

Church of the Divine Love
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
PROPER 7

JUNE 29, 2025 9:00 AM AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

A Morning Prayer – on insert

THE WORD OF GOD

Opening Acclamation page 355

Gloria page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21**

Psalm 16

Second Lesson: **Galatians 5:1, 13-25**

Gospel: **Luke 9:51-62**

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

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Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Confession page 393

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B page 367

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The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
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Sermon Sunday June 29, 2025

1Kings 19: 15-16, 19-21; Psalm 16; Galatians 5:1,13-25; Luke 9: 51-62.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, today's gospel is a difficult one. It's confrontational and it doesn't leave much, if any, wiggle room. **"No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."** We're either looking toward the kingdom or we are not. We're either responding to the call of life or we're not. We're either open to the coming future or we're not.

Jesus is calling us into question and that's never easy, fun, or comfortable. He is calling into question the direction of our life, the values we claim to hold, and how we are living and embodying those values. He is asking us to look at ourselves rather than the Samaritan on whom we'd like to call down fire from heaven. By Samaritan I mean those who look, act, and believe differently from us; those who do not hold our particular religious or political beliefs; those who are not from these parts; those to whom we are opposed and in conflict with, for whatever reasons. And if you're not sure who your Samaritans are look at your social media feed and who posts the articles and comments that push your buttons, turn on the news channel you refuse to watch, picture the face of one you crush and defeat in the arguments that go on in your head.

Today's gospel won't let us turn away from the people and situations that are right in front of us or the future that is coming to us. Jesus recognizes and holds before us the tension in which we live. On the one hand we say to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." On the other hand, we say to him, "But first let me go and" You probably know what that's like. I know I do. When have you experienced that tension? When has it felt like you were being pulled in two directions, the way of Jesus and some other way? In what ways have you said, "But first let me go and...?" It's easy and simple to follow Jesus, in principle. Love your neighbor as yourself, love your enemy, welcome the stranger, visit the sick and imprisoned, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give the thirsty something to drink, turn the other cheek, forgive not just seven times but seventy times seven. These are values Jesus holds. That's where Jesus is going. That's the direction in which he has set his face. That's the road to Jerusalem and it sounds good. Most of us probably agree with those values. It's the road we too have chosen to travel, in principle.

But it's so much harder and messier to follow Jesus in life than in principle. I suspect we are all in favor of love, hospitality, forgiveness, and nonviolence until we meet the unlovable, the stranger who scares us, the unforgivable act, the one who throws the first punch, or the Samaritan in our life. Then it's a different story and that story usually begins with, "But first"

Jesus, however, puts no qualifications, limitations, or exceptions on where he is going, who is included, or what he is offering. He doesn't seem to care who we are, where we are from, or what we have done or left undone. Republican or Democrat, citizen or foreigner, Christian or Muslim, gay or straight, black or white, good or bad, believer or nonbeliever just don't seem to matter to Jesus. For him there is no why, no conditions, attached to love, hospitality, forgiveness, or giving. He does not allow for a "but first" in his life or the lives of his followers. "But first" is the way we put conditions on the unconditional. Yes, I will love the other but first let me go and see who the other is, whether she or he is deserving of love, whether I like him or her, whether he or she agrees with and is agreeable to me. Yes, I will open my door to and welcome the stranger but first let me go and see who's knocking, how different he or she is from me, what she or he wants, what I am risking. Yes, I will forgive another but first let me go and see if she or he has acknowledged her or his wrongdoing, is sorry for what they did, and has promised to change. Yes, I will give to and care for another but first let me go and see why I should, what it will cost me, and what's in it for me. But first....

