

Holy Eucharist

The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 17B

August 29, 2021

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Prelude

Opening Hymn

Glorify thy Name

Chorus Book 3

1. Fa - ther, we love You, we wor - ship and a - dore You;
2. Je - sus, we love You, we wor - ship and a - dore You;
3. Spir - it, we love You, we wor - ship and a - dore You;

Chords: B \flat , E \flat / \flat , B \flat , F, E \flat / \flat , F, B \flat , B \flat

Glo - ri - fy Thy name in all the earth.

Chords: B \flat , E \flat , B \flat / \flat , C \flat \flat \flat 7/ \flat , F sus, F

Glo - ri - fy Thy name, glo - ri - fy Thy name,

Chords: B \flat , B \flat / \flat , E \flat , D, C/ \flat , D7, G \flat , G \flat / \flat

Glo - ri - fy Thy name in all the earth.

Chords: E \flat , F/ \flat , E \flat , F7, E \flat / \flat , F7, B \flat sus, B \flat

All standing as they are able, the Officiant says

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

People

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

The Officiant 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

Glory to God

Gloria in excelsis

8 Glo-ry to God in the high - estand

14 peace_to God's peo - ple, and peace_to God's peo - ple on_ earth. Lord God, heavenly

19 King, Al - mighty_y_ God and Fa - ther, we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we

25 praise you_ for your_ glo-ry. _____ Lord, Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son_ of the

31 Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God. You take a - way all the sin_ of the

36 world. Have mer - cy on us. You are seat - ed at the right hand of the

43 Fa - ther. Re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone are the

48 Ho - ly One. You a - lone are the Lord. You a - lone are the Most High

51 Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the

glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men, A - men.

Collect of the Day

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

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

First Reading

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

A Reading from the Song of Solomon.

⁸The voice of my beloved!
 Look, he comes,
 leaping upon the mountains,
 bounding over the hills.
⁹My beloved is like a gazelle
 or a young stag.

Look, there he stands
behind our wall,
gazing in at the windows,
looking through the lattice.
¹⁰My beloved speaks and says to me:
“Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;
¹¹for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
¹²The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land.
¹³The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.”

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 45:1-2, 7-10

¹My heart is stirring with a noble song;
let me recite what I have fashioned for the king;
my tongue shall be the pen of a skilled writer.
²**You are the fairest of men;
grace flows from your lips,
because God has blessed you for ever.**
⁷Your throne, O God, endures for ever and ever,
a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom;
you love righteousness and hate iniquity.
⁸**Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness above your fellows.**
⁹All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and cassia,
and the music of strings from ivory palaces makes you glad.
¹⁰**Kings’ daughters stand among the ladies of the court;
on your right hand is the queen,
adorned with the gold of Ophir.**

Second Reading

James 1:17-27

A Reading from the letter of James.

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.
People **Thanks be to God.**

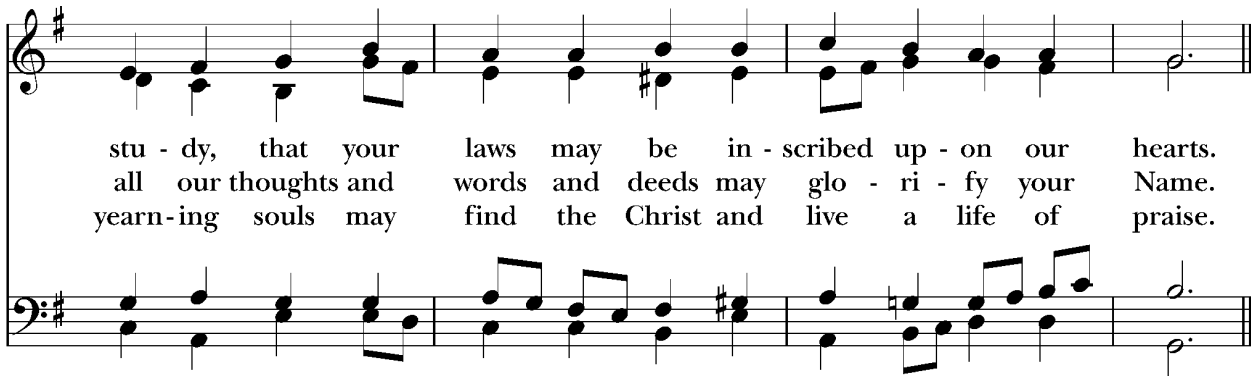
All stand as they are able.

