

Morning Prayer 29th August 2021

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost/ The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Morning Worship with Daphne Norwood



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

We gather to worship the Lord.
Not with empty rituals.
Not with doctrines and traditions.
But with all our hearts.

The Lord our God is king.
God rules with justice and equity.
God loves righteousness and hates wickedness.
God's kingdom will last forever.

We gather to worship the Lord.
With ears ready to listen.
With hearts ready to receive.
With faith ready for action.

Because God is good.
Because our hearts are filled with love.
Because we care for one another.
We gather to worship the Lord.

Let us pray with words from Psalm 45:1-2, 7-10

My 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.

You are the fairest of men; *
**grace flows from your lips,
because God has blessed you for ever.**

Your throne, O God, endures for ever and ever, *
**a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your
kingdom;
you love righteousness and hate iniquity.**

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you *
with the oil of gladness above your fellows.

All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and
cassia, *
**and the music of strings from ivory palaces makes
you glad.**

Kings' daughters stand among the ladies of the court; *
**on your right hand is the queen,
adorned with the gold of Ophir.**

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: ACF 112, vv. 1, 4, 5, 6
Thank you for giving me the morning

1. Thank you for giving me the morning,
thank you for every day that's new,
thank you for all my hurts and troubles
I can take to you.

4. Thank you for comfort in my sadness,
thank you for all who understand,
thank you that your hand holds and leads me,
everywhere I am.

5. Thank you for speaking to me, Jesus,
thank you for meeting with me here,
thank you, because you love all people,
those both far and near.

6. Thank you that you're so good and loving,
thank you that I am filled with you,
thank you, you make me feel so glad and
thankful as I do.
thank you, you make me feel so glad and
thankful as I do.

Words and music: Martin Gotthard Schneider
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**The Collect for today, the Fourteenth Sunday after
Pentecost**

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

**The reading is taken from the epistle of James
1:17-27**

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

Every 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. In 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.

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore 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.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But 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.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion 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.

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

The reading is taken from Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

Glory to you, O Lord

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and 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.) So 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?" He 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;

in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

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

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O God my father.

As I opened the email from Iris and looked at the choice of scriptures for today, my heart was full of joy. Today's passage in James has been important to me since my years as a teenager. As a teenager I spent time every day memorising scripture. For almost a year I managed to memorise one verse a day. One day my spiritual advisor challenged me to memorise the entire book of James and I am so glad that I accepted it.

It is assumed that the author of James was the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church. As we know from the Gospels Jesus' family were not always big fans of Jesus' early ministry. In John 7:5 "For even his own brothers didn't believe him". Years later Christ appeared to James after his resurrection. Jesus was always a part of James' life and though James was not an instant follower, he became well known as an authority in the early Christian Church.

James is different than the rest of the epistles in the New Testament. James writes extremely practical and is often compared to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job) These books are full of wise sayings or so to speak, words of common sense. James was not a stranger to his audience. In contrast to Paul's epistles, James is not complicated and overly theological.

Let us begin to read our text and see how it applies to each of us.

Vs 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights... This is a verse that has transformed my thinking and my life. Too often we as people are so quick to complain about what we don't have and totally forget about the pile of good gifts that surround us. We are often like a disappointed child on Christmas who does not get the exact gift they wanted and doesn't even see the multitude of other gifts. One Christmas I purchased

the wrong baby doll for one of my children so I know exactly what I am talking about. The first step we need to take is to see the good things in our lives and recognise the source.

One simple way to practice this is with a "Thankfulness Diary". I started mine years ago with a small notebook beside my bed. Every night before I turn the lights out, I reflect on my day and enter things that I am thankful for in my diary. Then I pray a prayer of thanksgiving and recognise the giver of the beautiful gifts I am blessed with daily. Writing things down helps especially on the days when thanks are slow in coming. As I read from days before I can soon think of things to be thankful for in my present day.

