

Church of the Divine Love
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
PROPER 11
SEPTEMBER 8, 2024 10:15 AM
HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prayer before worship – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung)

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 35:4-7a**

Psalm 146

Second Lesson: **James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17**

Gradual Hymn #

Gospel: **Mark 7:24-37**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze (printed on insert)

The Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:	
Eucharistic Prayer B	page 367
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 367
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn #	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #	
Dismissal	

Sermon Sunday September 8, 2024

Isaiah 35: 4-7a; Psalm 146; James 2: 1-10 (11-13), 14-17; Mark 7: 24-37.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

“They brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment.” The gospel does not tell us much about this man. We don't know his name, where he is from, or what he does. We don't know when or how he became deaf. The only thing we know is that he is deaf and has a speech impediment.

This isn't simply a story about Jesus turning a particular deaf man into a particular hearing man. This is a story about each one of us. Deafness is the human story. This man could be anyone and, likely, he is everyone. He is every man. He is every woman. He is every child. He is you and me. Today's gospel is a story about one who was closed but is now open, one who was deaf but now hears, one who was dead but now lives. It is more about our heart than it is about our ears. It is more about spiritual deafness than it is about physical deafness.

Hearing and deafness are not determined by our ears, but by what's in our heart; the way we love and relate to one another. The old Verizon commercial – **“Can you hear me now?”** – reminds us that it is all about the connection. So, it is for the man in today's gospel. So, it is for us as well. We are either open or

closed to the connection with God, one another, and the world. Sometimes we choose to be open or closed depending on people, places, and circumstances. We hear what we want to hear. Selective hearing. What if our sighs are the revelation and recognition that we have bumped up against a closed place within ourselves, in a relationship, or in our life and world? Isn't that what happened in today's gospel? The people of that region brought Jesus a man who is closed. His ears are stopped up and his tongue is tied. And Jesus sighed. What if every sigh carries the words, "**Ephphatha**, be opened?" "What if the exhalation, the breathing out, that accompanies every sigh is the breath of life? What if Jesus is sighing new life into the man in today's gospel, into you and me? Isn't that the story of creation? God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being" (**Genesis 2:7**). And for the man in today's gospel, Jesus "sighed and said to him, '**Ephphatha**,' that is, 'Be opened.' And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly." He was a new man, a new creation

Regardless of how it comes about, the tragedy of spiritual deafness is that the connection is broken. We can no longer hear the voice of God or another person. The only voices we hear are the ones in our heads. The only conversation we have is with our self. Spiritual deafness is ego centered. When we are spiritually deaf, we assume that ours is the only or the most important voice to hear. We are cut off from God and other people. We are closed to new ideas, understandings, and experiences. Unopen to new ways of thinking, behaving, and relating, we continue business as usual and nothing ever changes. It is a lonely, isolated existence. But we still need "**Ephphatha moments**," don't we? We still need those moments in life that soften our hearts, and help them to hear again, as if for the first time, how very much we are loved by God. We need those moments, and God gives them to us in an incredible variety of ways. Moments when we remember, in our heart of hearts, that we are God's beloved. That Jesus died for us. That we are forgiven, that we are loved, and that nothing in life will ever separate us from that love. I can't help but wonder if spiritual deafness isn't one of the primary causes of conflict in our marriages and families, in our relationships with one another, in our nation, and in the world. It's not hard to see how deafness destroys relationships.

We are deaf to the dignity of all human beings when we show favoritism and make distinctions based upon appearance, wealth, and status. We are deaf to the teaching of Jesus when judgment triumphs over mercy, and indifference rather than love defines our relationship with our neighbor. We are deaf when we become self-occupied and self-enclosed because of pride, anger, jealousy, or the refusal to forgive another. We are deaf to our spouse and children when we are too busy or too self-important. We are deaf to God's justice when we refuse to recognize and do something for the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and those who suffer the devastation of war. We are deaf when agendas, prejudice, and assumptions tell us all we need to know. We are deaf when we have no need of another because his or her views, politics, religion, or lifestyle differs from our own. We are deaf when we choose not to listen to the cry of the unborn, the elderly, the disabled, the marginalized and oppressed. We are deaf to God's grace when productivity, winning, and profits determine our choices and guide our lives. We are deaf to God's presence when we refuse to be still, be quiet, and listen.

