

Morning Prayer 1st August 2021

**The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost/
The Ninth Sunday after Trinity**

Morning Worship with Tini Horning



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

Call to worship

In this moment
we are invited to acknowledge the loving care
and compassion of God for each of us,
to listen to the words of encouragement,
and call, even on difficult or depressing days,
and God's desires
for our complete and unequivocal faithful
response to the message of Jesus.

Come let us worship God.

Approach

O God You know each of us well, love us deeply
and are able to sustain us
in an enormous variety of ways.
We are humbled
by our awareness of Your profound concern
and involvement in our petty concerns and worries,
and your keen interest in our welfare.

Given so many gifts in our daily lives to enrich us and opportunities for love and companionship, we come anticipating a deeper appreciation of and wider perspective of Your grace and power. **Amen.**

Let us pray with words from Psalm 51:1-14

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness; ♦
according to the abundance of your compassion
blot out my offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness ♦
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults ♦
and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned ♦
and done what is evil in your sight,

So that you are justified in your sentence ♦
and righteous in your judgement.

I have been wicked even from my birth, ♦
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire truth deep within me ♦
and shall make me understand wisdom
in the depths of my heart.

Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; ♦
wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear of joy and gladness, ♦
that the bones you have broken may rejoice.

Turn your face from my sins ♦
and blot out all my misdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God, ♦
and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence ♦
and take not your holy spirit from me.

Give me again the joy of your salvation ♦
and sustain me with your gracious spirit;
Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked ♦
and sinners shall return to 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.

Song: SoF 120 From heaven you came (The Servant King)

1. From heav'n You came, helpless babe,
Enter'd our world, Your glory veil'd;
Not to be served but to serve,
And give Your life that we might live.

This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.

2. There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load He chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but Yours,' He said.

This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.

4. So let us learn how to serve,
And in our lives enthrone Him;
Each other's needs to prefer,
For it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow Him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.

The Collect for today, the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
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.
Amen.

The reading is taken from 2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a

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

When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this

deserves to die; he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; I gave you your master’s house, and your master’s wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

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

The reading is taken from John 6:24-35

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

Glory to you, O Lord

The next day, when the people who remained after the feeding of the five thousand saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you

ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.” Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

Have you ever thought about how much doing things and what we do impacts our lives? How do you introduce yourself? What do you think about when you go to bed at night or get up in the morning? How do you determine success or a sense of accomplishment? What do you talk about with your friends or family?

What about in the media? You-Tube ads tell us how to lose weight, how to earn more money, etc. Nike says, “just do it!” Amazon has 100,000+ how to books. Let’s face it, we can tend to be action-oriented people. Both unconsciously and consciously, we want to do more, to have more, and to experience more. The world is at our fingertips. We want more and need to know what we can do to get it.

Is this true in the spiritual world as well?

I will go out on a limb and say definitely! A quick search showed that Amazon has 50,000+ how to Christian books. It makes sense after all. If our faith is so important, why wouldn't it be a high priority to do it right.

The people in our Gospel text today seem to be driven in a similar way. Last Sunday we read the passage directly before this one where Jesus fed a crowd of people (5000) with 5 barley loaves and 2 fish). Afterwards the crowd was full-both physically and spiritually. They even said, "Surely this is the Prophet who has come into the world."

Now, just a day later, the crowd wants more. They are driven to action and, seeing that Jesus had left, go in search of Him. Why? They are hungry for more. This hunger was enough for them to stop what they were doing and seek after the source of this bread. Suddenly their jobs, their chores, and their to-do lists were irrelevant. They had a one-track mind.

We don't know how long it took them to find Him but when they did, they asked him, "When did you get here?" I wonder if they felt disappointed that Jesus had left without telling them or what they really wanted to ask Him.

Jesus responds as He often does- by not answering the question but teaching them. He says that they should not work for food that spoils but for that which endures. In other words, they should not be content with a full belly or a paycheck but work for something that has an eternal impact. It sounds enticing and confusing all at the same time. Who wouldn't want to spend their time working on something that lasts forever? But what would that look like?

This is back to the concept of wanting more and our focus on action. Naturally then, the crowd asks Jesus what they need to DO in order to please God and do the work God requires. I imagine them waiting for and

expecting either a “how-to” presentation or Jesus explaining a three-step process to success. If this scene took place in today’s world, they would have probably searched for an instructional video “how to work for food that endures” on YouTube. (If you do, by the way, you will find a few sermons on this text.) ☺

Again, Jesus baffles the crowd. Instead of being given a list of things to do in order to produce eternal works, to see and experience even greater miracles, and to please the Lord, they are told to believe. That’s it?

How is belief considered work? What employer would pay you if you said to them, “I believe in you as my boss or that things will get done, that is enough, right?” With so many how-to books available for Christians there must be more to pleasing God than that, right?

I certainly used to think so and can catch this train of thought sneaking into my mind. Maybe you can relate, it is in a way seeing living out my faith successfully like going to the fitness studio.

