

# Morning Prayer

## Proper 14A, Pentecost 10

August 9, 2020

### Prelude

### Announcements

### Opening Hymn

*Our God reigns*

Chorus Book 99

1 How love-ly on the moun - tains are the feet of him  
2 He had no state - ly form, he had no maj - es - ty,  
3 It was our sin and guilt that bruised and wound - ed him;

who brings good news,  
that we should be  
it was our sin

good news;  
drawn to him.  
that brought him down.

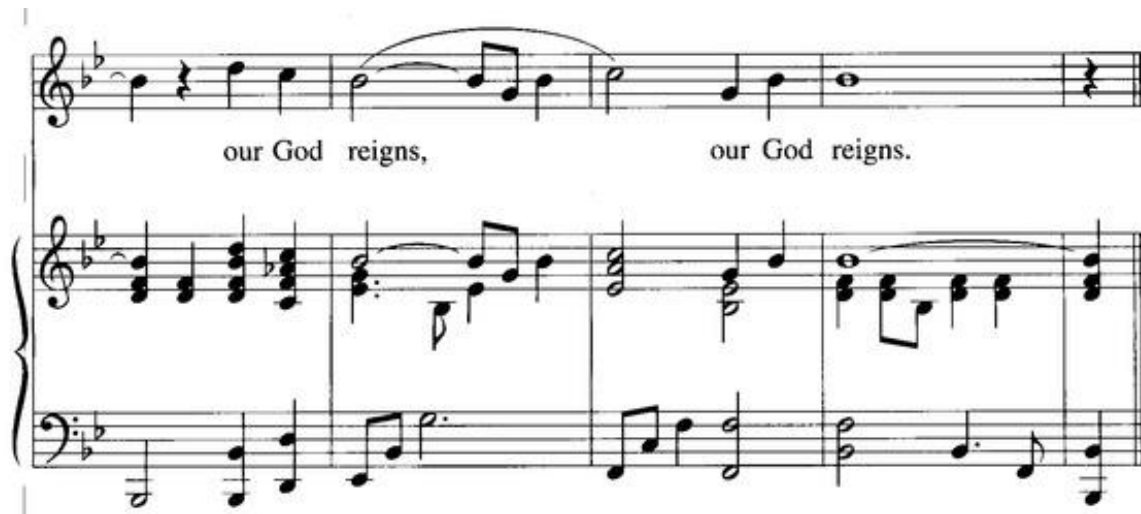
The musical score consists of three systems. The first system is a single melodic line in G major (one flat) with lyrics. The second system is a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef, featuring a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The third system continues the melody and piano accompaniment, with lyrics for the second and third verses.

an - nounc - ing peace, pro - claim - ing news of hap - pi - ness:  
 He was de - spised and we took no ac - count of him,  
 When we like sheep had gone a - stray, our Shep - herd came,

our God reigns, our God reigns.  
 yet now he reigns with the Most High.  
 and on his shoul - ders bore our shame.

*Refrain*

Our God reigns, our God reigns,



## Confession of Sin

*The Presider says*

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord." *Psalms 122:1*

Let us confess our sins to God.

*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 Priest then says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you 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.**

Christ has triumphed over death:  
**O come let us worship.**

### 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 God's presence with thanksgiving \*  
and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.**

For you are a great God; \*

you are great above all gods.

**In your hand are the caverns of the earth, \*  
and the heights of the hills are yours also.**

The sea is yours, for you made it, \*

and your hands have molded the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down and bend the knee, \*  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

For you are our God,

and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand. \*

**Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!**

### Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 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>16</sup>Then he called for a famine in the land \*  
and destroyed the supply of bread.

<sup>17</sup>**He sent a man before them, \***  
**Joseph, who was sold as a slave.**

<sup>18</sup>They bruised his feet in fetters; \*  
his neck they put in an iron collar.

<sup>19</sup>**Until his prediction came to pass, \***  
**the word of the LORD tested him.**

<sup>20</sup>The king sent and released him; \*  
the ruler of the peoples set him free.

<sup>21</sup>**He set him as a master over his household, \***  
**as a ruler over all his possessions,**

<sup>22</sup>To instruct his princes according to his will \*  
and to teach his elders wisdom.

<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 37:1-4, 12-28

A Reading from the book of Genesis.

<sup>1</sup>Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

<sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup>So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, <sup>15</sup>and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" <sup>16</sup>"I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." <sup>17</sup>The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. <sup>18</sup>They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. <sup>19</sup>They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup>Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become

of his dreams.” <sup>21</sup>But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” <sup>22</sup>Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. <sup>23</sup>So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; <sup>24</sup>and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

<sup>25</sup>Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers agreed. <sup>28</sup>When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

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

## **Canticle D: A Song of the Wilderness**

*Isaiah 35:1-7, 10*

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

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, \*  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

**It shall blossom abundantly, \***  
**and rejoice with joy and singing.**

They shall see the glory of the Lord, \*  
the majesty of our God.

**Strengthen the weary hands, \***  
**and make firm the feeble knees.**

Say to the anxious, “Be strong, do not fear! \*

Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you.”

**Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, \***  
**and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.**

Then shall the lame leap like a deer, \*  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

**For waters shall break forth in the wilderness \***  
**and streams in the desert;**

The burning sand shall become a pool \*  
and the thirsty ground, springs of water.

**The ransomed of God shall return with singing, \***  
**with everlasting joy upon their heads.**

Joy and gladness shall be theirs, \*  
**and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

**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 10:5-15

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

<sup>5</sup>Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” <sup>6</sup>But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup>“or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup>But what does it say?

“The word is near you,  
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup>because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. <sup>11</sup>The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. <sup>13</sup>For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

<sup>14</sup>But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? <sup>15</sup>And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

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

**Hymn**

LEVAS 143

*Wade in the water*

Wade in the wa - ter, wade in the wa - ter, chil - dren,

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Wade in the water'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff, with lines of music corresponding to the words. The lyrics are: 'Wade in the wa - ter, wade in the wa - ter, chil - dren,'.

Wade in the wa - ter, God's a-gon-na trou-ble the wa - ter.

1. See that host all dressed in white,  
 2. See that band all dressed in red,  
 3. Look o - ver yon-der, what do I see? God's a-gon-na trou-ble the

1. The lead - er looks like the Is - ra - elite,  
 2. Looks like the band that Mo - ses led,  
 3. The Ho - ly Ghost a - com - ing on me,  
 wa - ter.

God's a - gon - na trou - ble the wa - ter. *D.C.*

**Third Reading**

Matthew 14:22-33

A Reading from Matthew.

<sup>22</sup>[Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.<sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,<sup>24</sup>but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup>And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."



<sup>28</sup>Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” <sup>29</sup>He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” <sup>32</sup>When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”



*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. Help us, O God our Savior;

**R. Deliver us and forgive us our sins.**

V. Look upon your congregation;

**R. Give to your people the blessing of peace.**

V. Declare your glory among the nations;

**R. And your wonders among all peoples.**

V. Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;

**R. Never forget the lives of your poor.**

V. Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

**R. And your favor to those who are true of heart.**

V. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

**R. So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.**

### *The Collect of the Day*

Grant to us, Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always those things that are right, that we, who cannot exist without you, may by you be enabled to live according to your will; 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 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 Collect for Grace*

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *A Prayer for Mission*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere

may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Intercessions and thanksgivings**

*Presider* We glory in God's Name through the offering of our prayers and petitions, responding, "Hear us, good Lord."

*Intercessor* For the will to discover God's Word dwelling in our hearts, finding expression through our lips, and revealing hope through our generosity; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

For a renewed commitment to righteousness and peace, that we may join with the leaders of all the nations in seeking ways to promote harmony in warring lands, and mutual respect across cultures, races, and languages; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

For creative ways to express the faith, drawing upon the jewels of our tradition, and using our hearts and minds to proclaim Christ's message to those of little faith, or who have no faith at all; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

That the summer months may provide opportunities for rest and refreshment, so that we may be rejuvenated for the challenges ahead; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

For medical personnel who volunteer their services in dangerous places and among the most needy of the world, that we may lift our voices in praise for the healing they bring to others; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

For those who have died and reside in the tomb of death, [especially \_\_\_\_\_], that Christ, who broke the chains of death, will bring them to eternal life; let us pray. **Hear us, good Lord.**

*Silence is kept.*

Ever increasing in faith, we continue our prayers, lifting up to 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 Holy Cross, Novi; and St Thomas, Gautier, in the Dominican Republic. We give you thanks

for all the blessings and mercies we receive from your hands [especially \_\_\_\_\_]. We pray for those who are sick, or in any need 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.**

*Priest* 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 sisters and brothers, 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**

*Take my hand, precious Lord*

LEVAS 106

1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me  
 2. When my way grows— drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger  
 3. When the dark - ness ap - pears and the night draws—

1. stand, — I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; —  
 2. near, — When my life is — al - most — gone; —  
 3. near, — And the day is — past and — gone; —

1. — Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the  
 2. — Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand, lest I  
 3. — At the riv - er I stand, Guide my feet, hold my

1. light, — Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, — Lead me on. —  
 2. fall, — Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, — Lead me on. —  
 3. hand, — Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, — Lead me on. —

## Dismissal and Blessing

*Priest* Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who journey the way with us. So be swift to love, and make haste to be kind.

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

*Presider* Let us bless the Lord.

