

Holy Eucharist

September 26, 2021

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=ei94>

[MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=ei94)

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 21B

Prelude

Opening Hymn

Hymnal 482

Lord of all hopefulness



1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,



whose trust, ev - er child - like, no cares could de - stroy,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace,
whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm,



be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray,
be there at our lab - ors, and give us, we pray,
be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray,
be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray,



your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

All standing as they are able, the Presider says

Blessed be + the one, holy, and living God.

People **Glory to God for ever 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

D F#m7 GM9 Em7 D/E

Sure - ly the pres - ence of the Lord is in this place; I can

Em7 F#m A7 G A7 D G A F#m A7

feel His might - y pow - er and His grace. I can

D F#m7 GM9 Em7

hear the brush of an - gels' wings, I see glo - ry on each face;

Em7 F#m A7 F#m Em7 F#m A7 D

Sure - ly the pres - ence of the Lord is in this place.

Collect of the Day

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

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

The Lessons

First Reading

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

A Reading from the book of Esther.

¹The king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. ²On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” ³Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request. ⁴For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king.” ⁵Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?” ⁶Esther said, “A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. ⁹Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” ¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

^{9:20}Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, ²¹enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, ²²as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

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

Psalm 124

¹If the LORD had not been on our side, *
let Israel now say;
²If the LORD had not been on our side, *
when enemies rose up against us;
³**Then would they have swallowed us up alive *
in their fierce anger toward us;**
⁴**Then would the waters have overwhelmed us *
and the torrent gone over us;**
⁵Then would the raging waters *
have gone right over us.
⁶Blessed be the LORD! *
he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.
⁷**We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; *
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.**
⁸**Our help is in the Name of the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.**

Second Reading

James 5:13-20

A Reading from the Letter of James.

¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

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

Hymn

Hymnal 480

When Jesus left his Father's throne



1 When Je - sus left his Fa - ther's throne, he chose an hum - ble birth;
2 Sweet were his words and kind his look, when mo - thers round him pressed;
3 When Je - sus in - to Zi - on rode, the chil - dren sang a - round;



like us, un - hon - ored and un - known, he came to dwell on earth.
their in - fants in his arms he took, and on his bos - om blessed.
for joy they plucked the palms and strowed their gar - ments on the ground.



Like him may we be found be - low, in wis - dom's path of peace;
Safe from the world's al - lur - ing harms, be - neath his watch - ful eye,
Ho - san - na our glad voic - es raise, ho - san - na to our King!



like him in grace and know - ledge grow as years and strength in - crease.
thus in the cir - cle of his arms may we for ev - er lie.
Should we for - get our Sa - vior's praise, the stones them - selves would sing.

Holy Gospel

Mark 9:38-50

All stand as they are able.

Gospeller

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

People

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

³⁸John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.



⁴²“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

⁴⁹“For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Nicene Creed

All stand as they are able.

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.**

Prayers of the People

All remain standing.

Presider: Ever-present God, you reveal yourself in the splendor and order of your creation: Heal our broken lives that we may join in the reconciling work of Christ, as we pray: Our help is in the Name of God, the maker of heaven and earth.

Intercessor: Mighty and Patient One, you have taught us that whoever is not against us is for us, and you have promised a divine reward for all who befriend any of your children. We pray 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 Canterbury House, University of Michigan; and Divine Grace, Mosovi, and St Pater's, Los Conucos, in the Dominican Republic. Save your Church from whatever may cause us to stumble, that our hands may serve with compassion, our feet walk in the ways of truth, and our eyes be set upon your unquenchable love. Our help is in the Name of God, **the maker of heaven and earth.**

Silence is kept.

Just and Compassionate One, you call us to defend the vulnerable and to resist the oppressor: Give our leaders vision and strength to be instruments of justice and servants of peace who will take up the burden of your people and serve them rightly. Our help is in the Name of God, **the maker of heaven and earth.**

Silence is kept.

Gracious and Loving One, you have made the earth one home for all people: inspire us to serve alongside those who seek to care for your creation, and bestow upon all people, upon our children, and upon our children's children the fruit of that good work. Our help is in the Name of God, **the maker of heaven and earth.**

Silence is kept.