I love going to the fitness studio. There are countless machines and lots of things to do. It’s good for me as an achiever and the lover of To-do lists. It is a challenge. My sweaty clothes are proof that I have accomplished something and...probably the main reason, my subconscious seems to think that if I do ALL of the machines and stretch then, as a reward and if there is enough time, I can just BE in the sauna! Then I am successful and have earned it.

This week, I decided to try something new. I went to a cardio class. Let me tell you...it was exhausting. 1 hr. of LOTS of hard work and a trainer who was nice, but also pushy. There were only three of us in the course, so it was impossible to hide away in the corner and take a break. He was always watching. He was encouraging at times, but also challenged us to do more, work harder, and keep going. I must admit that no matter how hard I tried it never seemed to look as good or be as perfect as the instructor in front of me. I left the course tired and discontent.

Sometimes we can see living out our faith like attending that cardio course. We eagerly seek out instruction from the Word, from sermons, pastors, mentors, etc. in the same way that my eyes were glued to that fitness instructor. We wait to get the next instruction, not wanting to make a mistake. DOING things become most important and especially, doing them right. If we are driven to please a fitness instructor who we don't even know, how much more would we want to please our Father in Heaven? And, just as most of us can never seem to do the exercises exactly right in the fitness courses, we will undoubtedly miss the mark in DOING things for God and so living out your faith.

This type of faith is exhausting and impossible! We will never be able to DO enough to earn God's love or prove our faith in Him. We will make mistakes and even our best efforts will fall short. John 15:5 says, "apart from me you can do nothing." And...you know what. That's ok.

My last homily centered around the story of Jesus with Nicodemus, a teacher who wanted to know what he needed to do to enter the Kingdom of heaven- like the crowd's request mentioned today. Do you remember how Jesus answered? He said Nicodemus simply needed to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. In the Gospel today, Jesus echoes this message and calls the people to believe in Him.

Eph. 2:8+9 goes further to say, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this not from yourselves, it is a gift from God- not by works, so that no one can boast."

Grace is unmerited favor from God- a gift. God wants to be with us. Jesus even says in the Gospel that He came down from heaven to be the bread of life for us. He didn't have to leave heaven. He was in fellowship with His Father, God Almighty, surrounded by angels and saints. He lacked nothing but He chose out of love for us to come down from Heaven.

Just as any other gift, grace needs to be received in order to enjoy or experience it, which can be done by believing in Jesus, having faith and accepting His grace, accepting that He loves you and wants to have a relationship with you. Apart from believing, there is no other mention of anything we can or must do!

Does this sound too good to be true? Are you skeptical, just as the people from the Gospel text? It does totally go against the grain of the world in which we live that is focused on doing things to receive or become someone and is wildly contrary to the understanding of “fitness studio” faith that can creep into our minds.

We, however, were created to live with God in another world- in His kingdom, where things are entirely different. In this world things are turned around and, our actions stem from our being in a relationship with God, a byproduct of what we experience with Him.

David’s Psalm, which we prayed earlier in the service, alludes to this. He wrote the Psalm after the scene in the first reading. He comes before God in confession after having fallen short in a big way. He had committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to cover it up. When his first cover up attempt was not successful, he went to more drastic measures and had Bathsheba’s husband killed. God sent Nathan, an angel, to call him out on his actions, not right away though. A year’s time had passed between David’s sins and Nathan’s arrival.

David’s Psalm and the way he spoke to God differ from how the people spoke with Jesus in John. Instead of asking what he could do, David asks God to do things for him- to have mercy (or be gracious) (v.1), to cleanse him from his sins, to forgive him, to create in him a pure heart and to renew his Spirit. He asks God to be near him so that he may experience Him and the unsurpassable joy and salvation that is only available in Him. It seems as if he knew that he was reliant upon God and capable of doing nothing even close to an “eternal work.”

Notice that from Verses 1-12 the only action that David mentions he can do or has done is sinning against God. He recognizes that in everything else, he is reliant upon God to do everything, until v. 13. David says, "THEN I will teach transgressors your ways."

Do you see the change? After experiencing God's grace, being restored into fellowship with Him, David is moved and capable to DO something for God- to share with others about who God is and what he has experienced with Him.

It is the same with us. Instead of DOING things for Jesus to BE a good Christian and so live out our faith, we could first BE in His presence, be real about where we are, confess our shortcomings and allow Him to restore us, to make us new, to fill us with joy and so much more. THEN, out of being, we would be compelled to DO things for Him. The doing would be an afterthought, a natural byproduct.

I'm not say that we need to throw away and/or forget the how-to books on living out our faith. They can be super helpful and there is a value to them. There is a difference, however, in why we read them. Is it because we think there are things we MUST do in order to please God or do they show us what we COULD do with the joy and thankfulness we experience as a result of experiencing his grace?

God's love and acceptance and the amount of grace that He shows us does not change based on what we have or have not done. Through Christ and our faith in Him we are unconditionally accepted and reconciled with God, without having done even one single work!