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

*Presider* Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.** *Ephesians 3:20, 21*

## **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:** 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. **Food will be collected at the church on August 16, the next BC meeting date. The building will be open for you to leave your donations on the table.**

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** 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>

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

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**Upcoming Commemorations**

- Aug. 9 Herman of Alaska, Missionary to the Aleut, 1837
- 10 Laurence, Deacon, and Martyr at Rome, 258
- 11 Clare, Abbess at Assisi, 1253
- 12 Florence Nightingale, Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910
- 13 Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down, Connor, and Dromore, 1667
- 14 Jonathan Myrick Daniels, Seminarian and Martyr, 1965
- 15 Mary the Virgin, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ

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## BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

### Scripture preparation for August 16, 2020: Pentecost 11, Proper 15A

#### Genesis 45:1-15

Oftentimes, when we read the stories of Genesis (and other biblical books), we are perplexed at the turns of events attributed to God. For example, why would God place a forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden? Why would God destroy the world through a devastating flood? Why would God tell Abraham to sacrifice his son? In today's Genesis text we might ask "Why did God put Joseph and his family through such an ordeal, just to get Joseph into Egypt (as it says in verse 8)?" These stories should not be seen as literal presentations of God's actions and motives. Rather, they are myths (stories that use symbolism to speak about reality) or, in the case of the Patriarch stories, legends (interpretive stories of historic events). We should ask ourselves then what theological points the author was trying to make through this story. The answer might be that God can act in our lives and provide for us, even through circumstances that are apparently without hope, such as severe family strife or times of deprivation.

Notice also how Joseph's tearful reunion with his brothers (and his observation that this has all been God's work) comes after a few chapters of devious dealing on Joseph's part. Of course, his brothers previously had sold him into slavery. And they are all the sons of Jacob, the one who took advantage of his own brother and deceived his elderly father. These are not people with whom we would want to share a long car ride! Despite their flaws and bad behavior, however, God still chooses them and manages to do great things through them. Proof indeed that God can write straight with crooked lines!

- Where might God be acting unexpectedly in our church, families, and other experiences, especially in those circumstances where we feel there is no hope?
- How does God's choice of Joseph, his brothers and father, despite their unsavoriness and failings, speak to your own experience of God's grace in those circumstances and people who might not have been our first choice?

#### Psalm 133

Commentators suggest that this psalm could be extolling either the joys of harmony in the family, or the fittingness of worshippers participating in the sacred liturgy in the Temple on Mt. Zion. Regardless, this psalm, despite its joyful tone, can serve as a sharp warning and even rebuke to our modern Christianity, so often fraught with divisiveness. We are reminded here that our fellow worshippers are indeed our "brethren". Sometimes it can be difficult to be mindful of this reality, especially when we differ on matters of liturgical practice, discipline, ideology, or theology. Notice how the sacred author frames this Psalm with a beginning mention of harmony among people and a concluding statement that the blessing of the Lord is life.

Undoubtedly, the two are linked – the fullness of life can only be experienced when there is harmony within the family of faith.



- How might each of us reform our own actions, thoughts, and words so that we can be “brethren living in unity”?
- The biblical notion of salvation is often characterized as a communal experience of the fullness of life. How does this psalm serve as a challenge to some popular ideas that equate “being saved” with getting into heaven?
- What emotions, ideals, or hopes are evoked in the psalmist’s use of “precious oil ... running,” and “the dew of Hermon”? What is being said about the effects of unity?

### **Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32**

Paul continues to ponder the conundrum of Israel’s failure to accept the gospel of Jesus. His references to Abraham and the tribe of Benjamin might serve to evoke Paul’s namesake Saul the king, of this same tribe, who also struggled with the unbelief of his people. Prior to Saul’s becoming king God told the prophet Samuel, “They have rejected me as their king” (1 Sam 8:7). The people are greatly afraid of God’s anger, but Samuel assures them that God will not cast them off, just as Paul says that the Lord will not reject his people now. Paul thus situates Israel’s rejection of Jesus in a larger narrative of his peoples’ struggle to believe.

Paul’s reflections on God’s mercy illustrate how redemption can be brought out of what appears to be a great failure. Just as non-Israelites had previously rejected God, they now have experienced redemption through the sheer mercy of God, not because they did anything to deserve it. So too will Israel’s failure to accept Jesus serve as an occasion for God’s mercy. Above all, Paul tries to illustrate that human disobedience and failure cannot frustrate God’s grace. Grace is a free and abundant gift; nothing can stand in its way.

- How does your personal narrative of faith mirror that of Israel, i.e. the waxing and waning of belief and unbelief?
- Where in our experience of faith and life has God brought about redemption and grace despite our actions that appear to obstruct God’s gifts?

### **Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28**

This short section provides a raw, telling glimpse of the human Jesus, for this is the only instance in the Gospels when he loses an argument! Whenever he is confronted publicly Jesus always has a response to his questioners. But in this instance, his female Canaanite interlocutor manages to stump him – a major embarrassment for a middle- eastern man of the 1st century. More significantly, it appears that Jesus evolves in his thinking about the nature and scope of his ministry. He initially makes it clear to the woman that he has come for the sake of Israel, but by the conclusion of this episode something has changed. Could this be the moment when Jesus realized that the salvation he brought was to be for the nations as well?

This story serves as a challenge to the closed religious mind – those who see faith as static and not subject to development. Jesus exhibits a willingness and ability to change and take on a new perspective. Are there any areas of your faith life where you might be closed-minded or short-sighted?

- How have you been challenged with a new perspective and way of articulating some aspect of your faith that made you feel uncomfortable, but resonated with you nonetheless?
- How does our encounter with and contemplation of the humanness of Jesus nourish our spirituality, identity as disciples, and faith life?

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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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