



The Anglican Parish of
CHRIST CHURCH ST LUCIA

Sunday, 30th August 2020

13th Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 17



Online Service of
Praise, Prayer & Proclamation

<https://youtu.be/T8Lt1ecTq4w>

Welcome *Rev. Bill Crossman*

Organ Prelude *Fantasia in b, BWV 563/i - J.S.Bach (1685-1750)*

Opening Sentence: *sung by Cantor*

If you want to become a disciple of Jesus, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow him.

Matthew 16.24-25

The Greeting

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!

Revelation 5.12

The following thanksgiving is said together

**Gracious God, we humbly thank you
for life and health and safety,
for freedom to work, leisure to rest,
and for all that is beautiful in creation and human life.
But, above all, we praise you for our Saviour, Jesus Christ,
for his death and resurrection;
for the gift of your Spirit;
and for the hope of sharing in your glory.
Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The following prayers and Collect of the Day are said in preparation for the reading and teaching of Scripture

Thank you, Father, for making yourself known to us and showing the way of salvation through faith in your Son. We ask you now to teach and encourage us through your word, so that we may be ready to serve you; for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

O God, whose Son has shown the way of the cross to be a way of life: transform and renew our minds that that we may not be conformed to this world but may offer ourselves wholly to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Lord, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness watch over refugees and asylum seekers, those separated from their loved ones, those who are lost, and those who have been exiled from their homes. Bring them safely to the place where they long to be, and help us always to show your kindness to those in need. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord who showed compassion to all who suffered. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Reader: Helen Clarke

Jeremiah 15.15-21

O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult.

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, or you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail.

Therefore, thus says the Lord: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Hear the word of the Lord:

thanks be to God.

- 1 Give judgement for me, O Lord,
for I have walked in my integrity:
I have trusted in the Lord and not wavered.
- 2 Put me to the test, O Lord, and prove me:
try my mind and my heart.
- 3 For your steadfast love has been ever before my eyes:
and I have walked in your truth.
- 4 I have not sat with deceivers:
nor consorted with the hypocrites;
- 5 I hate the assembly of the wicked:
I will not sit with the ungodly.
- 6 I wash my hands in innocence, O Lord:
that I may go about your altar,
- 7 And lift up the voice of thanksgiving:
to tell of all your marvellous works.
- 8 Lord, I love the house of your habitation:
and the place where your glory dwells.

New Testament Reading

Reader: Rev. Canon Libbie Crossman

Matthew 16.21-28

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Hear the word of the Lord:
thanks be to God.

Acclamation *O Jesu Christ, meines Lebenslicht (var.5), op.55 – C.H. Rinck (1770-1846)*

The Sermon *Rev. Canon Libbie Crossman*

Musical Reflection *Andante con moto (Violin Sonata), BWV 1015/3 - J.S.Bach*

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I 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.**

CONFESSIOIN OF SIN

Invitation to the Confession

Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Joel 2.13

Let us now confess our sins to almighty God.

**God the Father, maker of heaven and earth,
have mercy on us.**

**God the Son, redeemer of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**God the Holy Spirit, giver of light and life,
have mercy on us.**

**For accepting life yet living it without you,
for living without concern for others,
for tolerating oppression, injustice and wrong,
for disobeying your will and commandments,
for refusing to love and forgive others,
for turning the world to our own purposes and desires,
forgive us, Lord.
That in all things we may hold to your will and purpose,
Lord, hear us. Amen.**

The minister declares God's forgiveness

O God, you have searched us out and known us,
and all that we are is open to you.
We confess that we have sinned:
we have used our power to dominate
and our weakness to manipulate;
we have evaded responsibility
and failed to confront evil;
we have denied dignity
to ourselves and to each other,
and fallen into despair.

We turn to you, O God;
we renounce evil;
we claim your love;
we choose to be made whole.

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

The Intercessions

Leader: Helen Clarke

Loving God, you have made us your people, richly provided us with good gifts, called us to live for you; may gratitude be in our hearts, may generosity be in our hands, offering our time, our skills and abilities to your service.

