

A Liturgy of
AnteCommunion
online or at home

July 19, 2020

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost



Trinity
Episcopal Church

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Prelude

Toccata in F Major, BuxWV 157
Dietrich Buxtehude

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Book of Common Prayer, page 355

Our worship begins with a greeting that unites us in praising God as holy Trinity.

The opening prayer, or “Collect of the Day” helps to focus our attention on a theme of the day or the season.

The Book of Common Prayer calls for a “song of praise” to begin our worship.

The traditional *Gloria* quotes the words the angels sang to announce the coming of Jesus, and then expands our praise of God and Jesus with the characteristics of majesty and salvation. The church has been singing some form of this hymn of praise for over sixteen centuries.

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Let us pray. *(BCP page 231)*

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.**

All sing or say together:

S-280; Robert Powell; BCP page 356

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

A Reading from the Book of 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 139:1-11

Book of Common Prayer, page 794

- 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?**

Our **readings** follow the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year cycle of readings shared by many Christian denominations. You can find the calendar of readings on pages 888-932 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

In this story, Jacob, who has "stolen" the birthright of the heir of Abraham from his brother, leaves home in fear of his life. While he is vulnerable and alone, he encounters God's presence, promise, and purpose for his life, and an ordinary place becomes extraordinary in the presence of God.

We read the psalm **responsively**, which means that the leader reads one verse and the congregation *responds* with the next.

In this season, the Psalm often connects with a theme from the first reading. Psalm 139 continues the Genesis theme of unexpected encounter with God, who is with us – and knows us! – everywhere we are or go.

- 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.

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

8:12-25

So then, 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Writing to a congregation of very mixed social class, Paul reminds us that we are all adopted into the highest place, sharing the identity of “Children of God” with Jesus – an identity proven by the simple fact that we already call on God intimately as “Father” when we pray as Jesus taught us.

This connection with God is given to us not primarily for our own sake, but for the sake of the glory God has planned for all of creation.

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

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

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Another parable Jesus put before the crowds: “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!”

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Jesus tells the crowds a farming story of a familiar weed – one that mimics wheat – growing in a tended field. It may originally have been intended to suggest that the kingdom of heaven doesn’t need to be a “pure” community, protected against outsiders, even enemies, since God will take care of the final judgment of everyone.

The interpretation offered privately to the disciples makes all Matthew’s readers into “insiders” in the story of Jesus; those who know the ultimate destiny of the world and can let judgment rest in God’s hands.

The Nicene Creed

Book of Common Prayer, page 358

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son
he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

As part of our response to the Word of God in our lives, we stand to proclaim the core story of our Christian faith together in **The Nicene Creed**, created in the late 4th century by the councils (gatherings of church leaders) in Nicea.

No matter what story of Jesus we are hearing in scripture, we remember and proclaim the whole outline of his life, death, and resurrection, and anticipate his coming again.

Prayers of the People

Book of Common Prayer, page 387

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest.
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

The people offer their own prayers.

The Celebrant adds a concluding prayer:

Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: Accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

In response to hearing and reflecting on scripture, we turn to prayer together, asking God's care for our world, the church, for others and for ourselves.

The prayers we are using today are Form III in the Book of Common Prayer. This form of prayer is designed to invite us to prayer for all the areas of concern the church usually prays for, then urges the congregation to offer their own particular prayers for individuals or for general needs the church has not mentioned. As we pray today, please use that opportunity to name before God the specific people you know who are ill or suffering; the needs of our nation, world, or church that weigh on your heart; or other needs or thanksgivings.

The Confession of Sin

Book of Common Prayer, page 360

Deacon or Celebrant:

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

**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.
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.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

The Priest says

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

Exchange of Peace

The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of Christ be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Today, in the spirit of Christ's peace, please reach out to greet someone you might normally see in worship by telephone, internet, or text message.

The Confession of Sin returns to our shared worship today after eight Sundays of Easter celebration.

Praying the Confession together allows us to bring our failures and weakness, individually and as a community, to God, to ask God's help in facing the evil in the world around us, and to receive the assurance of God's forgiveness and strength, which the priest reminds us of in the **Absolution**.

The exchange of peace is rooted in Jesus' call to reconcile with one another as we approach God's altar. In this time of separation, it may be a cue to restore our connections with those we haven't been as close with as we would like to be!

When gathered in person, we would receive a collection of money for the support of the church at this point in a Sunday service.

If you are able to fulfill your annual pledge, please mail your regular pledge check to the office, use your bank's online payment system, or visit www.trinitymoorestown.org/donate to make your weekly gift or regular pledge offering while we are unable to gather in person.

Instead of praying the Great Thanksgiving over bread and wine, in this time when we are physically separated, we join together in an act of spiritual communion, beginning with the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples as the basis of all prayer.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

During this time of worshipping together but physically distant, we depend on the long established teaching of the Church that if a person is prevented from physically receiving the Sacrament for reasons of extreme illness or disability, the desire for Christ's presence alone is enough for all the benefits of the Sacrament to be received. This is often referred to as "spiritual communion."

At every service in the Episcopal Church, we pray **the Lord's Prayer**, which we learn in the gospels (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-4) The prayer takes its name from the request of Jesus' disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Because we cannot physically receive the bread and wine together today, we name our need for Christ's nourishing presence in our spirits in this prayer for spiritual communion.

We pray the usual **Post-Communion Prayer** thanking God for the blessings received in the spiritual food of this sacrament, even though we have not physically received the bread or wine, and asking that we be prepared by those spiritual riches to go into the world to share in God's ongoing work.

We are blessed, then sent to take our worship into the world and our our daily lives, and we affirm that commitment with our thanks to God. The celebratory "Alleluias" are optional in this season, but often used to express our joy in God as we complete our worship.

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life, until by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

(From Saint Augustine's Prayer Book, rev 2014., based on a prayer by St. Alphonsus de Liguori)

Post communion prayer

Book of Common Prayer, page 366

Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

The priest offers a blessing, and the people respond. Amen.

Closing Hymn 569, verses 1, 2, & 4

Russia

The Dismissal

The Deacon dismisses us to go forth into the world.

People **Thanks be to God. [Alleluia, alleluia!]**

Postlude

Fugue in F Major, BuxWV 157
Dietrich Buxtehude

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Libby Curran (with Val Curran), *online Lector*

Jim Morley, *telephone Lector*

The Rev. Leslie G. Mazzacano, *Deacon*

The Rev. Emily A. Mellott, *Celebrant and Preacher*

Vernon Williams, *Organist and Video Editor*