



AN AGAPE LITURGY

Christ Episcopal Church • Cape Girardeau, Missouri

8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. services

July 19, 2020

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Gathering: Liturgy of the Word

Prelude

“Cornet Voluntary”

George Berg

Opening Hymn

#392 Come, We that Love the Lord

Opening Rite: Liturgy of the Light

All stand, and the Officiant greets the people with these words:

Officiant: Dear friends in the risen Christ, we gather today to celebrate the Lord’s Day, and for a time to be united in prayer and praise with each other and those who have gone before us. Sunday has been called the Lord’s Day because it was on this day that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life. As we gather [in-person and/or online], let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world and celebrate our redemption in Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection.

Silence may be kept for a time.

Officiant: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The following passage of Scripture may be read:

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

(Matthew 5:14–16)

Prayer for Christ's Light

Candles may now be lit using the following prayer.

Officiant: O God, we give thanks for the gift of your light — shining on the first day of creation, guiding us through the wilderness, leading us to the land of promise.

People: You sent Jesus, light of the world, to be our way of truth and life. Help us to follow him each day and rest in him each night until at last we come to live with you in endless light. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and with the Holy Spirit we give you honor and glory, now and always. **Amen.**

The Confession

As we worship we ask God's forgiveness for things done and things left undone and things done on our behalf so that we are reconciled to God and each other.

Officiant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Silence is kept for a time.

Officiant: 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.

People: 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.

Officiant: For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;

People: That we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. **Amen.**

Officiant: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Opening Acclamation

Officiant: Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

People: Glory to God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Purity

Officiant: 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.*

Hymn of Praise

#302 Father, We Thank Thee

The Collect of the Day

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Officiant: Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Readings

The First Reading: Genesis 28:10–19a

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood beside him and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your

father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place – and I did not know it!” And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Response: Psalm 139:1–11, 22–23

- 1 LORD, you have searched me out and known me; *
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 2 You trace my journeys and my resting-places *
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips, *
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.
- 4 You press upon me behind and before *
and lay your hand upon me.
- 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; *
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
- 6 Where can I go then from your Spirit? *
where can I flee from your presence?
- 7 If I climb up to heaven, you are there; *
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.

- 8 If I take the wings of the morning *
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 9 Even there your hand will lead me *
and your right hand hold me fast.
- 10 If I say, “Surely the darkness will cover me, *
and the light around me turn to night,”
- 11 Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day; *
darkness and light to you are both alike.
- 22 Search me out, O God, and know my heart; *
try me and know my restless thoughts.
- 23 Look well whether there be any wickedness in me *
and lead me in the way that is everlasting.

The Epistle: Romans 8:12–25

Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption

of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Hymn #318 Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face

The Gospel: Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

Jesus put before the crowd another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

Officiant: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Kent Miller

Affirmation of Faith

Originally the entire service was viewed as our confession of faith. However, since the sixth century, the church has recited either the Nicene Creed or the Apostle's Creed at the Eucharist. The word "creed" comes from the Latin credo, for "I believe" or "I lend my heart to." Either the Nicene Creed, the Apostle's Creed, or the following may be used:

Officiant: Let us affirm our faith. Do you believe in God?

People: We believe in God the Father the almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

Officiant : Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

People: We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Officiant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

People: We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Prayers of the People

Bound together in Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray with one heart and mind to our God, saying:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

That the love which passes ceaselessly between the Father and the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may renew and deepen the life of each Christian and draw us all gathered here into your unending life, we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

For the leaders of the church (especially our Bishop, Deon), and for the leaders of the nations (especially our President, Donald), that they may discern the ways to overcome divisions and mistrust, and may reflect your unity in every aspect of common life, we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

That your self-disclosure in Christ and your enduring presence among us as Spirit may help us to understand both you and ourselves, made in your image and likeness, we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

For our families, our households, and our communities, that they may be places of communion and mutual support, which build us up and strengthen us in grace and truth, we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

Thankful for our world which you made through Christ, and renewed in the power of his resurrection, that we may be wise and careful stewards of creation, we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

In the power of the Spirit who joins our prayer to Christ's enduring intercession, we pray for the sick, the suffering, and all who stand in need, especially For healing for all the world we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

For those who have asked for our prayers, and for those whose burden is too deep for words, especially , we pray:

Holy Trinity, hear us.

