**Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 27 (A) – Sunday 08 November**

**WORDS OF WELCOME**

**OPENING SENTENCE**

**Presider:** + O God, light of the hearts that see you, life of the souls that love you, strength of the thoughts that seek you: to turn from you is to fall, to turn to you is to rise, to abide in you is to stand fast forever. Although we are unworthy to approach you, or to ask anything at all of you, grant us your grace and blessing for the sake of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

***People: Amen.***

**COLLECT FOR PURITY**

**Presider:** 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.

***People: Amen***

**HYMN OF PRAISE** H1982, #373

**Presider:** Praise the Lord! O heavens adore him; praise him, angels in the height; sun and moon, rejoice before him; praise him, all you stars of light.

***People: Praise the Lord! for he has spoken; worlds his mighty voice obeyed; laws which never shall be broken, for their guidance he has made.***

**Presider:**  Praise the Lord! for he is glorious; never shall his promise fail; God has made his saints victorious; sin and death will not prevail.

***People: Praise the God of our salvation! Hosts on high, his power proclaim; heaven and earth, and all creation, laud and magnify his Name.***

**COLLECT OF THE DAY**

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

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

**Presider:** Let us pray. Holy God, whose fire of love never goes out: free us from the fear of scarcity that keeps us out of love’s own feast; renew our trust in your abundance which knows no death and keeps no count; through Jesus Christ, the oil of gladness.

***People: Amen.***

*We read each month from the various biblical translations authorized by our Church. This month we read from the New International Version (1978)*

**FIRST LESSON**  Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

**Reader:** A reading from Joshua. 24 Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. 2Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. 3But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. 14“Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” 16Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! 17It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God.” 19Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. 20If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.” 21But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the Lord.” 22Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord.” “Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied. 23“Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.” 24And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.” 25On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. This is your Word;

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

***RESPONSE*** (*Please say together in unison*) Psalm 78:1-7

***1My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.  
2I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—  
3things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.  
4We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.  
5He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children,  
6so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.  
7Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.***

**SECOND LESSON** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

**Reader:** A reading from the Letter to the Thessalonians. 13Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 8Therefore encourage one another with these words. This is your Word;

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

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Presider:** By your Word, O Light of this whole universe, we live, move and have our being. As you have illumined the hearts of people at many times in the past, we pray, eternal God, for your awakening within us.

**Presider:** From delusion to truth, and to your righteous way:

***People: Lead us, source of all, our Father and our Mother.***

**Presider:** From darkness to light and into your gracious will:

***People: Lead us O Christ, our Friend and our Brother.***

**Presider:** From death to eternal life and into your infinite joy:

***People: Lead us Divine Spirit, enlivening Power within, for we seek your awakening touch.***

**GOSPEL** Matthew 25:1-13

**Presider:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

25 Jesus said, “the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. 6“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ 7“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ 9“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. 11“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ 12“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ 13“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. Continue to speak to us, Lord.

***People: Praise be to you, O Christ.***

**SERMON** The Rev. M. C. Gillette

*(A brief period of silence follows the sermon)*

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *(Please say together in unison)*

***I believe in one God who creates, loves, cares for, and corrects all people, who acts in history, and who promises never to leave us alone. I believe in Jesus of Nazareth who is Lord, Christ, and Redeemer, who wants not to be idealized, but to be followed. I believe that we live in the presence of the Holy Spirit without whom we are nothing; filled with the Holy Spirit we are able to become creative, free, and full of life. I believe in the church of God in Jesus Christ, a community where we find companions and courage for the struggles of life, where we grow in the understanding of our faith through worship, fellowship, and acts of liberation. I believe that God has called us to a partnership for the continuance of his mission in this time and place, and that, though we live in the midst of confusion, turmoil, exploitation, and oppression, and in the grip of the forces of death, we are called to be instruments of peace and justice. I believe that God brings about changes in people, in nature and in the whole cosmos; that God makes the whole creation a new heaven and a new earth of justice, peace, harmony, and life in all its fullness. Amen***

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**Leader:** In your comforting presence, we remember the poor and the homeless, the widows and the exploited women, the undernourished children and the victims of war, terrorism and unjust socio-economic systems. Where the mind is without fear, where the head is held high, into that haven of freedom O Lord, let our world awake.

