

# The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost Healing Service



November 8, 2020  
10:30AM

## We Gather

*Instructions for standing, sitting, and kneeling are rubrics from the Book of Common Prayer. Any person who is unable to stand or kneel is welcome to sit for any part of the service regardless of the printed instruction. Please feel comfortable using any posture you wish.*

**Processional Hymn: #436**     ***Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates (Vs.1,2,3)***     *Please stand as you are able.*

**Introduction:** *Please be seated.*

**Celebrant:** Welcome to Grace in-person and Grace online. Given the increase in pandemic rates, we may be forced to close the in-person part of worship for a while. Everyone's safety is the first priority here. Please wear your mask wherever you go.

We are entering the last few weeks of the long church season of Pentecost. Advent begins a new church year in three weeks. Our readings today include a farewell speech from Joshua who brought the Israelites across the Jordan into the promised land which happened to be occupied by the Canaanites. He begins his discourse in a strange way. 1400 years later, Jesus teaches about the kingdom of heaven with the parable of the bridesmaids. There is a connection, so stay tuned.

**Opening Acclamation / Call to Worship** *Please stand as you are able.*

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

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

### Collect for Purity

**Celebrant:** 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**

**Song of Praise: #S-236**     ***Glory to You***     *Please remain standing.*

**Collect of the day** *Please be seated.*

**Celebrant:** O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

## We Hear God's Word

**First Lesson: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25** *Please remain seated.*

**Reader:** A reading from the book of Joshua.

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

*Reader:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 78:1-7**

*Reader:* Hear my teaching, O my people; \*

*People:* **incline your ears to the words of my mouth.**

*Reader:* I will open my mouth in a parable; \*

*People:* **I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.**

*Reader:* That which we have heard and known, and what our forefathers have told us, \*

*People:* **we will not hide from their children.**

*Reader:* We will recount to generations to come the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the LORD, \*

*People:* **and the wonderful works he has done.**

*Reader:* He gave his decrees to Jacob and established a law for Israel, \*

*People:* **which he commanded them to teach their children;**

*Reader:* That the generations to come might know, and the children yet unborn; \*

*People:* **that they in their turn might tell it to their children;**

*Reader:* So that they might put their trust in God, \*

*People:* **and not forget the deeds of God, but keep his commandments;**

### **Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

*Reader:* A reading from the book of Thessalonians

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

*Reader:* Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

### **Gradual Hymn: #620**

### ***Jerusalem, my happy home (Vs. 1,2,3)***

*Please stand as you are able.*

### **Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13**

*Please remain standing as you are able.*

*Reader:* The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

Jesus said, "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went

to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

*Reader:* Alleluia! Alleluia! Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people and kindle in them the fire of your love.

*People:* **Thanks be to God! Alleluia, Alleluia.**

**Sermon:** *The Rev. Bob Wickizer*

*Please be seated.*

*Choose this day whom you will serve*

Today we live during an in-between time. Between the national election this week and our national holiday of Thanksgiving a few weeks from now. We live between the beginning and the end of the Coronavirus pandemic. We live in uncertain times – uncertain about our health, uncertain about the fate of our nation, uncertain whether humans today will doom the fate of the next century with anthropogenic warming, uncertain whether our children will see opportunities and economic prosperity as much as we have enjoyed so far.

We gather together in our collective faith of a God of grace and mercy. We gather in hope that no matter what blunders lie ahead, the God of mercy will forgive us and offer sanctuary. We gather in fear and trembling that maybe we haven't dedicated ourselves to God 100%, that perhaps we have hedged our bets serving other, lesser gods along the way.

We are not much different than the Israelites who fled Pharaoh's chariots in Egypt, wandered in the desert for 40 years, crossed the Jordan with their new leader, Joshua, and who now are gathered at an ancient city to hear Joshua's farewell speech. This takes place three or four centuries before David sets up Jerusalem about forty miles south as the center of Jewish worship.

