

**Morning Worship**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**  
**16<sup>th</sup> August 2020**  
**Rev. Peter Widdess**



**Personal preparation before the service begins.**

Please take time to remember where you are, and why you are here. Give thanks and become still in the presence of God

**Prelude**

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you.

**And also with you**

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Song**

Sing for God's glory  
that colours the dawn of creation,  
racing across the sky  
trailing bright clouds of elation;  
sun of delight  
succeeds the velvet of night,  
warming the earth's exultation

Sing for God's power  
that shatters the chains that would bind us,  
tearing the darkness  
of fear and despair that could blind us,  
touching our shame  
with love that will not lay blame  
reaching out gently to find us.

Sing for God's justice  
disturbing each easy illusion,  
tearing down tyrants  
and putting our pride to confusion;  
lifeblood of right,  
resisting evil and slight,  
offering freedom's transfusion.

**Let us pray with words from Psalm 67**

May God be gracious to us and bless us  
**and make his face shine on us**  
so that your ways may be known on earth,  
**your salvation among all nations.**  
May the peoples praise you, God;  
**may all the peoples praise you.**  
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
**for you rule the peoples with equity**  
**and guide the nations of the earth.**  
May the peoples praise you, God;  
**may all the peoples praise you.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
**As it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever.**

### **The collect for the 10th Sunday after Trinity**

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,  
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;  
and that they may obtain their petitions  
make them to ask such things as shall please you;  
through Jesus Christ your son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### **The First Reading** **Romans chapter 11, 1-2a, 28-32**

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God  
**Our hearts and our minds are open**

I ask then: Did God reject his people?  
By no means!

I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the  
tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he  
foreknew.

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your  
sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on  
account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are  
irrevocable.

Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have  
now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they  
too have now become disobedient in order that they too may  
now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For  
God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he  
may have mercy on them all.

This is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to  
Matthew 15, 21-28

**Glory to you, O Lord**

Leaving Gennesaret, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

Jesus did not answer a word.

So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

"Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **Homily**

Tuesday this week there was an article in the Badische Zeitung. The headline was: "No longer in camouflage – anti-Semitism is fit for society". The Verfassungsschutz reports that violence against Jews in Germany has doubled between 2017 and 2019. The journalist doesn't need to mention the attack on the synagogue in Halle or conspiracy theories about Jews and Corona, but writes about everyday life. The president of the Zentralrat der Juden in Germany, Josef Schuster, is quoted as saying that people say things about Jews now which they would not have said 10 years ago.

Anti-Semitism, pogroms of Jews and ultimately the attempt of the Nazi regime in Germany to destroy European Judaism belonged almost 2000 years to our history in Europe. There

was not just physical violence but also intellectual violence. At the moment the Archdiocese of Freiburg is trying to get rid of the bust of Professor Alban Stolz, an extremely aggressive and anti-Semitic catholic theologian of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The bust is in front of the Munster Forum, but the Denkmalschutz says that the bust must stay where it is.

We, as Christians, are not innocent of anti-Semitism. There are Christian groups which are, up to the present day, anti-Semitic through theological conviction, arguing that the second coming of Christ is only possible when the Jews are converted. It was only a few years ago that Pope Benedict tried to restore the old church collect for Good Friday to the catholic liturgy, which prays for the conversion of the Jews to Christ. Fortunately the resistance in the world church was so great that he had to take back this reform.

Where are the roots of anti-Semitism? Let us focus on one central event – the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in the year 70. The people of Israel lived in conflict with the roman state. The study of the history of the Roman Empire is the dreary story of the continual uprisings of peoples on the frontiers of the Roman Empire. The Empire meant violence and repression for the edges and wealth for the middle. The Israelites had made various attempts to throw off the roman yoke. In the year 68 a major uprising resulted in the roman army needing 5 years before it had crushed all resistance. In the course of this war the roman army destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. This was a turning point in Jewish and Christian history.

From this time on the practice of Jewish religion was not based on the liturgy in the temple, but rather prayer with the reading and preaching on the bible texts in the synagogue. This was the time when the Jews had to decide which books or texts belonged to the holy canon of scripture. And a few years later, with the final destruction of the city of Jerusalem, the Jewish Diaspora in the whole of the Roman Empire became a despised and persecuted minority.

This had important consequences for that small Jewish sect, the early church. One important root of anti-Semitism is the way in which the early church distanced itself from the despised and persecuted Jews in the Empire. This wasn't social distancing, this was self-defence. The early church was despised and persecuted as well, but it was very keen to say – we are not Jews, we are good Romans faithful to the empire. The criticisms of Judaism in the New Testament need to be read and understood in this context. If we are blind to this context, which theologians and other Christians have been for hundreds of years, then we have as a

consequence Alban Stolz in the Catholic Church or Lutheran theologians in Germany welcoming the Nazis.

If however we read the bible without being blind, we get tantalising glimpses of how Christianity might have developed differently.

The central issue for the early church was the question: is Christianity a Jewish movement which welcomes people who are not Jews into its midst, or is it a religion which has grown out of Judaism, and is now independent?

In today's gospel we get a very clear picture of Jesus, the Jew. He says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." The Canaanite woman forces him to think again with her sharp image of the dogs which eat crumbs from under the table of their masters. It is a rare picture of Jesus learning from others and accepting their criticism. Jesus learns that people outside of the fence which defines Jewishness can also have great faith.