In closing, I want to return to the crowd's mindset at the beginning of the text. After experiencing the miraculous bread, they were compelled to drop everything and go in search of more from Jesus! That bread must have been something special and they were compelled to seek Jesus without knowing for sure if he was just a one-trick pony, a miracle worker who could multiply

bread, or if He could do more than that! We know more than that. We have the chance to experience so much more— Jesus, the BREAD of Life! We might not have Jesus with us physically, but we who believe in Jesus have the Holy Spirit living in us, the part of the trinity that guides, comforts, directs and so much more.

And... spoiler alert! One fun fact about works that Jesus says later in John 14:12:
Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

This is a verse that I can't get my mind around! Our belief enables us to do even greater things than Jesus did while He was on this Earth! That gives me goosebumps. I have no idea what that looks like exactly, but it makes me want to drop everything and find out! So, works do come into play in our faith after all, just not in the order that we might assume. Our ability to do great works for God!

Are you hungry to find out or to know more? Let's start by going to the source- Jesus, believing in Him, being with Him and seeing what happens. He says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” ALL are welcome!

Amen.

Song: ACF 7 Beauty for Brokenness (God of the Poor)

1. Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord, in Your suffering world this is our prayer.
Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,
Sunrise to sunset, Your kingdom increase!

4. Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned - our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;

Make us content with the things that we need.

God of the poor, friend of the weak,
Give us compassion, we pray:
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain;
Come, change our love from a spark_____ to a flame.

5. Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame
Until Your justice burns brightly again;
Until the nations learn of Your ways,
Seek Your salvation and bring You their praise.

God of the poor, friend of the weak,
Give us compassion, we pray:
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain;
Come, change our love from a spark_____ to a flame.

CCLI Song # 1236690
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Intercessions (by Judith)

O Lord, you give us the true bread from heaven, the bread of life, your Son Jesus.
In this life, mankind must toil and labor for food that provides only temporarily nourishment to our bodies, which will eventually die. Jesus had the power to multiply that food and could do so much more. Help us to embrace Jesus into our lives that we may be filled with the fullness of his love and dwell in him as he dwells in us.
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Lord, thank you for all the gifts you have lovingly bestowed upon us. We pray that we may use these to the best of our ability and to best advantage within your church, our families, our neighborhoods and within society. Give us wisdom and guidance to employ these gifts to the good of all.
Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for rulers and leaders that they may not neglect or abuse the responsibilities for their people

and the environment. That they may use their power wisely and humanely. We pray for all individuals who strive for peace and justice, who seek to improve the world we live in and sustain it for future generations. We remember those countries where corruption is rampant, where peoples are suppressed, degraded and demoralized. We ask for your wisdom, guidance and strength to stand up and fight against injustice. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We give thanks for all who work in caring professions. For those and the many private people who give of their love and time so willingly. For those professional and private individuals who travelled to help and support the people affected by the recent floods in NRW. We pray for those in despair, who have lost all their possessions in the floods, who do not know which way to turn. May they find comfort and strength in You via the deeds of others. Feed and nourish them on Your bread and guide them to a path out of their despair.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those individuals consumed by private tragedy..., those who are ill in body or mindWe remember Margaret, Bev ... and others who are personally known to us

We pray for those caught in the circle of addiction, violence, abuse, oppression – we pray for both victims and perpetrators

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Almighty God, we ask that you would show us what it means not to “work for the food that perishes” but for the “food that endures to eternal life”, and guide us to live our lives accordingly. You call us, you yearn for us to hear you. Open our hearts, open our minds that we may sense your deep love for us and your purpose in our lives.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our Prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

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

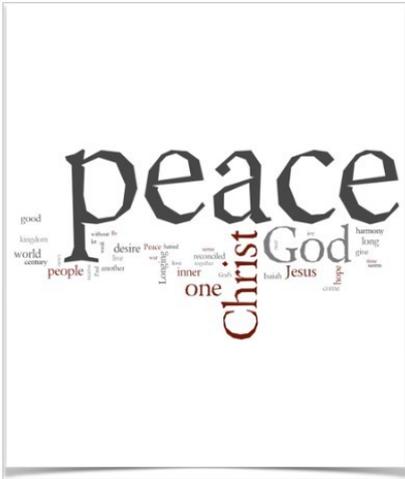
A sign of peace

God is love
And those who live in love live in God
And God lives in them.
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

Song: SoF 19 Amazing Grace!

1. Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

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The Blessing

The Lord bless us and watch over us,
the Lord make his face shine upon us
and be gracious to us,
the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace;
and the blessing
of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us now and always.

Amen.

Announcements

(see below)

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude





Evening Prayer on Wednesdays

Wednesday, 4th August 2021
9pm (for 20-30min)

(Please use the usual Sunday
service link.)

Look forward to our next

Communion Service
with Revd. Peter Widdess

8th August 2021
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
11:30 hrs, Zoom link see website
and in person in the church 😊