vs. 17b -who does not change like shifting shadows. Wow these are words of wisdom that we all need in this very fluid time of history. With the arrival of the internet we are bombarded with new News stories 24/7. In the case of my granddaughter this occurs every 5 minutes or less when her phone notifies her of a new message. For me it is so important that there is one thing in my life that never changes. The message of the Gospel will never change and will always be relevant for each generation that follows. It is amazing to know that we have the same amount of love and support daily. God does not love me or you more or less on any given day. Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,"

It is a privilege to have such a strong foundation. As said before, James is typical of the Old Testament wisdom literature. One characteristic is that he often jumps around between subjects. In vs. 19 we jump to practical advice as to how our faith should look like outwards. This is in no means contradictory to Paul's writing of being saved by grace and not our works. James writes about how we should look like if we are saved by grace. If we are living in Christ there should be a change in our actions. Charles Wesley called this "practical divinity" or "What do you do with what God did in you".

James becomes very personal very quick and knowingly steps on some toes.

Vs 19 “ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this; Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

I'm sure most of us feel a twinge of guilt when we hear these words. I confess that I far too often am working on a reply to something someone is saying while they are still speaking. This is not listening. Maybe there is a reason why God gives us two ears and one mouth. Our's is a generation of people who have to shout to be heard. Too often we are not listening to the neglected groups in our world. Maybe if more of us learned to listen more, they will feel they have a voice. Less speaking, more listening.

Not only should we be slow to speak, we should also be slow to anger. Anger is a big problem in all levels of our society. Maybe if we learned to listen to each other there would be less anger. So often our anger is defensive of something we believe is right and just. But as soon as we are angry we are no longer representing the righteousness that God desires.

Vs. 20 “ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

The next piece of advice is that, it isn't enough to listen. If we are truly listening to God's word we will be changed. The illustration of looking into a mirror is very relevant in our lives. Most of us look at a mirror at least once daily. Whether you are looking for flaws or perfection, it doesn't matter. Each of us has a response to how we look. If we were shown a group of photos we are quick to notice if we are in any of them. Each of us knows what we look like.

Now comes the application. James replaces the mirror with “the perfect law”. The “perfect law” is what we see when we read the Bible. How often do we read or hear God's word and are so quick to forget it. How often do we hear a sermon or the reading of the Bible being read in a service and in three hours we have no recollection of what we heard. We need to remember what we have heard and we will be blessed when what we hear is changing what we are doing.

More than once James writes about our tongues. Our speech is so important that if we have no control of it, our deeds become worthless.

Proverbs 18:21 “The tongue has the power of life and death,”

Proverbs 15:4 “The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit”

A quote from James S. Hawlett- Illustrations Unlimited “The boneless tongue, so small and weak, Can crush and kill,” declares the Greek. “The tongue destroys a greater horde, ” The Turk asserts, “than does the sword.” The Persian proverb wisely saith, “A lengthy tongue—an early death! ”Or sometimes takes this form instead, “Don’t let your tongue cut off your head.” “The tongue can speak a word whose speed,” Say the Chinese, “outstrips the steed.” The Arab sages said in part, “The tongue’s great storehouse is the heart.” From Hebrew was the maxim sprung. “Thy feet should slip, but ne’er the tongue.”

James ends the this passage with what God the Father accepts as “pure and faultless” Just as Christ, his brother, puts the meeting of the needs of the neglected as requirements to enter the kingdom, (Matthew 25:31-46, The Sheep and the Goats and Matthew 5:3-12, The Beatitudes) James puts the meeting of the needs of the neglected as a test of our faith. We are called to serve and listen to those who have been forgotten far too often. It is not just about giving money, it is about sharing our very selves. Step out of your box of friends and invite someone who needs a friend into your life. Let us not just feel sorry for someone neglected, be a friend.

In closing

-recognise the good things in your life and the source of them

-God does not change

-we have two ears and one mouth, let us be better listeners

-slow to anger

-let would we hear change us

-your tongue is powerful, use it wisely

-Remember those who have been neglected and forgotten

Song: ACF 108, vv. 1, 3
Sing of the Lord's goodness

1. Sing of the Lord's goodness,
Father of all wisdom,
come to Him and bless His name.
Mercy He has shown us,
his love is forever,
faithful to the end of days.