Kind and Gentle One, you uphold the little ones, the weak and the vulnerable: Raise up those who suffer or who are oppressed throughout the world, that they may know the comfort of your saving help. We pray for those for whom we are concerned: those who have asked for our prayers, and for those who have no one to pray for them, [especially _____]. Our help is in the Name of God, **the maker of heaven and earth.**

Silence is kept.

Merciful and Healing One, you have taught us that the prayer of faith will save the sick and that you will raise them up: Hear us as we pray for the sick [especially _____].

You have told us to sing songs of praise with the cheerful: Hear our thankful hearts praising you [especially for _____].

You have overcome death in the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ: Accept into your eternal love those who have ended their earthly journey and now are surrounded by angels and archangels and their unending songs of praise [especially _____]. Our help is in the Name of God, **the maker of heaven and earth.**

Presider Send your Spirit into all the earth, O God, that every human being may know your love, grow in faith, and serve your creation in grateful humility, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

The Presider says

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord your God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

A minister then says

Let us confess our sins to God.

A period of silence is observed.

Minister and People together say

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. 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.**

Announcements

Holy Communion

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

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 Presider 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.

Redeeming God, we delight to praise you for the triumphs of your grace
and to thank you for the wonders of your love.

You created all things to fulfill your longing to be in covenant relationship with us.

When that trust was broken, you visited your children in the exile of Babylon
and upheld them in a foreign place.

Again in Christ you came closer to your people through suffering
than they had been to you in times of plenty.

Because his resurrection was for us and our salvation, we call upon your holy name
in the hope that never disappoints us, and we celebrate your glory,
joining with the host of heaven in the never-ending song.

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

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

The Presider continues

Renewing God, in Christ you reveal to us the heart of your life,
 and you show us how to live the life of your heart.

He is the wonder of you, standing before us, and the reality of us, standing before you.

Send your Holy Spirit upon your children,
 that they may be shaped by your love and joy and peace.

Bless this bread and wine by the power of that same Spirit
 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 Presider continues

Restoring God, visit today all who are sick: send them companions to abide with them, faithful friends to pray with them, forgiving disciples to be close to them in their suffering, and prophets to raise them from sadness and pain.

As your servant Esther prayed fervently for deliverance, and found her answer in you, look with mercy on all who live in fear or scarcity or doubt or despair, and hear the cry of all who have found a stumbling block in those they had cause to trust.

Turn our sorrow into dancing and our grief into hope, until your kingdom comes, your will is finally done, and you are all in all. God the three in one. **AMEN.**

The Presider 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 Presider says

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

The Presider 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 Presider 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

May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of his blessing. **Amen.**

May God, who through the water of baptism has raised us from sin into newness of life, make you holy and worthy to be united with Christ for ever. **Amen.**

May God, who has brought us out of bondage to sin into true lasting freedom in the Redeemer, bring you to your eternal inheritance. **Amen.**

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

Trust and obey

LEVAS 205

1. When we walk with the Lord In the light of His word, What a glo - ry He
2. Not a shad - ow can rise, Not a cloud in the skies, But His smile quick - ly
3. Not a bur - den we bear, Not a sor - row we share, But our toil He doth
5. When in fel - low - ship sweet We will sit at His feet, Or we'll walk by His

1. sheds on our way! While we do His good will, He a - bides with us still,
2. drives it a - way; Not a doubt nor a fear, Not a sigh nor a tear,
3. rich - ly re - pay; Not a grief nor a loss, Not a frown nor a cross,
5. side in the way; What He says we will do, Where He sends we will go,—

1. And with all who will trust and o - bey.
 2. Can a - bide while we trust and o - bey.
 3. But is blest if we trust and o - bey. Trust and o - bey, for there's
 5. Nev - er fear, on - ly trust and o - bey.

no oth - er way To be hap - py in Je - sus, But to trust and o - bey.

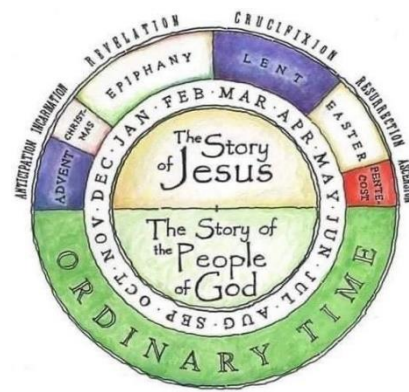
Dismissal

A minister says

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

Thanks be to God!

