

Sunday, August 16, 2020 🕯 11th Sunday after Pentecost

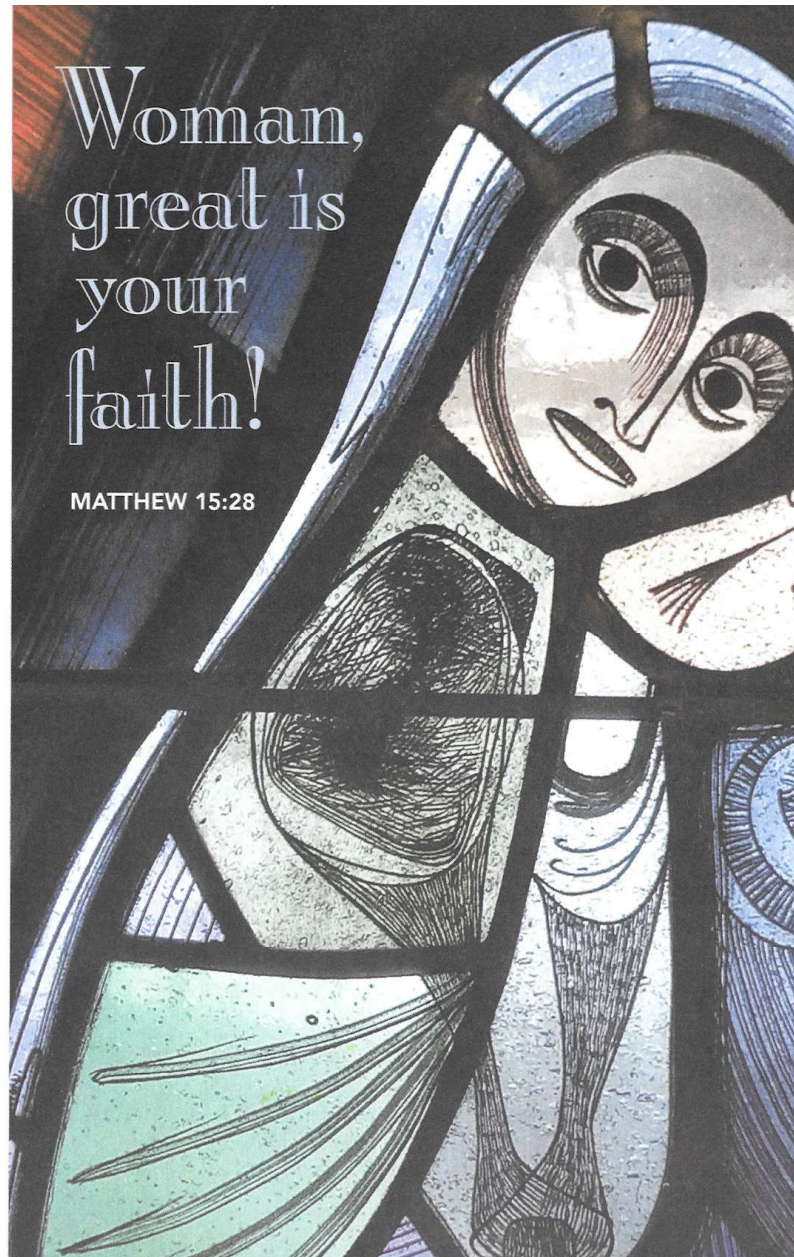
## Worship Is Practice

It is just about time to move back into the rhythms of the academic year. Our summers may be quite different from household to household, but the school year often brings similar patterns. We are heading back to alarm clocks, early mornings, quick breakfasts, lunchboxes, and lunch money, “I can’t find my other shoe!,” bus stops, backpacks, and bell schedules. While our summers may have been filled with family and friends, school is packed with people we don’t necessarily know well, understand, or even like. This seems like the perfect time to remember that amid the stress and people we encounter, Jesus says that our words have the power to defile us (Matt. 15:11).

How might the patterns of worship help us use words that sanctify rather than defile us?

We begin with words like “Forgive us . . .” as we humble ourselves before God. After confession and forgiveness, we often sing a song of praise, lifting sweet words of love to God. And in the Kyrie, our lips form the words “Lord, have mercy.” When a worship leader greets us with “The Lord be with you,” we return the greeting: “And also with you!” We stand for the gospel and sing an acclamation, which often includes the phrase “You have the words of eternal life.” After the gospel is read, we cry, “Praise to you, O Christ!” As we share the peace of Christ, we look people in the eye and declare to them that Christ’s peace is theirs. In worship, we practice the life we are to live all week. Our mouths are filled with truth, humility, praise, and gratitude—nothing that defiles.

What a gift it is to gather with a community of believers each week to sing and pray words of love and light, practicing together the sometimes-difficult work of using our words to build up, rather than tear down, our neighbors.