*Come then, all you nations.
sing of your Lord's goodness,
melodies of praise and thanks to God.
Ring out the Lord's glory,
praise Him with your music,
worship Him and bless His name.*

3. Courage in our darkness,
comfort in our sorrow,
Spirit of our God most high;
solace for the weary,
pardon for the sinner,
splendour of the living God.

*Come then, all you nations.
sing of your Lord's goodness,
melodies of praise and thanks to God.
Ring out the Lord's glory,
praise Him with your music,
worship Him and bless His name.*

CCLI Song # 180125

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Intercessions (by Wolfgang)

Today's reading from the Epistle of James reminds us that generous giving is a godly act, and that hearing alone quite literally won't do – but there is so much to do, and where should we give first? And how much? Lord, help us to stay focussed, and to help where we can, and where our help is needed most.
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer.**

Sometimes it is more obvious who needs help, and fast – the evacuees from Kabul, and the people along the Ahr and Erft rivers, whose lives were turned inside out and whose livelihoods were swept away within hours, need our solidarity. Dernau, Altenburg, Mayschoss and Schuld were not Sodoms and Gomorrhass, but there are a lot of pillars of salt there now. Lord, help us to find ways to support them in their plight.

James says we need to be doers who act, so what can we do? Prayer will help. Money will certainly help. What helps best at the moment are people with craftsman skills, builder tools, some time to spare, and prayer in their hearts. Lord, help us to find the measure of helpfulness that we can do

I have always been suspicious of charities. In a charity situation, there is an imbalance between those who give and those who are in need. The givers can feel good and righteous about themselves, and those on the receiving end of charitable giving are supposed to be grateful, and grovelling, hat in hand, thank you ma'm. Lord, help us to keep in mind that they don't receive our help because they are needy, but because they are our brothers and sisters.

There is no compensation for giving, no tit for tat – we won't get into paradise five minutes earlier because of five extra Euros donated to a charity. But there is love, and there is humor. Yesterday, I saw a hilarious sign somebody had finger-painted onto a bus: "#Ahrship: Every 11 minutes a helper falls in love with the people on the Ahr river." Lord, help us to keep in mind that this

is what helping others is all about – to enable them to smile and laugh again, wholeheartedly. Because where your love is, there is laughter.

The Lord's Prayer

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

A sign of peace

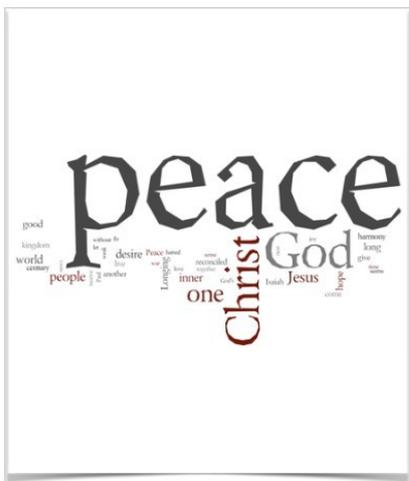
God is love
 And those who live in love live in God
 And God lives in them.
 We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

Song: SoF 405 Now thank we all our God

1. Now thank we all our God,
 with hearts and hands and voices;
 who wondrous things has done,
 in whom His world rejoices;
 who from our mother's arms
 has bless'd us on our way
 with countless gifts of love,
 and still is ours today.

2. O may this bounteous God
 through all our life be near us,
 with ever joyful hearts
 and blessèd peace to cheer us;
 and keep us in His grace.
 and guide us when perplexed,
 and free us from all ills
 in this world and the next.

3. All praise and thanks to God
 the Father now be given,
 the Son, and him who reigns
 with them in highest heaven,



the one eternal God,
whom earth and heav'n adore;
for thus it was, is now
and shall be evermore.

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The Blessing



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

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.

Announcements
(see below)

Postlude

Look forward to our next service

with Tini Horning

5th September 2021

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
11:30 hrs, Zoom link see website
and in person in the church 😊



Evening Prayer on Wednesdays

Wednesday, 1st Sept. 2021
9pm (for 20-30min)

(Please use the usual
Sunday service link.)