***People: Lord hear our prayer; let our cry come to you.***

**Leader:** In your comforting presence, we remember those who cannot and may not read and write, those who are denied the power of knowledge and skill, those who are rendered voiceless through exploitation and oppression for being ignorant, those whose questioning faculty has been taken away, and the ones who are tormented and mentally ill. Where knowledge is free, where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sands of dead habit, into that haven of freedom, O Lord, let our world awake.

***People: Lord hear our prayer; let our cry come to you.***

**Leader:** In your comforting presence, we remember those who work without getting their due, the landless laborers, the child laborers, the bonded laborers, the dispossessed and those who are unjustly treated or falsely accused. Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection, into that haven of freedom O Lord, let our world awake.

***People: Lord hear our prayer; let our cry come to you.***

**Leader:** In your comforting presence, we remember the victims of discrimination because of color, race, class, caste, nationality, religion, and traditions. Help our leaders and all those who serve in the Government. Grant them the will to do everything they can to build a society of equality and justice. Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls, into that haven of freedom, O Lord let our world awake.

***People: Lord hear our prayer; let our cry come to you.***

**Leader:** In your comforting presence, we remember those who suffer from any grief, pain, or trouble, especially those whose names we raise up now, either silently or aloud *(we will keep a 10-second silence)*. We remember those who have died, especially our beloved departed, those who have lost their lives in service to others, and those whose names we raise up now, either silently or aloud *(we will keep a 10-second silence)*. Where mourning has turned to dancing, O Lord, we remember those good gifts we have been given. We pray with glad hearts for those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week, especially those whose names we raise up now, either silently or aloud *(we will keep a 10-second silence).* We thank you for the joy and laughter in our lives.

***People: Lord hear our prayer; let our cry come to you.***

**Leader:** In your comforting presence, we remember those who labor in your church. Let the Church be a foretaste of the coming reign of God in the world, let her work in partnership with all humanity for reconciliation, justice and peace to make this world an *oikumene -* a happy home for all creation. Where words come out from the depths of truth, where the mind is led forward by you into ever-widening thought and action, into that haven of freedom, O Lord let my world awake.

***People: Lord hear our prayer; let our cry come to you.***

**Presider:** Eternal God, our Father and Mother, we commit our struggles and sufferings into your son's wounded hands, our hopes and aspirations into his praying hands, our poor, hungry and exploited people into his just and caring hands, our living and departed into his hands that hold the key to the future. Blessed be the Lord, forever. ***People: Amen.***

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

**Presider:** Brothers and sisters, we have come together to hear God's most holy Word, and to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. Let us therefore kneel and examine ourselves in silence, seeking God's grace that we may draw near to him with repentance and faith.

*(A brief period of silence is kept)*

**Presider:** You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and peace with your neighbour, and intend to live a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from now on in his holy ways, make your humble confession to the compassionate God, that you may be reconciled anew to him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

***All: Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbour. We have walked in darkness rather than in light; we have named the name of Christ, but have not departed from iniquity. Have mercy upon us, we ask you; for the sake of Jesus Christ forgive us all our sins; cleanse us by your Holy Spirit; quicken our consciences; and enable us to forgive others; that we may hereafter serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.***

**Presider:** Hear the gracious Word of God to all who truly turn to him through Jesus Christ: Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16

**Presider**: **+** The Saviour of the world, the refuge of the repentant, forgives and strengthens all who truly seek his grace. He accepts you as his sons and daughters, and sets you free from the bondage of your past. For Christ died and rose to new life that we might all share his wholeness and abundant life. As God's own people, be merciful in action, kind in heart, humble in mind. Be always ready to forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be loving, and never forget to be thankful for what Christ has done for you.