Postlude



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**CONTINUING 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. **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 be **October 21**. 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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Upcoming Commemorations

- September 26 Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop, 1626; and,
Wilson Carlile: Priest, 1942
- 27 Vincent de Paul: Religious, and Prophetic Witness, 1660; and,
Thomas Traherne: Priest, 1674
- 28 Richard Rolle, 1349, Walter Hilton, 1396, and
Margery Kempe, c. 1440, Mystics
- 29 St Michael and All Angels
- 30 Jerome, Priest and Scholar, 420
- October 1 Remigius of Rheims, Bishop, c. 530

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Proper 21B

September 26, 2021

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

Esther is perhaps the most fun of all the biblical books! A hilarious cast of characters, comedic turns of fate, and a clear commendation of enjoyment make this story a delight! And, of course, the story of Esther animates the wonderful Jewish holiday known as Purim. It is remembered on this day how Queen Esther and her cousin Mordecai saved the Jewish people of Persia from the plots of the wicked Haman. Purim includes costumes and noisemakers which are sounded whenever the name “Haman” is mentioned in the text! Another Purim tradition derived from the ancient Babylonian Talmud is that Jews are to drink until they cannot tell the difference

between the phrases “cursed be Haman” and “blessed be Mordecai!”

While the book of Esther conveys much wisdom and is a joy to recite, let’s focus on two brief points. First, the book does not mention God. Rather, we intuit that God is at work in events and in the characters’ choices and intuitions. Isn’t it much the same for us? Like Esther and Mordecai, we are called to discern and act in our circumstances as best we can. The invitation is to trust that God is mysteriously, quietly at work beneath the surface. What’s more, our reading concludes with a call to celebrate and enjoy! We don’t often hear such an enjoinder under the auspices of religion. Our ancestors in faith understood that life is above all a gift to be celebrated and enjoyed; that there indeed should be days of “feasting and gladness”!

- How can we make days of “feasting and gladness” a spiritual practice, as commended by the book of Esther?

Psalm 124

Our psalm verses this week strike themes of new life, redemption, and the trustworthiness of the Lord. Verse 8 expresses a truth that is key to the Christian journey – “Our help is in the name of the Lord.” In other words, we can’t do it on our own. Our ultimate security, peace, meaning, and future require our cooperation with God’s transformative grace. Though we value “independence” and have internalized the non-biblical teaching that “God helps those who help themselves”, Psalm 124 stands as a counter-witness to this kind of thinking. The authors of this poem lived through a trial that threatened their very survival (perhaps the Babylonian Exile). They teach us that in the experience of having nowhere else to turn but God, one is initiated into the reality of human limits and vulnerability, and also the power of God to deliver from the flood that would have swept us away (v. 4).

- How have you experienced the truth that “Our help is in the name of the Lord?”

James 5:13-20

James emphasizes the importance of rituals in the life of faith. The instruction to call for the elders to pray over the sick, using oil in the name of the Lord, has been interpreted in our tradition as a forerunner of the sacrament of anointing. Similarly, the teaching that we should confess our sins to one another is held as a prototype of sacramental confession. James recognizes the need for human contact through ritualized gestures. These speak in a powerful way to the human heart.

James concludes by underscoring his major theme – faith in action. Christians are called to hear the word and put it into practice. Faith in action is faith that works for the building up and preservation of the community. Although individual members of a community might be sinners, the good work to maintain the unity of the group serves to counteract, to “cover a multitude of sins” (v. 20).

- How have ritual gestures and prayers been important to your experience of Christian faith?

Mark 9:38-50

The metaphor of the body was a commonly used teaching tool in the ancient world, and we see Jesus take it up in our verses this week. While often used to symbolize the community (see also 1 Cor. 12), Jesus creatively uses “body” to address the matter of scandal. We might find Jesus’ language harsh, for he says in effect if a member of the community is leading others astray, that member should be removed, before the whole body is damaged. And his concluding proverb about salt is not innocuous. Salt was used in the ancient Near East as a catalyst to start fires. He is telling his audience to be confrontational at times. Verse 50 could be interpreted to mean that troublemakers should be confronted so that the community can have peace. This passage, when read in this light, is among the “hard sayings” of Jesus. In the context of our modern church communities, we are invited to carry the tension between protecting the integrity of the community and being compassionate toward the wayward.

