Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church

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**Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost**

October 31, 2021

Pastor John Nieman

79 Cross Street, Gardner, Massachusetts ~ 01440

***Welcome to St. Paul’s.*** *We’re glad that you have joined us for worship, either in person or livestreamed on our YouTube channel. For as long as COVID infection rates remain elevated in our area, we ask everyone attending in person to wear a mask in worship and to sit safely distanced from people not from your household. At the distribution of Holy Communion (bread only), please come forward one at a time, and return to your seat through the door to your right and from the rear of the nave down the center aisle. Worship leaders are all vaccinated and will only unmask while speaking. Words in* ***boldface type*** *are the congregation’s responses.*

**Prelude:**  *Jesus, Meine Zuversicht*

**The Word of God**

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

**Collect for Purity**

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**

**A Song of Praise** *Benedictus es, Domine 1982 Hymnal S236*

**Glory to you, Lord God of our fathers;**

**you are worthy of praise; glory to you.**

**Glory to you for the radiance of your holy Name;**

**we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.**

**Glory to you in the splendor of your temple;**

**on the throne of your majesty, glory to you.**

**Glory to you, seated between the cherubim,**

**we will praise you and highly exalt you for ever.**

**Glory to you, beholding the depths,**

**in the high vault of heaven, glory to you.**

**Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit;**

**we will praise you and highly exalt you forever.**

**The Collect**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, you have taught us in your Son that love fulfills the law. Inspire us to love you with all our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength, and teach us how to love our neighbor as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Stewardship Reflection**

*“We Offer with Joy and Thanksgiving …. Our Possessions” -*Ron Lewis

**First Reading**: Ruth 1:1-18

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. Then Naomi started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back each of you to your mother’s house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.” Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. They said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.” Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. So Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!” When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 119:1-8** *Beati immaculate*

1Happy are they whose way is blameless, \*  
who walk in the law of the Lord!

2 Happy are they who observe his decrees \*  
and seek him with all their hearts!

3 Who never do any wrong, \*  
but always walk in his ways.

4 You laid down your commandments, \*  
that we should fully keep them.

5 Oh, that my ways were made so direct \*  
that I might keep your statutes!

6 Then I should not be put to shame, \*  
when I regard all your commandments.

7 I will thank you with an unfeigned heart, \*  
when I have learned your righteous judgments.

8 I will keep your statutes; \*  
do not utterly forsake me.

**Second Reading:** Hebrews 9:11-14

When Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gradual Hymn:** *“St. Michael’s Setting”*

*All Sing:***Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 12:28-34

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

One of the scribes came near and heard the Saducees disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’ —this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Gradual Hymn:** *“St. Michael’s Setting”*

*All Sing:* **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**The Sermon** ~ Pastor John Nieman

**The Hymn:** *How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place, #517*

1.**How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me!**

**My thirsty soul desires and longs within thy courts to be;**

**my weary heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee.**

2.**Beside thine altars, gracious Lord, the swallows find a nest;**

**how happy they who dwell with thee and praise thee without rest,**

**and happy they whose hearts are set upon the pilgrim’s quest.**

3.**Those who go through the desert vale will find it filled with springs,**

**and they shall climb from height to height till Zion’s temple rings**

**with praise to thee, in glory throned, Lord God, great King of kings.**

4.**One day within thy courts excels a thousand spent away;**

**how happy they who keep thy laws nor from thy precepts stray,**

**for thou shalt surely bless all those who live the words they pray.**

**The Nicene Creed**

**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 and the Son. 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 ~** *Form VI ~ The Book of Common Prayer p. 392*

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God. *Silence*

For all people in their daily life and work;  
**For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.**

For this community, the nation, and the world;  
**For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the just and proper use of your creation;  
**For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;  
**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;  
**For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.**

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, and Douglas our Bishop; and for all bishops and other ministers;  
**For all who serve God in his Church.**

For the needs and concerns of this congregation and its people; especially for:

Jared Snyder Jon Bowdoin

Lisa Boulanger Brian Cormier

Cindy Richard Maureen Owens

Brandon Grenier Eveline Beauregard

Millie Williams Jay Hipkins

Jacob Decarolis Dawn Deluca

Cyndi Flanagan Andy LePage

Christopher Sharon Hamel

Kim Shea Bob and Lorene McLaughlin

Kathy Lewis Fred and Ginny Monette

Evelyn Wolenty Tom and Felicity Littlepage

Joni Pulnik Suzanna Cleveland

Robin Hatch and family

For those in military service.