We pray for countries destroyed by natural disasters, hatred and conflict. We pray for communities ravaged by poverty and disease. Strengthen us to stand firm against forces of greed and destruction, and make us ready to proclaim your good news of justice and peace.

*Loving God, in your mercy – **hear our prayer.***

Loving God, we pray for the Church, that we may be a servant Church, faithfully proclaiming your gospel in sacrament, deed and word. Help us to remember that

at all times, we speak, act and live in the presence of your Son. Let the way we treat one another, and all to whom we minister, reflect his strong, saving love. Strengthen us to stand firm against the powers of evil, and make us ready to proclaim your good news of forgiveness and grace.

*Loving God, in your mercy – **hear our prayer.***

Loving God, we give thanks for our world, make us more aware of our responsibilities to our environment, our climate and our resources that we may ensure that the beauty of the earth continues for future generations. We pray for peace in the world, that the Holy Spirit may unite and reconcile the people and nations to bring an end of war, hatred and discrimination.

We pray for our Governments, and for the common good of the communities in which we live and work. We pray for all those in our society whose voices go unheard. Give us compassion, Lord, that we may respond to their cries. Strengthen us to stand firm against all that devalues human life and make us ready to proclaim your good news of acceptance and love.

*Loving God, in your mercy – **hear our prayer.***

Loving God, your word came among us to bring comfort and consolation to the suffering, relieve and protect those who struggle with pain, sorrow and adversity and give them strength and healing that only you can provide. Quiet their fears, heal their bodies, mind and hearts; renew their hope. Bless all who care for them, especially those who need refreshment, respite, and resources to continue their ministry of loving service.

*Loving God, in your mercy – **hear our prayer.***

We remember those who have died and share with their families and friends in their time of loss.

Loving God, we give thanks that you come to us to free us from the bondage of death. Those from this Parish who have gone before us, and all whom we have loved. Lay your hands on us and transform our lives by your touch, that we may come with all your saints to the city of the loving God.

*Loving God, in your mercy – **hear our prayer.***

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,
feeding us with your word,
and encouraging us in our meeting together.

**Take us and use us
to love and serve you
and all people,
in the power of your Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted;
give honour to all; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

Dear sisters and brothers, go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Postlude

Fugue in c, BWV 537/ii - J.S.Bach (1685-1750)

MUSIC LINKS:

Hymn:

May the mind of Christ my Saviour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ghgaqT57lk>

Anthem:

Set me as a seal upon your heart – Rene Clausen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0sFACmOB0k>

Director of Music/Organist: Christopher Wrench

Cantor/Organ Scholar: Talia Garret-Benson

Violin: Richard Clegg

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Other weekly resources:

ABC Classic FM - **For the God who sings** with Stephen Watkins

Sundays 10pm-midnight or on demand:

<https://www.abc.net.au/classic/programs/for-the-god-who-sings/>

VIRTUAL EVENSONG from Trinity College Cambridge

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn7d1iCH8cbdKfgFqueckig>

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Notes on the Lectionary readings appointed for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 30 August 2020

Jeremiah 15:15-21

The Bible is the world's #1 bestselling book of all time. Its influence in the West (and in the world for that matter) cannot be overstated. One of the reasons why the Bible remains an all-time bestseller may be its willingness to tell the good, the bad, and the ugly of human endeavour.

Any visions that the Bible is all "peaches and cream" are quickly dispelled when the reader encounters passages such as Jeremiah 15:15-21. The idea of the flawless prophet who can do no wrong are immediately dashed to smithereens when the reader stumbles on this passage. Stunned, the reader might wonder, "Really, Jeremiah, really? Surely my eyes deceive me. This could not be the same Jeremiah that God called from the womb. Surely, this is not the same Jeremiah who fearlessly stood against the externals of temple worship. There is no way this could be the same Jeremiah who declared God's promise of a new covenant written on the heart." Resigned to the truth, even as the reader ponders these questions, he/she knows that this is indeed the same Jeremiah.