Gracious God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father, accept our prayers this morning. By the inner workings of your Spirit, deepen our

communion with you, the source and goal of our life, and make us more and more signs of your enduring love. This we pray through Christ, who lives and works with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer

Officiant: Let us pray in the way that Christ taught us:

People: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Agape

While sharing a common Eucharistic celebration is not possible at this time, this liturgy expresses our longing for a time when we can once more share and gather together at the Eucharistic table. This practice of giving thanks for bread, wine and food is ancient, going back to the hospitality our ancestor Abraham showed to his visitors. While not the full celebration of the Holy Eucharist, there is a relationship, in much the same way that giving thanks over water is a reminder of our Baptism.

Instrumental music may be played or a hymn sung. A suitable space is prepared with wine, bread, and other foods.

The Officiant and people give thanks for the gift of wine.

Officiant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

People: You create the fruit of the vine; we long for the day

when you will once again refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Glory to you for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Officiant and people give thanks for the gift of our daily bread.

Officiant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

People: You bring forth bread from the earth; we long for the day when we may once again partake of the bread of life the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. As grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power forever and ever. *Amen.*

The Officiant and people give thanks for the gift of food.

Officiant: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe.

People: You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the Eucharistic fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Conclusion

Officiant: God of all creation, we gather on this first day of the week made holy by the resurrection of Christ, your Son. In the waters of baptism we were buried with him so that we might also rise with him and so share his victory over sin and death.

People: You have transformed our lives into the living stones that form your Church with Christ as the foundation stone. Strengthen our community's bond of communion and peace and deepen our solidarity with your Church throughout the world.

Officiant: Rekindle within us this Sabbath day the vision of your kingdom so that our daily concerns and labor may find their proper perspective.

People: Fill our homes with the spirit of the Gospel and give us the grace to see the face of Christ in the people with whom we live. We raise our voices in praise and thanks giving to you, O God; that we who have celebrated Christ's resurrection this day share in his eternal glory where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Peace

The Peace is exchanged.

Officiant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: And also with you.

We greet each other in the name of the risen Christ.

Final Hymn

#482 Lord of All Hopefulness

The Sending

Officiant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.

People: *Amen.* [Alleluia!]

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord. [Alleluia, Alleluia!]

People: Thanks be to God. [Alleluia, Alleluia!]

Postlude

“Voluntary”

Jonathan Battishill

A simple meal may now be shared.



Notes on the Service

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 11)

Gen. 28:10–19a • Ps. 139:1–11, 22–23

Rom. 8:18–25 • Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43

Today's collect is one of a few not translated from earlier Latin books but instead composed in English for the first Prayer Book, 1549. Its petition, "have compassion, we beseech thee, on our infirmities, and those things which...for our blindness we cannot ask, mercifully give us..." agrees with Paul's point in the verse following the end of today's epistle, the opening of next Sunday's, "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought." A woman whose weakness Christ helped was Mary Magdalene. Magdalene's feast will be July 22.

The enmity between Jacob and his brother Esau, about which we read last Sunday, reached a pitch that pushed Jacob out of their home. That, and the desire that he, like their father Isaac, not marry a Canaanite native propel him toward Haran, in what is today Syria. On the way, while camping for the night, Jacob dreams of his famous "ladder," most likely a ramp such as those in front of Babylonian ziggurats. Angels go up and down it, and the Lord repeats to Jacob his promise of countless descendants. So moved is he by this experience of transcendence that he erects a cairn shrine on the spot, using stones, which are his "totems." Notice he uses a stone as a pillow, and soon he will win a bride by rolling a big stone off a well for her.

Psalm 139 is a meditation on God's presence everywhere, including within the psalmist's soul. Although written centuries after Jacob's era, one might imagine Jacob having used similar words, as in v 2, "You are about my path and about my bed," or, "You trace my journeys and my resting-places," literally, the lair where an animal lies down; and v 7, "If I make the grave my bed," literally, "if I bed down in Sheol," the underworld of the dead, (not hell-fire of the Gospel.)

Whereas the Lord promised Jacob physical offspring, spiritual off-spring is what Paul has in mind when he urges the Romans to bear up under their sufferings for they are adopted children of the Spirit. "When we cry, 'Abba,' Father," may be Paul's allusion to the Lord's Prayer. Like a woman in labor, all creation is waiting for God's glory to be revealed at what Matthew will describe as "the close of the age."

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares stresses God's patience, as he postpones punishment until the Last Moment. The explanation attached five verses later stresses the fiery punishment (in gehenna, hell in the sense of torment) of the children of the evil one, in contrast with the righteous in the kingdom.

– Rev. Stephen Weissman
St. Louis, Missouri