatred and trauma within scripture. There are some parts of the Bible that feel like a blessing right away and some parts that are more of a struggle, yet God meets us in the whole process.

- Have you ever wrestled with God? Have you ever recognized God's presence in an experience after it was over?
- Do you experience scripture as a struggle? Where do you find yourself wounded, and where do you find yourself blessed?

### **Psalm 17:1-7, 16**

Our lectionary skips some of the angrier verses of this psalm, where the psalmist cries out for God's vindication against enemies who are wealthy, complacent, and pitiless. Perhaps this omission is because many of us feel uncomfortable with the anger expressed in those verses. That kind of anger might not be something we want to hear in church when there may not be opportunity to address it or move through it with care—and this is a valid reluctance, as many of us have been hurt by anger. Perhaps the verses are omitted because we feel uncertain about claiming the position of a victim as we pray the psalm together. On the other hand, maybe the psalmist's depiction of the oppressor sounds too familiar for comfort.

Though I think some of the reasons for omitting these angry verses are reasonable, I also think that our church needs to work on better ways of understanding and engaging with anger. Now, in the summer of 2020, as we see a protest movement demanding justice for Black lives and an end to police violence, maybe we need all the verses of this psalm. Whichever verses we read, and whatever our feelings are about current protest movements, I believe that we as people of faith need to hear the longing for justice and the righteous anger in this psalm. We need to hear the psalmist's deep connection to God in the midst of pain. We need to hear the restlessness and the fury of people calling out for deliverance in an untenable situation.

- What is your church's attitude toward anger, and why do you think this is the case? How do you deal with anger in the Bible?
- Can you identify with any of the longings the psalmist expresses? Can you identify with any of the anger? Does any part of the Psalm remind you of something in your own life?

### **Romans 9:1-5**

Placed in context, this note of anguish from Paul comes right after one of his most confident moments—"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." It's a jarring transition. Yet this means that when we find ourselves moving back and forth between confidence and concern, between exultation and anguish, we can know that St. Paul is with us in the complexity and changeability of this human response to God's grace.

It's also important to note that this passage occupies a complicated position in Christianity's ongoing legacy of anti-Semitism and in our attempts at interfaith dialogue. St. Paul seems deeply concerned that many of his Jewish siblings may not be included in the salvation he experiences in

Jesus. He seems to speak out of deep love and concern here, seems to still regard Jews as his own people, and has a deep appreciation for the ways in which he sees God relating to the Jewish people. And yet, this strand of exclusion has deadly consequences when Christians in power read Jews as enemies of Christian faith.

- In your own life of faith, have you experienced the kind of rapid shift in mood that we see here at the start of Romans 9?
- What do you make of St. Paul's conflicted concern for his Jewish siblings here? Why is he so distressed? And how have Christians moved from concern like this to religious hate?

### Matthew 14:13-21

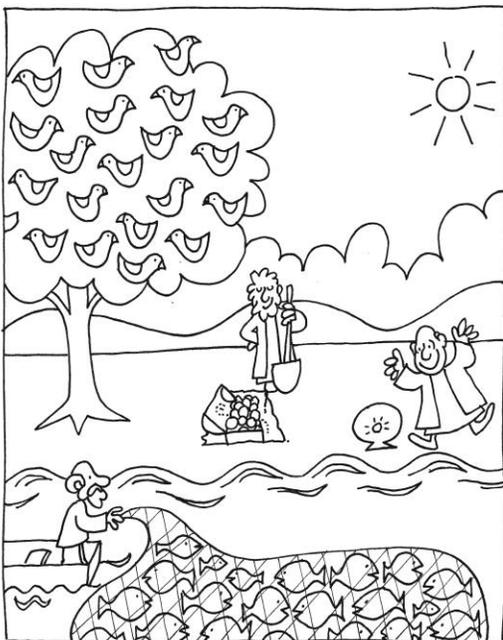
It's common in our churches to hear narratives of scarcity. A budget shortfall leads to last minute appeals and difficult choices. We wonder when we'll have enough time to do the work we care most about instead of the work that's most urgent. We face shortages of resources and time, and we can often feel pressed and anxious in these conditions of scarcity. Like the disciples in this Gospel story, we may want to send people away to fend for themselves as we recognize the inadequacy of our resources.

And yet, in this situation of scarcity, Jesus offers abundance and hospitality. Instead of turning people away, Jesus invites the crowd to stay and feast in the wilderness. And the disciples—despite their previous fear—are the ones tasked with distributing this blessed feast. Instead of hunkering down and doling out the little they have among themselves, they go out among the crowd and share the delicious plenty that Jesus has provided.

This Gospel story will not magically fix our budget woes or add hours to our days—and yet perhaps it does have some power to free us from our own narratives of scarcity. The story invites us to hope and pray and live toward God's abundance, not just for our group but for everyone. We're invited to share what we have and to loosen our grip on the questions of whether we have enough and whether we are enough. And we're invited to feast on the bread Jesus blesses.

- Where do you feel the strain of scarcity right now? Are there places you see God's abundance? How can we be honest about real need and struggle while also questioning some of our scarcity narratives? How does this discernment work?

*This Bible study was written by Dr. Joanna Benskin.* Published by the Office of Communication of The Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017 © 2020 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.



### 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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