The writer lets the reader in on what otherwise is a private conversation between God and Jeremiah. After years of living in isolation (God told Jeremiah not to marry, have children, or even socialize at funerals and celebrations), preaching an innovative message of individual (not just communal) responsibility for sins, and having to deal with insults, persecution, and rejection (who wants to hear a message that failure to repent and change its ways means certain destruction?), Jeremiah is weary. He pours out his heart to God.

Jeremiah comes straight to the point in verse 15. He begins by asking God not only to remember him, but also to bring retribution on his persecutors. There is no subtlety here. Jeremiah has had enough. After all, earlier in Jeremiah 7:16, it seemed that even God had enough for God said, "As for you, do not pray for this people, do not raise a cry or prayer on their behalf, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you."

Like the psalmists, including David, who called for God to take action against their enemies, Jeremiah longs for justice on his own behalf. Confident that he has answered God's call and done what God asked him

to do, Jeremiah reminds God that he suffers insult from others on God's account. Though God's words were a joy and a delight, he also experienced much hurt because of them. He tells God that his is a life lived alone, not by personal choice, but by God's command.

Jeremiah's pain can be characterized by an "unsettled ache ... [a] war within."¹ He poignantly describes the ache as "unceasing, incurable, and refusing to be healed." Portrayed as "a deceitful brook" and as "waters that fail," even relationship with God provides no relief. With no comfort, divine or human, Jeremiah stands alone. Jeremiah is committed to God and to the task that God has given him. Yet, his struggle with the call to ministry is an ongoing issue; later in Jeremiah 20 the prophet will again express his anguish, denouncing his detractors and protesting God's role in his life. Though there were times when he would rather not preach, he clearly could not stop. In 20:9, Jeremiah complained, "If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot."

Jeremiah's petition for God to bring retribution on his persecutors is part of the Bible that many Christians - including many clergy! - would rather overlook and dismiss. While this academically-titled "imprecatory corpus" can be hard to stomach, its connection to Jeremiah the prophet is even more difficult to understand. Surely, a man of God would not feel this way, would he?

Jeremiah's words confirm that ministry is not an easy job. Ministry is not simply one task after another. Rather, the work of ministry touches the core of a church leader's being. While Jeremiah's words may be surprising to the casual reader, clergy know that Jeremiah's words are not empty words. Jeremiah's words speak of the anguish that sometimes accompanies life in church leadership -- and not just church life, but many times life in general as well.

Repeatedly throughout the Bible, imprecatory words help the utterer work through and find healing even in the most difficult situations. Suppression and denial of such feelings allows feelings of bitterness, even actions that harm others, to take root. Acknowledging these types of feelings in front of God allows God to step in and heal the woundedness and release the giftedness that lies beneath the hurt.

Unlike those who may try and talk others out of their feelings, God neither silences Jeremiah nor attempts to convince him otherwise. Instead God's response is a call to repentance. Just as Jeremiah warned of destruction and called on the nation to repent, God instructs Jeremiah to repent. With the commandment for Jeremiah to repent comes the promise that God will restore him to his work as a prophet, to his work as God's mouthpiece. Moreover, God assures Jeremiah that God will strengthen him to be able to withstand any and everything people do to oppose him. God promises to uphold Jeremiah and redeem him from any hostility that he might face.

The Bible does not record Jeremiah's repentance, but his 40-year ministry implies it. While this complaint appears in chapter 15, the biblical record of his ministry does not end until chapter 52. The story of his life and message speak as powerfully today as in his day. The ability to acknowledge and repent of one's feelings is part of the journey of faith. We, as clergy and laity alike, would do well to follow Jeremiah's example.

Psalm 26

This simple but insightful modern paraphrase of Psalm 26 might be of use in understanding its deeper meaning and its application to living in our world.

Psalm 26: True North

I trust you O Lord
by you I set my bearings.
You are my true North
and I will walk in confidence
in the right direction –
towards you!
Even when I close my eyes
I can feel the warmth of your love
shining on my face.

There is plenty that could distract me
and knock me off course:
gossip and stupid chatter
puffed up self-importance
getting rich no matter what
bloodthirsty need to control.