For the people of Afghanistan and for the people of Haiti and for all refugees.

For people who have suffered injury and loss from storms, fires and floods.

For our parishioners unable to be with us.

For the repose of the soul of Frank Wells and Jill Pollard.

In thanksgiving for the birthday of Ashley Davis.

In thanksgiving for the Sanctuary Candle given by Les Whitney, in memory of Lester and Bernice Whitney.

In thanksgiving for the Communion Wine, given by Sylvia Wells in memory of Frank Wells.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

**Your generous goodness comes to us new every day.**

We will exalt you, O God our King;

**And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died,

**that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.**

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;  
**Who put their trust in you.**

**The Collect**

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**The Confession of Sin**

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**The Absolution**

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

**The Peace**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

**Announcements**

**The Holy Communion**

**Offertory Invitation**

Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of life and labor to the Lord.

**Offertory Music:** *For the Least of My Brothers ~ Dolores M. Hruby. Composer*

**Offertory Prayer**

Gracious God, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us, - ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your generosity and love.

**Receive them for the sake of the one who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Eucharistic Prayer C** *~ from the Book of Common Prayer p. 369*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

**Glory to you for ever and ever.**

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

**By your will they were created and have their being.**

From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

**Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.**

Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

**By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.**

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

**Sanctus** *1982 Hymnal, #S125*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

And so, gracious God, we who have been redeemed by Christ, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, 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. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving.

**We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.**

Lord God of our forebears: God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God of Sarah and Rebekah, Rachel and Leah; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

**Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.**

Accept these prayers and praises, holy God, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. **Amen***.*

**The Lord’s Prayer**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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, forever and ever. Amen.**

**The Breaking of the Bread**

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

**Lamb of God** *sung by all*

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; grant us peace.**

**The Distribution**

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come to supper. Feed on Christ in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

**Communion Hymn:** *Let thy Blood in Mercy Poured****,*** #313

1. **Let thy blood in mercy poured,  let thy gracious body broken,   
   be to me, O gracious Lord, of thy boundless love the token.**

*Refrain:***Thou didst give thyself for me, now I give myself to thee.**

2**. Thou didst die that I might live; blessed Lord, thou cam’st to save me;   
all that love of God could give Jesus by his sorrows gave me.** *[Refrain]*

3**. By the thorns that crowned thy brow, by the spear wound and the nailing,   
by the pain and death, I now claim, O Christ, thy love unfailing.** *[Refrain]*

4**. Wilt thou own the gift I bring? All my penitence I give thee;   
thou art my exalted King, of thy matchless love forgive me.** *[Refrain]*

**Post Communion Prayer**

Let us pray.

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**The Blessing**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and for ever. **Amen**

**Sending Hymn:** *Rise Up, Ye Saints of God!, #551*

1**. Rise up, ye saints of God! Have done with lesser things,  
give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings.**

2**. Rise up, ye saints of God! His kingdom tarries long:  
Lord, bring the day of truth and love and end the night of wrong.**

3**. Lift high the cross of Christ! Tread where his feet have trod;  
and quickened by the Spirit's power, rise up, ye saints of God!**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude:** *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*

**Worship Leaders and Helpers Today**

Presider/Preacher … Pastor John Nieman

Reader …Pam Harris LEM …Denis Meunier

Organist … Judy Greenlees

Altar Guild … Denise Whitney Camera …Susan Hubbard

Stewardship Reflection - Ron Lewis

**This Week at St. Paul’s:**

Tuesday, 7:30 pm - Bible Study on Zoom.

Next Sunday (November 7) will be observed as All Saints Sunday.

*(Remember: Daylight Savings Time ends Saturday, 11/6. FALL BACK one hour!)*