



Wednesday@12 OnLine

WE GATHER ON ZOOM to be in community and to share thoughts and reflections on the readings scheduled for the coming Sunday service. The service starts with praise to God. Then we read the three readings, taking turns serving as readers. Third, we pray for each other and the world. When this service can be held in person, Holy Communion comes next. At this time, however, we will simply shift from formal readings to informal discussion and conversation.

Feel free to provide yourself with coffee or tea while we chat. Welcome!

Blessed be God: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

Gracious 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 Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

Open our lips, O God,

And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Be joyful, and serve God with gladness,

and come before God's presence with a song.

Let us enter this sacred moment with thanksgiving,

and come into God's presence with praise.

God is good; God's mercy is everlasting;

and God's faithfulness endures from age to age.

Life giving God, we praise you for your steadfast love, for the assurance given in countless ways that our whole lives are held in your embrace. Open our hearts and minds to your truth and your presence, conveyed in words shared by your people. **Amen.**

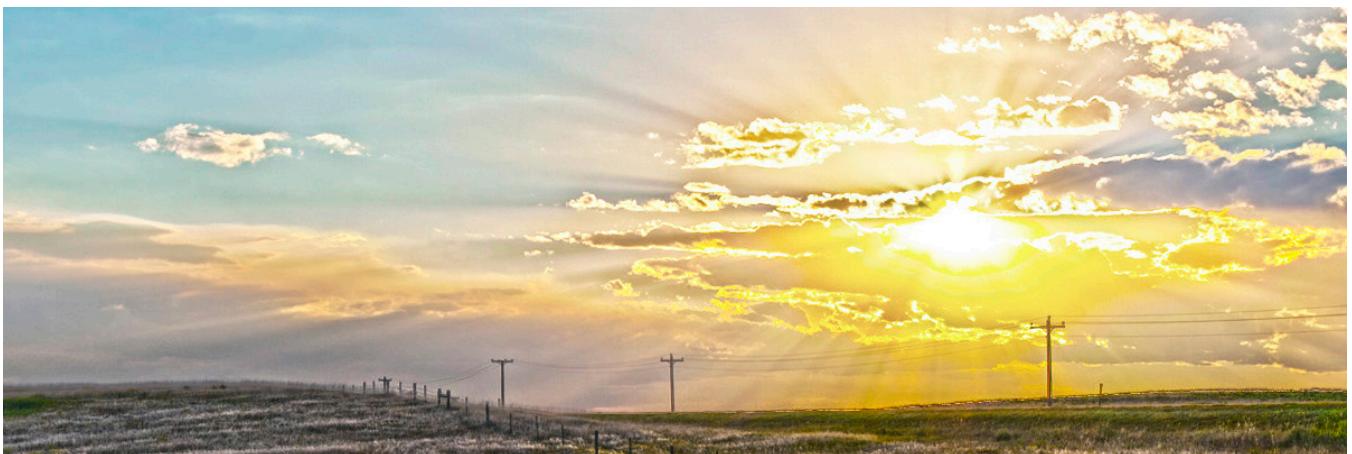


Photo by Matt Lincoln

Three Readings

First Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

There was a time when you were darkness, but now you are light in Christ. Live as children of the light. Light produces every kind of goodness, justice and truth. Be correct in your judgment of what pleases our Savior. Take no part in deeds done in darkness, which bear no fruit; rather, expose them. It's shameful even to mention the things these people do in secret; but when such deeds are exposed and seen in the light of day, everything that becomes visible is light.

That's why we read,

"Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Thanks be to God.

Middle Reading

Monet Refuses the Operation, by Lisel Mueller, from Second Language

Doctor, you say there are no haloes
around the streetlights in Paris
and what I see is an aberration
caused by old age, an affliction.
I tell you it has taken me all my life
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,
to soften and blur and finally banish
the edges you regret I don't see,
to learn that the line I called the horizon
does not exist and sky and water,
so long apart, are the same state of being.

Fifty-four years before I could see

Rouen cathedral is built
of parallel shafts of sun,
and now you want to restore
my youthful errors: fixed
notions of top and bottom,
the illusion of three-dimensional space,
wisteria separate
from the bridge it covers.

What can I say to convince you
the Houses of Parliament dissolve
night after night to become
the fluid dream of the Thames?

