



AN AGAPE LITURGY

Christ Episcopal Church • Cape Girardeau, Missouri

10:15 a.m. service live-stream

September 27, 2020

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Gathering: Liturgy of the Word

Prelude

“Trumpet Tune”

Henry Purcell

Opening Hymn #477 All Praise to Thee, for Thou, O King Divine

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 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

#435 At the Name of Jesus

The Collect of the Day

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Officiant: 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.*

The Readings

The First Reading: Exodus 17:1–7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried out to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They

are almost ready to stone me.” The LORD said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Response: Psalm 78:1–4, 12–16

- 1 **H**ear my teaching, O my people; *
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; *
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.
- 3 That which we have heard and known,
and what our forefathers have told us, *
we will not hide from their children.
- 4 We will recount to generations to come
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the LORD, *
and the wonderful works he has done.
- 12 He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, *
in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.
- 13 He split open the sea and let them pass through; *
he made the waters stand up like walls.
- 14 He led them with a cloud by day, *
and all the night through with a glow of fire.
- 15 He split the hard rocks in the wilderness *
and gave them drink as from the great deep.
- 16 He brought streams out of the cliff, *
and the waters gushed out like rivers.

The Epistle: Philippians 2:1–13

IF then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who,

though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel: Matthew 21:23–32



Officiant: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

WHEN Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

Officiant: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

Rev. Annette Joseph

Affirmation of Faith

Originally the entire service was viewed as our confession of faith. Since the sixth century, however, 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

God of abundance, in this season of harvest we thank you for farmers and fieldworkers, for those who grow our food and those whose labor brings it to our table. For what else do the People of God offer thanks? [*Prayers of thanksgiving may be spoken*]. Almighty Creator, bless this earth and teach us to become reverent caretakers of your holy gifts.

People: O Lord, hear our prayer.

God of steadfast love, we pray for your universal Church, both here

at home and far away. Bind us together with cords of kindness, forgiveness, and fidelity, that we may be of one heart and mind in the service of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: O Lord, hear our prayer.

God of compassion, we pray for those in hospitals and hospices, for those struggling with addiction and mental illness, and for all who are sick and suffering, especially those we name now, both aloud and in our hearts: [*Prayers for the sick and suffering may be spoken*]. Bring them comfort, O God, as we entrust them to your loving care.

People: O Lord, hear our prayer.

God of lost things, we pray for the anxious and the afraid, for those who are confused and those who are conflicted, and for all who need your holy guidance, especially those we name now, both aloud and in our hearts: [*Prayers for guidance may be spoken*]. Grant them wisdom and discernment, O God of all truth, that they may find strength and clarity of purpose.

People: O Lord, hear our prayer.

God of Resurrection life, we remember those who have died, especially those we name now, both aloud and in our hearts: [*Prayers for the dead may be spoken*]. May we, together with these and all the faithful departed, joyfully be reunited at the banquet table of your coming Kingdom. *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.

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 thanksgiving 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 the Lord Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

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

Here at Christ Church we consider gratitude and generosity to be spiritual disciplines. While we can't be together to pass the collection plate to one another in church at this time, we encourage you to offer your gifts and service in any way that makes the most sense to you.

[Click here](#) to contribute to our ongoing ministry by donating online.

Final Hymn

#685 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

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

“Postlude in G”

G. F. Handel

A simple meal may now be shared.

Don't forget to join us at 12 p.m. for Virtual Coffee Hour after the service! Just click the following link to join:

Link: <https://bit.ly/2Yjv7YV>

Password: coffeetime

You can also dial in by telephone: Call (312) 626-6799 and enter the Meeting ID 979 4119 5732. For those joining us by telephone, the password will be 0023717181.

Notes on the Service

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 21)

Exod. 17:1-7 • Ps. 78:1-4, 12-16 • Phil. 2:1-13 • Matt. 21:23-32

The 8th-century collect says that God exercises omnipotence chiefly in showing mercy. Today's readings from Exodus and Psalms show examples of divine mercy, when God provided for the wandering Israelites despite their grumbling; the epistle shows the ultimate example of divine mercy, when Christ relinquished his omnipotence to suffer with the human race.

Last Sunday's Exodus reading was about God's providing quails and manna in the wilderness. Today's is a parallel instance where he supplies water at Meribah quarreling and Massah, testing. Those sites became proverbial for putting God to the proof, as in Ps 95:8, "harden not your hearts, as in the provocation and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works." Later to rabbis the waters symbolized wisdom and the Torah. Rabbi Paul claimed that the Rock from which waters came to save the Israelites was Christ. (1 Cor. 10)

Psalm 78 is one of several psalms which recite the history of Israel, likely written to be used at temple festivals marking those historic events. The opening four verses are characteristic of the wisdom schools' stress on ancient lessons as guides for living. That preface is followed in today's excerpt by vv 12-16, which rehearse the mighty works which God had performed for Israel at the Exodus and during their journey through Sinai. The psalm will go on to moralize about Israel's interminable faithlessness.

Embedded in today's passage exhorting the Philippians to be humble is a hymn to the pre-existent Christ which Paul may have written or may have quoted: Christ humbled himself to servanthood and death, for which God exalted his name above all. Whereas Christ was eternally equal with God, humanity's making ourselves equal with God [as in Genesis 3] would constitute idolatry, robbing God of his due: "For that robbery of theirs was the Son of God robbed...and quite spoiled of his glory. For their puffing up, he was made empty; for their lifting up, was He brought thus low," wrote the great preacher Lancelot Andrewes of this passage. (Bishop Andrewes' feast was September 26.) This important epistle about divine self-humbling was read earlier this month on Holy Cross Day, as well as on the feasts of the Holy Name and Palm Sunday.

Early in the week before his arrest, during a debate with Jerusalem's religious authorities, while he is defending his right to have expelled temple money changers, Jesus uses a tale of two contrasting farm-sons (common Biblical figures), to criticize those reputable Jews who did not repent, unlike disreputable people who did repent at the warnings of John the Baptist.

— Rev. Stephen Weissman
St. Louis, Missouri