Deafness abounds in today's world. Talking heads are a dime a dozen. Listening hearts are few and far between. So, what about us? What are the places in which we are closed? Where is our life disconnected? To whom or what are we deaf? The cure for our deafness is not to hear but to be open. Hearing follows openness. **"Ephphatha."** That's what Jesus tells the deaf man. He doesn't say, "Now hear!" He says, **"Ephphatha,"** that is, 'Be opened.'" He says the same thing to you and me. Jesus is always speaking, **"Ephphatha,"** to the closed parts of our lives. So, I invite you to think again of those times in your life when your heart was softened, and when your ears and your eyes were opened. It may have been in church, or when you were reading the Bible, but it may have been at other times. It may have been through a friend. It may have been through what others would call a coincidence. It may have been through a beautiful sunset, or an unexpected rainbow. It may have been at a concert, or experiencing the birth of a child, and on and on. We all have those moments when something happens that causes our hearts to soften, and when we find ourselves hearing again God's loving voice in our heart of hearts.

Let our ears be opened to hear Christ's word of forgiveness of our sins and his love for us. Let our eyes be opened to see the beauty of creation and the possibilities God sets before us. Let our mouths be opened to speak the good news of what God is doing in our lives. Let our hands be opened to do the work God has given us to do. Let our minds be opened to new ways of thinking and understanding. Let our hearts be opened to love our neighbors as ourselves. Let our lives be opened that God might dwell in us. So, let's pray not just to have an **"Ephphatha Moment,"** but to be an **"Ephphatha Moment"** for someone else. Let's pray for the opportunity to share our hope, to invite someone to church, to send them a timely text, or share a quote or a book or something that helps to have their heart opened again to God's amazing grace, mercy, and love. So that they, too, can hear with the ears of their heart, and remember that they are loved by the God who is love.

"Ephphatha" is Jesus' prayer to God, his commandment to the deaf man, and his longing for all human beings. The openness to which Christ calls us transforms and heals our lives. It reconnects us to God and one another, offering new life, new beginnings, new hope, and new possibilities. ... **"Can you hear me now?" Ephphatha.** Be opened. May the ears of your hearts be opened, that they can be filled with God's love. And may your tongues be released, to share this love with all. To the glory of God. **Amen**

248th Diocesan Convention will be held November 8, 2024

Delegate needed.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 18

10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

(also on zoom)

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

MONDAY	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
	8:30 PM	AA MEETING
SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, PROPER 19

10:15 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II	(also on zoom)
	COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS	

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Dana Kenn	Deb Giordano
Coffee	Janet Croft	Erika Febres

SUPPORT THE FOOD PANTRY – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Loving God, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation. Especially we remember before you:

Sister Eddie	Betty Curley	Jess
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Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Art
Chris Dickson	Donna Buchsbaum	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Donna Edwards	Evelyn
Manetta Family	Robert Hosey	Kristen
Christopher	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Danielle	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Del
Donna A.	Kate Jones	Aidan
Sally & Roger	Sophia	Ciara
Mary & Family	Ann Turco	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Vincent
Michael & Family	Matthew Treasure	Mo
Michelle & Baby	Marjorie Guerrier	Joseph
John Rocco		

All people and countries suffering from violence, hatred and natural disaster.

Help us speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.

Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen.

To add or make changes to prayer list during the week, email

Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

Prayer before Worship

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it, the spirit of grace. Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart, and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn to be sung during the consecration:

Father I adore you,
Lay my life before you,
How I love you.

Repeat twice with second verse starting with Jesus
and third verse starting with Spirit.

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominions and glory, now and for ever. Amen