I will not return to a universe
of objects that don't know each other,
as if islands were not the lost children
of one great continent. The world
is flux, and light becomes what it touches,
becomes water, lilies on water,

above and below water,
becomes lilac and mauve and yellow
and white and cerulean lamps,
small fists passing sunlight
so quickly to one another
that it would take long, streaming hair
inside my brush to catch it.
To paint the speed of light!
Our weighted shapes, these verticals,
burn to mix with air
and change our bones, skin, clothes
to gases. Doctor,
if only you could see
how heaven pulls earth into its arms
and how infinitely the heart expands
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people
Thanks be to God.



British Parliament at Sunset, by Claude Monet

Gospel
John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw someone who had been blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, was it this individual's sin that caused the blindness, or that of the parents?" "Neither," answered Jesus. "It wasn't because of anyone's sin—not this person's, nor the parents. Rather, it was to let God's works shine forth in this person. We must do the deeds of the One who sent me while it is still day—for night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

With that, Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with his saliva and smeared the blind one's eyes with the mud. Then Jesus said, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" ("Siloam" means "sent") So the person went off to wash, and came back able to see. Neighbors and those who had been accustomed to seeing the blind beggar began to ask, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said yes; others said no—the one who had been healed simply looked like the beggar. But the individual in question said, "No—I was the beggar."

The people then asked, "Then how were your eyes opened?" The answer came, "The one they call Jesus made mud and smeared it on my eyes, and told me to go to Siloam and wash. When I went and washed, I was able to see."

"Where is Jesus?" they asked. The person replied, "I have no idea." They took the one who had been born blind to the Pharisees. It had been on a Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud paste and opened the beggar's eyes. The Pharisees asked how the individual could see. They were told, "Jesus put mud on my eyes. I washed it off, and now I can see." This prompted some Pharisees to say, "This Jesus cannot be from God, because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." Others argued, "But how could a sinner perform signs like these?" They were sharply divided. Then they addressed the blind person again: "Since it was your eyes he opened, what do you have to say about this Jesus?" "He's a prophet," came the reply. The Temple authorities refused to believe that this one had been blind and had begun to see, until they summoned the parents. "Is this your child?" they asked. "And if so, do you attest that your child was blind at birth? How do you account for the fact that now your child can see?" The parents answered, "We know this is our child, blind from birth. But how our child can see now, or who opened those blind eyes, we have no idea. But don't ask us—our child is old enough to speak without us!" The parents answered this way because they were afraid of the Temple authorities, who had already agreed among themselves that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why they said, "Our child is of age and should be asked directly."

A second time they summoned the one who had been born blind and said, "Give God the glory instead; we know that this Jesus is a sinner." "I don't know whether he is a sinner or not," the individual answered. "All I know is that I used to be blind, and now can see." They persisted, "Just what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" "I already told you, but you won't listen to me," came the answer. "Why do you want to hear it all over again? Don't tell me you want to become disciples of Jesus too!" They retorted scornfully, "You're the one who is Jesus' disciple. We are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this Jesus comes from." The other retorted: "Well, this is news! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes! We know that God doesn't hear sinners, but that if people are devout and obey God's will, God listens to them. It is unheard of that anyone ever gave sight to a person blind from birth. If Jesus were not from God, he could never have done such a thing!"

"What!" they exclaimed. "You're steeped in sin from birth, and you're going to lecture us?" With that they threw the person out.

When Jesus heard of the expulsion, he sought out the healed one and asked, "Do you believe in the Chosen One?" The other answered, "Who is this One, that I may believe?" "You're looking at him," Jesus replied. "The Chosen One is speaking to you now." The healed one said, "Yes, I believe," and worshiped Jesus.

And Jesus said, "I came into this world to execute justice, to make the sightless see and the seeing blind." Some of the Pharisees who were nearby heard this and said, "You're not calling us blind, are you?" To which Jesus replied, "If you were blind, there would be no sin in that. But since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Thanks be to God.

The Prayers of the People

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; including members of all religions; the people and leadership of The Episcopal Church; and the community of Trinity.

Let us pray for all who seek the beauty of holiness.

Silence is held

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.

Let us pray for equity, mutual regard, and peace.

Silence is held

I ask your prayers for those who are sick, who struggle in poverty, under oppression, and for those who care for them. Let us pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence is held

I ask your prayers for all who seek to practice their spirituality, and live more nearly according to their values. Let us pray for us all.

Silence is held

I ask your prayers for those who have died, and for those who grieve the absent. Let us pray for the grieving and the dead.

Silence is held

And now, let us give thanks to God for the abundance of our lives.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

The Peace

The peace of God be always with you.

And also with you.

Holy Conversation