Shechem – the name in Hebrew means "shoulder" indicating the fertile valley between Mt. Gerazim to the north and Mt. Ebal to the south. The site had been occupied by various peoples for several thousand years prior to Joshua's speech. It was a natural crossroads north and south from Galilee through Shechem in Samaria to Judah where Jerusalem is located. And east and west from the Assyrian kingdom east of the Jordan down the coast on the way of the patriarchs to Egypt.

This is where Jesus, about 1400 years AFTER Joshua's speech today, will talk to a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well about her ancestors who worshiped at the temple the Samaritans had built on Mt. Gerazim but was destroyed by zealous Jews from Jerusalem about 150 years before Jesus. Shechem is in the middle of Samaria. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews and considered to be half-Jewish apostates. This is why Jesus teaches the parable of the Good Samaritan because no respectable Jew of his day would ever consider a Samaritan "good" in any respect.

There is an ancient religious history to this site. Centuries before Joshua, the patriarch of the Israelites was Abram who traveled south through the land of Canaan passing through Shechem where he encountered the sacred oak tree at Moreh better translated as the terebinth tree of the teacher – a place of divine oracles. Abram encountered the word of God there. For centuries before this encounter, people believed that divine spirits lived in trees. Moses' encounter with the burning bush is an example of this belief.

Shechem was a sanctuary city meaning that if you killed a person in Galilee, Samaria or Judah, you could flee to Shechem and your life would be spared from your avenger. This was also the city set aside by later Jews in Jerusalem for the temple priests of the Levite and Cohen tribes.

Joshua begins his farewell speech reminding the Israelites that their ancestor, Abram, the father of the Jewish people, and his father, Terah, served other gods. From this humble beginning, he notes that whatever good the people have is not something they have done by themselves. God did it. God saved them from the Egyptians, preserved them, brought them to this day and gave them a land on which they had not labored, cities which they had not built, and vineyards which they did not plant. God brought them from their pagan past to move them into a land of milk and honey for which they had done nothing to deserve.

Could this be our story today? That God has brought us to this day, and for the most part, we enjoy many blessings which we have done nothing to deserve? That we and our ancestors have never really been 100% faithful to God? That we stray from time to time like lost sheep, worshiping the gods of money, power, security, health and social position?

By the way, that idea of being 100% faithful to God takes us to Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near Shechem. "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth..." A better translation for the word "truth" here takes us back to the Hebrew scriptures where it means "reliably." In other words, God is 100% reliable and faithful to us. We try to worship God and give thanks for what we have and who we are in a 100% reliable way. That is "spirit and truth."

Joshua challenges the Israelites three times to choose the God of Israel who brought Abram by faith out of the land of Ur of the Chaldeans. "Choose this day whom you will serve" he thunders. The God who gives us life, preserves us and brings us to this day? Or the lesser gods we all lean on just in case?

God does not expect us to be 100% reliable. We are expected to try. Maybe some of us are 80%, others are 50%. In every case, the God of mercy will forgive us and welcome us home. The good news in all this is that we are not forced to choose which god we will serve. We have a choice. We make that choice every hour of every day in every life decision big and small.

Jesus' parable of the bridesmaids encourages us to keep awake, to be alert every time we choose which god to serve. Making a choice one time is never enough because we encounter the lesser gods every day in every moment. I pray that we will all make the right choice at least most of the time.

*Silence for reflection after the sermon*

## Nicene Creed

*All in unison; Please stand as you are able.*

**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. 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.**

## Prayers of the People

*Please kneel, sit or stand.*

**Reader:** As we have offered gratitude for God's grace upon this community, let us now offer our gifts to the Lord, trusting that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be led to ever more faithful fellowship and service.

**Reader:** For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.

**People:** **Lord, have mercy.**

**Reader:** For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...

**People:** **Grace, Ponca City; Diocese of Utah; The Episcopal Church.**

**Reader:** For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

**People:** **Lord, have mercy.**

**Reader:** For...

**People:** **Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Bob and Tom, our clergy; Tim & Jennifer, our wardens; vestry delegates, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, have mercy.**

**Reader:** For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...

**People:** **Donald, our President; Mike, our Vice-president; Markwayne, our Congressman; James & Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.**

*Reader:* For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...