I won't go there!
I won't sit in evil dens
or waste my time with people going nowhere.

I am walking tall, walking free!
I love your presence, living God,
your glory shines around.
I sing for all to hear,
songs of freedom and thanks,
praise for all you have done and all you are.
I'm on solid ground, my path is clear.
Bless the Lord!

Susan Purdie

Romans 12:9-21 (not read in services this week)

Paul wrote to the Romans from Corinth, a church well acquainted with individualism and factionalism. (A church is still there - Rhonda and I were privileged to have visited it in 2018. It must be a strange experience when that congregation has readings from Paul's letters to the Corinthians read in their services). It was in Corinth that Paul had experienced disruptive, backstabbing people in his congregation, some of whom went so far as to accuse Paul of skimming from the collection basket. It is not surprising then that Paul includes in this passage a list of maxims, as per Greco-Roman letter-writing custom, which touch on themes of forgiveness, reconciliation and harmonious living. Paul appears to draw on a variety of sources for these, including the teaching of Jesus, Israelite wisdom literature, and Greco-Roman philosophy.

A modern interpreter will see Paul's admonitions as a call to tame the ego. The ego wants vengeance; Paul says that belongs to God. The ego wants praise and recognition; Paul counsels humility. The ego wants to see the defeat of one's enemies; Paul calls for forgiveness and reconciliation. Paul was certainly well acquainted with the darker desires for punishment and getting even, especially after his heart-breaking experience at Corinth. He speaks to the Romans - and to us - as a man who has journeyed through the crucible of emotional pain, but found the strength to put the demands of the ego aside and let something much larger (and holier) guide his response to his adversaries. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said to a later generation, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that."

In this series of directives about how to live the Christian life, the guiding principal is love, love for God and for our brothers and sisters. Transformed by faith, we are to love one another affectionately and to live in harmony, to provide hospitality to strangers and to live peaceably to the extent that is possible. None of this is easy to live out consistently, even when we're talking about family, friends, neighbours, or colleagues at work. Within these circles, however, we can at least aspire to live up to these ideals.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- The real challenge comes in the part where Paul goes on to talk about how we are to treat enemies. “Do not repay anyone evil for evil ... never avenge yourselves.” It’s hard to accept that this is meant to guide our behaviour toward people who have inflicted real evil on us. If we feed them and take care of them, aren’t we just enabling further evil? How does this fit with our obligation to work against evil and injustice? Do these mandates still apply in the circumstances of our world today? If so, how might we go about living them out? If not, why not?
- Discuss Paul’s call to tame the demands of the ego, and to offer peace and reconciliation to our adversaries.

Matthew 16:21-28

Poor Peter. In verse 17 he was being praised for having recognized Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ. Now he's getting roasted for a limited understanding of what that Messiah is. Peter's story is also our story in many cases. Through years of faithful church involvement, through a new sense of what the Gospel is all about, or through an experience of the living God, we recognize the presence of God in our lives.

But that's not the end of the journey. It's beginning.

This reading comes at a pivotal point in Matthew's gospel. The phrase "from this time on," which begins the passage, marks the end of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee and the beginning of his turn toward Jerusalem, where he will suffer and die. Here, for the first time in Matthew, Jesus predicts his own death. This is hard news for Peter, whose protest is quickly silenced by Jesus, but there's more: Jesus warns his followers that discipleship is going to cost them. Anyone who wants to follow him, he says, must also be willing to "take up his cross." This was shocking language, for crucifixion was the method of execution reserved for the lowest classes of society and the worst type of criminals, so to die in that way was not only excruciatingly painful but also shameful.

In our own times, however, the cross has lost its power to shock us – we even fashion it into pretty jewellery. We might wear a cross to make a statement about what we believe, but we certainly don't expect to be crucified for our faith.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- What is the cost of discipleship in the 21st century? Has our world really been made safe for Christianity?
- Are we fooling ourselves if we think there's no reason we can't aspire to "gain the whole world" as long as we identify ourselves as followers of Jesus?