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# Celebrate

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*In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.*

## Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

*The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.*

Thus says the LORD:

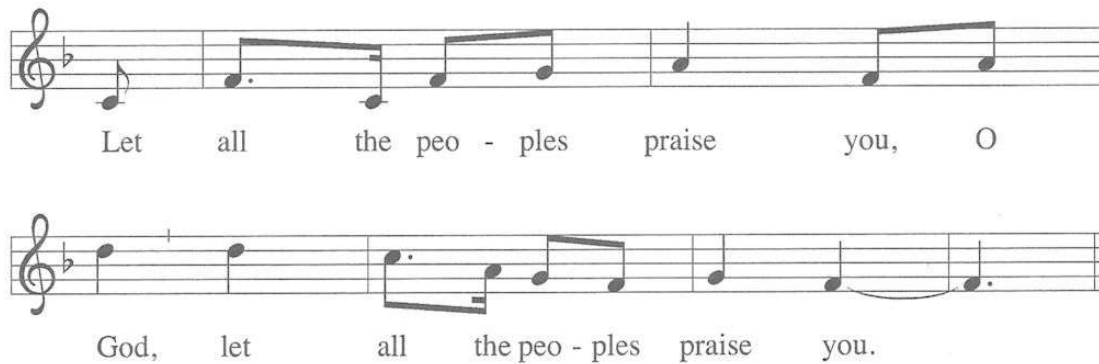
Maintain justice, and do what is right,  
for soon my salvation will come,  
and my deliverance be revealed.

<sup>6</sup>And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,  
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,  
and to be his servants,  
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,  
and hold fast my covenant—

<sup>7</sup>these I will bring to my holy mountain,  
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;  
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
will be accepted on my altar;  
for my house shall be called a house of prayer  
for all peoples.

<sup>8</sup>Thus says the Lord God,  
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,  
I will gather others to them  
besides those already gathered.





May God be merciful to <sup>1</sup> us and bless us;  
may the light of God's face <sup>1</sup> shine upon us.

<sup>2</sup>**Let your way be known <sup>1</sup> upon earth,**  
**your saving health a- <sup>1</sup> mong all nations.**

<sup>3</sup>Let the peoples praise <sup>1</sup> you, O God;  
let all the <sup>1</sup> peoples praise you.

<sup>4</sup>**Let the nations be glad and <sup>1</sup> sing for joy,**  
**for you judge the peoples with equity**  
**and guide all the na- <sup>1</sup> tions on earth. R**

<sup>5</sup>Let the peoples praise <sup>1</sup> you, O God;  
let all the <sup>1</sup> peoples praise you.

<sup>6</sup>**The earth has brought <sup>1</sup> forth its increase;**  
**God, our own <sup>1</sup> God, has blessed us.**

<sup>7</sup>May God <sup>1</sup> give us blessing,  
and may all the ends of the earth <sup>1</sup> stand in awe. R

## Second Reading

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

*God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.*

[Paul writes:] I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

<sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>Just as you

were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup>so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

## Gospel

Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

*Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.*

[[Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: <sup>11</sup>it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." <sup>12</sup>Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" <sup>13</sup>He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. <sup>14</sup>Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." <sup>15</sup>But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." <sup>16</sup>Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? <sup>17</sup>Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? <sup>18</sup>But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. <sup>19</sup>For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false wit-

ness, slander. <sup>20</sup>These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."]

<sup>21</sup>Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup>Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." <sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." <sup>24</sup>He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup>But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." <sup>26</sup>He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup>She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.



## Prayers of Intercession

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*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Lord, you gather the church to be part of your mission as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. As Jesus acknowledged the great faith of a woman from outside his people, help your church discover and find blessing in the faith of people we might reject. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have blessed us with the bounty of the earth. Grant your grace to all your creatures, that the earth will flourish. Relieve waters choked by garbage, renew soils stripped of nutrients, and refresh the air all creatures need to live. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call the nations to be glad and sing for joy. Let your way be known among all the nations of the world, now divided by competing interests, contending alliances, and consumed by enormous worry. Bless us and make your face shine upon all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You show unexpected mercy, kindness, and generosity. We pray for those who do not have enough, for outcasts in our villages, cities, and town, and for those who need your healing (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In you we live and move and have our being. Grant our congregation (*name*) grace to find our life refreshed in you. Accompany us in the rhythms of late summer. Give us rest and renewal, and strengthen us for mission in your name. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Your eternal promises are more than we could ever imagine. As you gather all the saints (*especially*), join us also with them on the great day of your salvation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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**Monday** Psalm 87. **Tuesday** Romans 11:13-29. **Wednesday** Matthew 8:1-13. **Thursday** (commemoration of Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, died 1153) Psalm 138. **Friday** Ezekiel 31:15-18. **Saturday** Ezekiel 36:33-38. **Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20.

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