Sequence Hymn

Hymnal 628

Help us, O Lord, to learn

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



Holy Gospel

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

All stand as they are able.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

¹Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,



“This people honors me with their lips,
 but their hearts are far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
 teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

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

Sermon

Nicene Creed

All stand as they are able.

Officiant 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.**

Prayers of the People

All remain standing.

Officiant: Let the words of our mouths express the thoughts of our hearts, O God, as we offer to your divine compassion the needs of the world, praying: Let our hearts be conformed to your purpose; and grant us your blessing.

Intercessor: Gracious God, you have given birth to your Church by your word of truth and raised us as fruits of your creatures. We pray today for our bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moises, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig, all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams, those in formation; and our brothers and sisters worshipping at St Thomas', Trenton; and St Mary, Full of Grace, Mao, in the Dominican Republic. Grant that we may be doers your word and not merely bearers, effectively sharing in your reconciling work throughout the world. Let our hearts be conformed to your purpose; **and grant us your blessing.**

Silence is kept.

Almighty One, help our leaders to carry your scepter of righteousness in order to create justice and peace, care for orphans and widows, and remove the stains that pollute your creation. Let our hearts be conformed to your purpose; **and grant us your blessing.**

Silence is kept.

Compassionate God, let your generosity abound among all the peoples of the earth, that humanity may respond with empathy and grace toward all who suffer, especially orphans and widows, and any who are vulnerable or poor. Let our hearts be conformed to your purpose; **and grant us your blessing.**

Silence is kept.

Loving God, our hearts and lips are close to you as we intercede for our community: Inspire us to resist following human traditions which divide rather than unite, that we may faithfully follow your perfect law of liberty. Let our hearts be conformed to your purpose; **and grant us your blessing.**

Silence is kept.

Healing God, empower our reconciling work to share your blessing with all for whom we intercede [especially _____].

We give you thanks and ask your blessing upon all students, teachers, support staff, and administrators as they begin a new year of learning and exploration. We thank you for all that is good and true and gracious [especially for _____].

Welcome into your divine heart those who have died [especially _____].

Silence is kept.

Officiant: Holy and Eternal One, you lead us through your Word Jesus Christ, who taught us to obey all of your commandments by loving you and by loving our neighbors as ourselves: Purify our hearts that we may be instruments of your holy reconciliation and peace, in the power of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

All kneel as they are able.

A minister then says

Let us confess our sins to God.

A period of silence is observed.

Minister and People together say

**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, who pardons all who truly repent, + forgive your sins, strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

Peace

All stand as they are able.

Officiant The peace of the Lord 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.

Announcements

Holy Communion

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.
Ephesians 5:2

The People then are seated.

How the Holy Communion is prepared

The Presider, other Eucharistic Ministers, and any participating Acolytes must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer, before celebrating and before distribution. Gloves will not be used.

The Presider alone will bring the bread and wine from the credence table to the Altar at the time of the offertory. All of the elements for Holy Communion will be placed on the Altar for the Eucharistic Prayer. The Presider alone stands at the altar, with others 6 feet or more away.

The **priest's wafer and chalice** will be uncovered in front of the Presider during the Eucharistic Prayer. They **are for the Presider alone**. They are consumed entirely by the Presider, or appropriately disposed of after the service.