*People:* **Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy, Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Angie, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jan, Thomas, Anthony Edwards family, all residents of Silverton, CO, Mary- Margaret, Mike, all those affected by the pandemic, and those whose suffering is known only to God.**

*Reader:* We pray for those in the armed services. We pray for those who have died (*especially...* )

*People:* **Lord, have mercy.**

*Reader:* For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ...

*People:* **Bob, Joan, Rebecca, Laura**

*Reader:* Also those who are traveling, (*especially...*)

*People:* **Lord, have mercy.**

*Reader:* Bless all those everywhere who give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy for love of him who laid down his life for us.

*People:* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

*Reader:* Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

*People:* **To you, O Lord.**

*Reader:* 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.

*People:* **Amen.**

### **Laying on of Hands and Anointing for Healing**

*Celebrant:* Brothers and sisters in Christ, if you wish to seek prayer, for yourself, on behalf of someone, or for a crisis in the world, you are invited to come forward at this time. Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are troubled and I will give you rest." So come, you who are burdened by regrets and anxieties, you who are broken in body or in spirit, you who feel deeply within yourselves the divisions and injustices of our world. Come, for Jesus invites us to bring him our brokenness.

*The people may come forward for healing prayers at this time. The Laying on of Hands is administered using these or other suitable words:*

*Celebrant:* In the name of God and trusting in his might alone, receive Christ's healing touch to make you whole. May Christ bring you wholeness of body, mind and spirit, deliver you from every evil, and give you his peace. Amen.

*Anointing may be administered.*

*Celebrant:* N, I anoint you in the name of God who gives you life. Receive Christ's forgiveness, his healing and his love. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the riches of his grace, his wholeness and his peace. **Amen.**

### **Healing Hymn:**

*Please remain seated.*

### **Confession and Absolution**

*Please kneel, sit or stand.*

*Celebrant:* Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Celebrant and People:*

**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.**

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

**Peace**

*Please stand as you are able.*

**Celebrant:** The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**People:** **And also with you.**

*Greet one another in the name of Christ.*

**Announcements; Anniversary and Birthday Blessings**

**Offertory**

**Offertory Sentence:** Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.  
*Ephesians 5:2*

**Offertory Hymn:**

*Please remain seated.*

**Doxology:** **Praise God from whom all blessings flow**

*Please stand as you are able.*

**The Great Thanksgiving**

**Sursum Corda**

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** **And also with you**

**Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** **We lift them to the Lord**

**Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

**Sanctus: #S-130**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord**

*Please stand, sit, or kneel.*

**Lord's Prayer:**

**Celebrant:** And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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

**Fraction Anthem: #S-164**

**Jesus, Lamb of God**

*Please remain seated.*

**Breaking of the Bread**

*A period of silence is kept.*

*Please come forward to receive communion while maintaining distances from one another. The celebrant will give you a small plastic bag with several consecrated communion wafers in it. You are not to consume it at church. Instead, take it home, say the prayers on the card and consume it with family and friends. You are the light of the world. Take the body of Christ with you this week and feed on it in your heart while praying for others.*

**Celebrant:** The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

**Communion Hymn:# 325**

**Let us break bread together on our knees.**

*Please remain seated.*



## We Go Out To Do Our Work

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Celebrant:* Let us pray.

*Celebrant and People:* Almighty God, giver of every good gift. All that we have and all that we are comes from you. Accept the humble gifts of who we are with our differences, our goodness, and our mistakes. Help us be the blessing to others that you are to us. Help us not to fear but to love fearlessly. Help us not to worry but to get busy and help. We ask you to remind us in our hearts and minds of the great needs of so many in the world today for love, truth, and clarity. Keep the clouds of darkness and confusion away as we work to make the world a better place. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit who guides, defends, and protects us. And who leads us into all truth. **Amen**

### Pentecost Blessing

*Celebrant:* May the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, stream within us.  
May the breath of God renew us.  
May the breath of God invigorate us.  
May we walk with confidence into this new day. **Amen**

### Sending

*Celebrant:* Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. Alleluia, Alleluia.  
*People:* **Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

**Recessional Hymn: #436      *Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates (Vs.4,5)***

*Please stand as you are able.*



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