It's as if we are backing our way into the kingdom while keeping an eye on the door. It's as if we are walking backwards into our future, not wanting to see or deal with what is before us. It's as if we have put our hand to the plow and looked back. And we already know what Jesus thinks about that. I don't want to back my way through this life. I don't want to live, if you will pardon a bad pun, a but first life. And I hope you don't either. I want us to turn and lead with our hearts, that deep heart that loves the unlovable, forgives the unforgivable, welcomes the stranger, and gives without seeking a payback or even a thank you. I wasn't kidding when I said that this is a difficult gospel. I wish I could resolve this in some neat and simple way, as much for myself as for you, but I can't. It's not about resolving the gospel. It's about resolving ourselves, resolving our heart. That resolution is not a simple or one time decision. It's a way of being in this world, a way of relating to others, a direction for our life. It's a choice we make every day. It's the road to Jerusalem. For Jesus Jerusalem is about healing and wholeness, mercy and forgiveness, peace, the dignity and holiness of all humanity, reconciliation with God and each other, overcoming death, and life fully lived. In that regard, Jerusalem is a place of hope, transformation, fulfillment, and new life. Let's not turn away from that. Let's set our faces to go to Jerusalem. If we are going to set our face on Jerusalem then we must first face up to ourselves; the condition of our lives, the state of our world, and the direction we are headed. That means taking an honest look at what's going on and answering some hard questions.

That means looking at the ways in which we are backing through life. It means naming the people and situations to which we have turned our backs, and acknowledging that we do sometimes live a "but first" life. I wonder what our lives and world would be like if we were to love, give, welcome, and forgive without a "but first?" Setting our face to go to Jerusalem means letting go of the past and the dead places and parts of our lives, the things that can no longer give or sustain life and growth. Jesus is not saying we shouldn't attend or conduct funerals. He is emphasizing that Jerusalem is about life and if we are more concerned with and attached to the past and dead parts of our lives then we are headed in a different direction than he is. Setting our face to go to Jerusalem means letting go of seeking approval and identity from our families, social groups, and political parties. It requires a reordering of priorities. It is an all or nothing proposition. We may have to grow into the implications of Jerusalem for our lives but we are either on the road to Jerusalem or we are not.

I think it would be risky and scary and look pretty crazy. But as I look at the world, read the news, and listen to the lives and stories of others, the world is already risky, scary, and crazy. So, what if we took a better risk, faced a better fear, and lived a kinder craziness? And what if we were to let that start with you and me, today, in our lives, in our particular situations, and with whoever or whatever is before us?

Today's gospel does not allow for excuses, justifications, running away, or hiding. Our lives are too important and we matter too much to allow for that. To struggle with the questions raised by today's gospel is the beginning of setting our face to go to Jerusalem. Let's not turn away from Jerusalem and let's not turn away from each other. Let's stand together and set our faces to go to Jerusalem. **AMEN.**

All baptized Christians, regardless of age, are welcome to receive communion in the Episcopal Church.

3 PENTECOST - PROPER 8	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

MONDAY	8:00 PM	AA MEETING
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TUESDAY	7:00 PM	BIBLE STUDY
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WEDNESDAY	7:00 PM	AL-ANON MEETING
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THURSDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
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SATURDAY	10AM-2PM	THRIFT SHOP
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4 PENTECOST - PROPER 9	9:00 AM	HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
		COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWS

	Today	Next Week
Eucharistic Minister	Deb Giordano	
Coffee Hour	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:

Barbara Curran	Betty Curley	Jess
Bob Curley	Steve Curley	Joseph
Chris Dickson	John Roccoo	Deb P.
John Mulligan	Margorie Guerrier	Bobby
Manetta Family	Robert Hosey	Ryan
Sister Eddie	Bernie Walther	Celeste
Beverly Noel	Phil Ryder	Warren
Anthony Paribello	Jonathan	Del
Donna Amundsen	Kate Jones	Aiden
Shannon & Family	Vincent & Barbara	Ciara
Mary & Family	Wendy	Jan
Nathan Treadwell	Gladys Hadija	Sophia
Michael & Family	Kristen	Mo

Michelle & Family

Christopher

Annie

Timothy Treasure

Donna A.

Aika

Moises Parra

Misael Varas

James

Donald Edwards

David Leone

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

The homeless and food insecure.

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 the prayer list during the week,

email Janet Croft at jmc220@optonline.net.

A Morning Prayer

Father in heaven, I stand ready to receive Your wisdom and guidance. In each decision, big or small, lead me to discern your will and to act accordingly. Help me to understand the depth of Your wisdom, finding guidance in Your word and through prayer. Teach me to be patient as I wait for Your direction, trusting that Your timing is perfect. May I navigate this day with the assurance that Your wisdom is a treasure far greater than any earthly

knowledge. Guide my thoughts and actions, that they may be a reflection of your discernment and love. In Your guidance, I find the path to a life of purpose and peace.

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 forever. Amen