The priest's wafer and the people's wafers will be kept separate at all times. The **people's wafers will be a container** on the Altar, which will remain covered throughout the Eucharistic Prayer.

During consecration, the Presider will touch the container, not the wafers.

The **distribution** of consecrated wine is not permitted at this time (as of June 19, 2020 Diocese of Michigan directive).

How the Holy Communion will be distributed

Everyone distributing communion will use hand sanitizer before they begin distribution. Gloves will not be used.

Communicants will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer before receiving. Hand sanitizer will be available at the service.

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The people will come to the Altar rail as they are able. The Minister will place the bread in the hand. The distribution will happen without directly touching the hand of the person receiving. Hand-to-mouth distribution is not permitted. If hand-to-hand contact happens, the minister will re-sanitize.

If a blessing is preferred, the blessing will be given without touch.

The people stand as they are able as a minister brings forward the alms basin.

Offertory Hymn

Doxology

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

The people remain standing.

The Officiant says

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We gladly and joyfully thank and praise you, our Lord and God, for you created all things from the overflowing of your goodness and made us your beloved in your covenant of grace.

Out of the long winter of our estrangement you called us to arise and come away with you, because the springtime of our salvation was at hand.

In fulfillment of your own purpose you gave us birth by your Word of truth, so that we would become the first fruits of his creatures.

In your Son Jesus you set us as a seal upon your heart, and in his cross and resurrection you showed that your love was stronger than death.

And so we join our voices with the heavenly throng, singing the hymn of your eternal glory.

Sanctus




Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly

5



God of po - wer and might. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly

9




God of po - wer and might. Hea - ven and earth are

12



full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! All

15




hea - ven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, ho -

18



san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est!

24



molto rit.
Bles-sed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD.

The Officiant continues

Transforming God, you long for us to become holy like you. Through this gathering of reconciliation and word of truth and embodiment of peace you fill us with bread for the journey.

In the power of your Holy Spirit, make all who participate in this blessed meal doers of your word, and not hearers only.

By your same Spirit, bless this food and drink, that they may be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, at the table with his disciples, took bread,
gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying,

"Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

After they had eaten, he took the cup.

Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

"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.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Officiant continues

Gentle God, you call us to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Embolden all who have no one to listen to them, that in their distress, or dismay,
or disease they may meet friends, receive justice, and find you.

Give wisdom to any who have something to say, that they may speak your words,
live your hope, and draw others to your truth.

Bless those who struggle with anger, that their frustration may turn to good work,
and their sense of deep wrong yield a pursuit of righteousness.

Hasten the day when there is no more grief or sorrow, but you are all in all,
ever one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

The Officiant then says

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

The Officiant says

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

The Officiant says

Christ makes himself known to us
in the breaking of bread.

**He offers us his body broken for our sake
and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.**

We accept his promises and gifts
and depend on his life to sustain ours.

**In turn we offer ourselves in thanksgiving
to the risen Lord who has conquered death.**

So we celebrate his victory here and now
and anticipate the joyous feast in his coming kingdom.

**United around this sacrament,
we receive strength and courage
to continue our pilgrimage with God in the world.**

The Presider continues

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, those who are not physically present here join us in offering you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your

resurrection; we await your coming in glory. And since they cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into their hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us all with your grace, Lord Jesus, and never let us be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

All baptized persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

After Communion, the Officiant says

Let us pray.

God of abundance, you have fed us
with the bread of life and cup of salvation;
you have united us
with Christ and one another;
and you have made us one
with all your people in heaven and on earth.

**Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit,
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world
and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

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

Closing Hymn

Be doers of the Word of God

Tune: Forest Green

1. Be do-ers of the word of God, not sim- ply those who hear.
 2. Re- li- gion that is un- de- filed, re- li- gion that is pure
 3. O Christ, you save us by God's grace from hav- ing to o- bey.