Paul, the Jewish rabbi, was very concerned about the question of Jewish identity, the fence around Jewishness. At the same time his role in the New Testament is as the missionary who spread the gospel of Christ to those who were not Jews. In his letter to the Christians in Rome in chapters 9-11 he sets out his thoughts about the relationship of Judaism and Christianity. His argument is complex and has often been interpreted through the dark glasses of blindness to anti-Semitism. In today's reading we have part of his conclusion. I will attempt to sum up his argument in my own words.

The Jews are God's chosen people, whom God has known from the beginning. The promises which God has made to them remain valid and true. Whatever else may happen, the Jews remain God's chosen people.

Now there is another chosen people, the Christians, some of them are Jews and others are not Jews. They have become chosen through the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Neither the Jews nor the Christians are perfect, all are sinners, blind to this or that aspect of the way they live and follow their faith in God. All are saved through God's mercy.

I ask a few questions for further thought arising out of this summary of Paul's understanding of the relationship Jews and Christians:

When did the ACF last visit the Freiburg Synagogue or meet with Jews from Freiburg?

Do we recognise or take seriously the faith of people from the other side of the fence around the ACF, other Christian

denominations, Jews, Moslems and others?  
How can we celebrate God's faithfulness and mercy not only  
to us but also to others?

To God be the glory, now and forever. **Amen**

### **Song**

*God has spoken to His people,  
Alleluia!  
And His words are words of wisdom,  
Alleluia!*

Open your ears, O Christian people,  
open your ears, and hear good news.  
Open your ears, O royal priesthood,  
God has come to you,  
God has come to you.

*God has spoken to His people,  
Alleluia!  
And His words are words of wisdom,  
Alleluia!*

They who have ears to hear His message,  
they who have ears, now let them hear.  
He who would learn the way of wisdom,  
Let them hear God's word,  
Let them hear God's word.

*God has spoken to His people,  
Alleluia!  
And His words are words of wisdom,  
Alleluia!*

Israel comes to greet the Saviour,  
Judah is glad to see His day.  
From East and West the peoples travel,  
He will show the way,  
He will show the way.

*God has spoken to His people,  
Alleluia!  
And His words are words of wisdom,  
Alleluia!*



## Intercessions

The readings today talk about God's mercy and show him hearing and answering a prayer. Therefore, it only seems fitting to use modification of a standard response, "Lord in your mercy." And "**Grant our request.**"

Let us pray.

Thank you for the reminder of your great mercy towards those whom you call. We bring you today the unrest and the continual persecution of the Jews in Israel, in Germany, and in other parts of the world. May your protective hand come over them and bring peace to this people group and may they experience you and the trinity in new and incredible ways!

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

Response: **Grant our request.**

We read last week that ALL who call on the name of the Lord will be saved and, in the reading today, you say you will grant mercy to us all. We bring the people groups that are experiencing persecution in Freiburg, in Germany, and in our home countries. May these people sense your mercy and protection in their trying circumstances and would you bring peace. May the eyes of the persecutors be opened to see those that they are persecuting with your eyes.

I especially mention the racial problems in the US and the groups that our on our hearts that we mention to you now in silence...

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

Response: **Grant our request.**

It is hard to remember your mercy and that are merciful when I see the state of the world today—whether it is in the riots in the US or the devastating circumstances in Lebanon. It seems like minorities and those who are struggling can't get a break. It can feel like hopeless and like an incredible weight is bogging us down. Lord, we beg you for mercy, protection, and that those in devastating circumstances would experience your provision in incredible ways.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

Response: **Grant our request.**

In preparing for these prayers I was reminded of your words on the Sermon on the Mount where you said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." Help me and help us to be your instruments and to show mercy to those around us. Open our eyes to see where we can be your hands and feet. What does it look like to show mercy and be merciful to those around us?

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

Response: **Grant our request.**

Lord, thank you for the mercy and forgiveness that you show us. What an incredible gift! Help us to forgive ourselves and others who have not been so merciful to us. Lord, help us to let go of any

bitterness or regret that clouds relationships and/or our own view of ourselves and receive and pass on your mercy.

We bring these thoughts to you now in silence...

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

Response: **Grant our request.**

Lastly, I am always struck by the story of the woman in this Gospel. She was bold and persistent. She truly believed that Jesus could help her and wouldn't give up. Her faith seemed to move you to action! Would you increase our faith and may be also be so bold and persistent in the requests that are near and dear to our heart? We bring you those requests now...

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

Response: **Grant our request.**

**Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

In the language of our hearts, let us pray as our Saviour taught us .....

### **A sign of peace**

Blessed are the peacemakers:

they shall be called children of God.

We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

We offer one another a sign of peace.

### **Song**

For the healing of the nations,  
Lord, we pray with one accord,  
for a just and equal sharing  
of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,  
from despair your world release,  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth be banned:  
Pride of status, race or schooling,  
dogmas that obscure your plan.  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow brief life's span.

### **The Blessing**

May the Father from whom every family  
in earth and heaven receives its name  
strengthen you with his Spirit in your inner being,  
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
come upon you and remain with you always  
Amen

Go in the peace of Christ

**Thanks be to God**

### **Postlude**