***People: Amen, thanks be to God.***

**THE PEACE**

**Presider:** Having been forgiven and made whole through our Peacemaker, let us live together in Peace. God's Peace challenges us and guides us towards the acts of justice, peace and integration of the whole creation. Let us say `Shalom' to one another and give each other a sign of reconciliation and peace. The peace of the Lord be with you:

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

**OFFERTORY SENTENCE**

*(The Presider gives this or another Offertory Sentence)* O God, you have given us a new and living way to offer ourselves to you. Though unworthy we come to you, as we are, by that Way which is your Son Jesus of Nazareth; and in his name we ask you to accept and use us and our gifts however it best pleases you. All that is created is yours and everything that we can offer already belongs to you.

***People: Amen.***

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**Presider:** Our Creator God is with us to bless us;

***People: We surrender ourselves to the One who Creates.***

**Presider:** The risen Lord is with us to bless us;

***People: We surrender ourselves to the One who Redeems.***

**Presider:** The transforming Spirit is with us to bless us;

***People: We surrender ourselves to the One who Sustains.***

**Presider:** We do not stand here alone as we proclaim and sing your glory, O God, but rather with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven.

***All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.***

**Presider:** **↑**O God, Redeemer of fallen creation, at the last meal that your Son, Jesus Christ, shared with his disciples before his death, he took bread in his hands of compassion, gave you praise and thanks, and broke the bread. Then he said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

***People: We celebrate through this bread, the self-offering of our Savior Christ.***

**Presider:** **↑**Then, after the meal, he took the cup of wine, offered praise and thanks to you, gave the cup to his disciples and said: Drink this, all of you: This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.

***People: We celebrate through this cup the new covenant of our Savior Christ.***

**Presider:** As this bread is broken and this wine poured out, O Seeker and Savior of the lost, we remember again the poor and oppressed of the earth. We recall that your body was broken that the hungry might be nourished with the bread of new hope and new life.

***All: Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come in glory.***

**Presider:** As this bread was once scattered seed, O Bread of life sown in the earth to die and rise to new life: so gather all peoples together in one humanity of your coming reign. Restore the broken life of your creation; heal the disfigured body of your world; draw all creatures unto yourself through the cross and in the power of your risen life. And grant to all the faithful departed a share in your bliss, that with them we too at the end may be welcomed into your eternal kingdom through your inexhaustible grace, and through the guidance of your indwelling Spirit.

***All: +Sanctify us; ∞sanctify this bread; ∞sanctify this wine, so that together we may be the body of Christ. People: Amen.***

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**Presider:** As our Savior has taught us, so we pray:

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your 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 them that 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***

**FRACTION (THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD)**

*(The Presider breaks the consecrated bread. A brief period of silence is kept.)*

**Presider:** *(As the bread is raised and broken)* When we break the bread, do we not share in the body of Christ?

***People: We seek to share your life, gracious God.***

**Presider:** *(As the cup is lifted up)* When we lift the cup, do we not share in the life-blood of Christ?

***People: We seek to share your life, gracious God.***

*(The Communion is administered)*

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**Presider:** Merciful God of all creation, holy Parent of all people through our Lord Jesus Christ who united all things in His fullness, we join your whole creation in exultant praise of your bountiful goodness. You have now touched us with new life and filled us with new hope that your reign will come, that the hungry will be fed, that the oppressed will be set free from evil, that your reconciling work will be done, that love and faithfulness will meet together, that justice and peace will kiss each other, and the whole creation will be filled with your glory. Amen.

***People: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. AMEN***

**BLESSING**

**Presider**: Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold onto what is good; return no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honor all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

***People: Amen.***

**DISMISSAL**

*(The Presider gives this or another dismissal)*  Our worship is over, our service now begins. Let us go forth, rejoicing in the power of the holy spirit.

***People: Thanks be to God!***

**CLOSING VOLUNTARY**

**Hymn of Praise:** Based on a prayer from the United Church of Christ posted on **Wild and Precious Life.**

<http://stephenmfearing.wordpress.com/category/easter/>

**Collect of the Day:** Prayers for an Inclusive Church, Stephen Shakespeare

**Confession:** Based on a prayer by Bruce Prewer, and posted on **Bruce Prewer’s Homepage.** <http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocA/61SAINTS.htm>

**Eucharistic Prayer and Other Service Elements:** Adapted from Church of South India Order For The Lord’s Supper (2004)