Be ones who look in- to God's word, o- bey, and per- se- vere.
 will reach to help the or- phaned child and wel- come all the poor .
 Then, freed to love, we can em- brace a life that seeks your way.

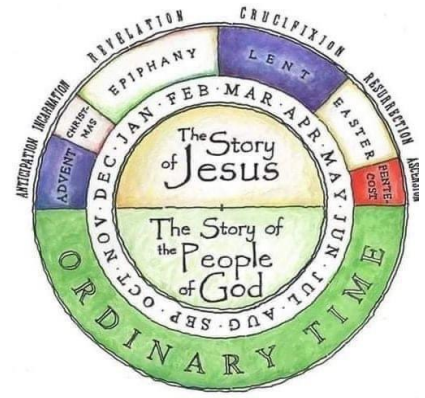
Be quick to li- sten, slow to speak, and slow to an- ger, too.
 If peo- ple come here poor- ly dressed, to judge them is a sin.
 May we be do- ers of the word; may faith shine through our deeds;

Put wrath a- side; in- stead, be meek and let God work in you.
 The rich aren't bet- ter than the rest; God wel- comes poor ones in.
 And as we seek to trust in God, may eth- ics fol- low creeds.

Dismissal

Minister And now, my siblings in Christ, I bid you go in peace to love and serve our Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**



Postlude

Upcoming Commemorations

- August 29 John Bunyan, Writer, 1688
- 30 Charles Chapman Grafton, Bishop of Fond du Lac, and Ecumenist, 1912
- 31 Aidan of Lindisfarne, Bishop, 651
- Sept. 1 David Pendleton Oakerhater, Deacon, 1931
- 2 The Martyrs of New Guinea, 1942
- 3 Prudence Crandall, Teacher and Prophetic Witness, 1890
- 4 Paul Jones, Bishop, Peacemaker and Social Justice Activist, 1941;
and, Albert Schweitzer, Physician, 1965

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OFFERING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in Action is continuing to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They are in need of our continuing help. **If you donate fresh produce**, it is best to bring it directly to FIA on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. **The usual "TOP ITEMS" needed are:** baked beans, coffee, canned tomatoes, hamburger helper (or any helper), spaghetti sauce, small cans Campbell's soup, ketchup, ranch dressing, cereal, 64oz fruit juices, chips, crackers, toilet paper, laundry soap, cleaning products. 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 at the church will September 19**. Please leave your donations at the church on that day.

Financial donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at 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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On Saturday, August 14, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the southwest portion of Haiti. This devastating earthquake was followed by Tropical Storm Grace on Monday night and much of Tuesday. More than 1 million people, including more than half a million children, have been impacted by the back-to-back disasters, and the death toll is close to 2000. Episcopal Relief &

Development and its partners are responding immediately with direct assistance to vulnerable households in the region, as partners plan long-term recovery. Your generous gift can provide assistance to help people in the wake of these disasters. To assist in these efforts, visit episcopalrelief.org/haiti-relief.



Pentecost Proper 17B August 29, 2021

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Everyone loves a good love story. And it is tempting to choose not to see that these verses in the Song of Solomon are indeed a love story. While it is appropriate to view these words as a metaphor for our relationship with God, it is also a very holy act to allow the story to stand on its own and appreciate the tenderness that is woven throughout this love story.

This is the only time in the three-year lectionary that a reading from Song of Solomon is included. Maybe we can just ignore it for three more years, or perhaps, just perhaps - like the two lovers in our reading - we can wrap ourselves in the joy that can come from intimate relationships. God-given intimacy. Beautiful words, poetic words – and words that maybe make some of us blush.... just a little.

- Take a moment to view this story as a metaphor. What does intimacy with God look like for you?
- Read verses 11-13 again. Perhaps nature is God’s intimate and creative gift to us. What are some ways that nature reveals intimacy to you? Write your own 2-to-4-line poem, using imagery of nature that is meaningful to you.

Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9

Another love story. The presence of Psalm 45 in this lectionary series perhaps is a response to the Song of Solomon passage. This psalm is written from the viewpoint of a wedding guest, as the writer describes the loving relationship between a fair king, who rules from the basis of equality, and his bride. Jewish and Christian scholars alike interpret the words of this psalm as pointing us toward the Messiah.

Practically speaking, the fragrances – myrrh, aloe, and cassia – are spicy, sweet smells that today are known protections against infections and promoters of calming emotions. Romance,

protection, equality, and a king who upholds fair treatment. Words of beauty, love pure and holy, words of hope. Yes, this psalm is a love story of hope to the reader.

- In today's pandemic atmosphere, what are the words that bring you hope?

James 1:17-27

The Bible tells many stories about widows and orphans. You have Elijah and the widow – where Elijah appears to take the widow's last amount of oil and flour, only to have blessed her to have an over-abundance. Jesus encounters a widow and restores life to her only son. During Biblical days and beyond, a woman without a man was doomed to a life of poverty and destitution. So, this passage makes it clear to us that true religion, true and authentic worship, has nothing to do with your yearly pledge or your prestigious position, but with how you treat the widow and the orphan or the least of those among you.

This passage in James also reminds us that words matter. It's not only *what* we say that matters, but also *how* we speak our words. When we speak with rage, we are hurtful and we dehumanize ourselves and the other person. When we are living out the word of truth, we are aware when our words become weapons. We are aware when the widow and orphan among us need our truth and support. And we become active parts of the generous giving from above.

- Take a moment to remember a time when your words expressed an unhealthy rage. At what point were you able to stop and recognize the impact of your words?
- In what ways can speaking the truth and caring for the least of those among you be simultaneous?

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

We have learned over the past year in this age of Covid-19, that we can be very much physically defiled by not washing our hands. In the early days of the pandemic, we learned that we should even keep from touching our faces. So, what is Jesus talking about? Is Jesus trying to encourage eating with dirty hands? Of course not. But Jesus is making a point to the scribes and Pharisees: It is not what is outside, but what is in your own heart that defiles you.

Jesus warns that when we place human traditions over God's directions, our hearts become wicked. He gives a substantial list in verses 21-23, teaching that these terrible things do not come from not washing our hands, but they come from within our own hearts – for it is the unclean heart that defiles us.

And these are some rather tough words to swallow: wickedness, defile, murder, slander – and the list goes on. We could very easily skim right over the words with the thought, “Well, I don't do any of these things!” But try instead to keep it simple and ask yourself, “Am I honoring God with my lips, while my heart is far from God?” This is not an invitation to beat yourself up, but an opportunity to bring your heart in line with your traditions.

- Think of an example in your own congregation where something continues to be done because of tradition. Does this activity reflect the true mission of the church? Why or why not?

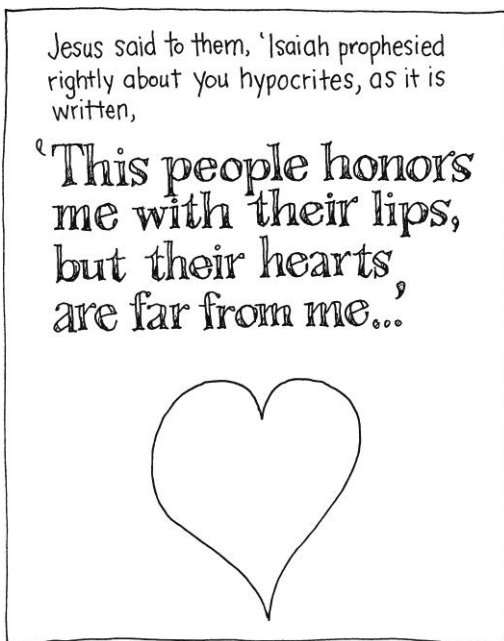
This study was written by Rita Carson Kendagor

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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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