- How might we go about discerning when scandal is a danger to the community, and how we might confront it?

This study was written by Brian B. Pinter.

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Holy One, you are our comfort and strength in times of sudden disaster, crisis, or chaos. Surround us now with your grace and peace through storm or earthquake, fire or flood.

By your Spirit, lift up those who have fallen, sustain those who work to rescue or rebuild. Fill us with the hope of your new creation; through You, our rock and redeemer. Amen.

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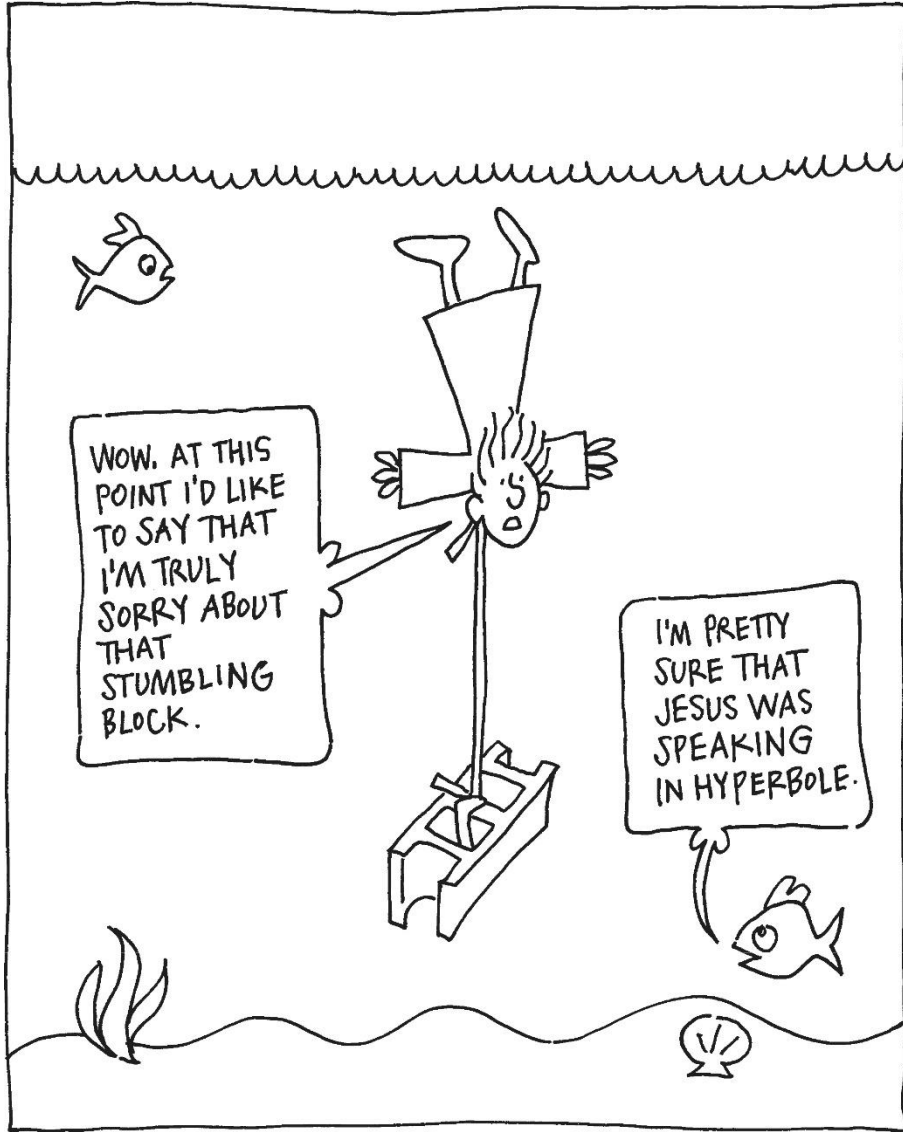
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Intercessions and Thanksgivings from *Planning for rites and rituals: Year B*. New York: Church Publishing, 2017, pp.263-264.

Eucharistic Prayer from Wells, Samuel and Abigail Kocher, *Eucharistic prayers*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, pp.288-289.

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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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