

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Stockbridge, Massachusetts
September 20, 2020 – The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Forgiveness

Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The collect for this week encourages us not to be anxious about earthly things. And yet there is much to be anxious about. We are indeed placed among things that are passing away. The pandemic is bringing us both staggering losses and quiet blessings and mercies. How do we hold fast to our faith that God will provide in a time of such suffering and uncertainty?

In our Gospel reading for this Sunday, Jesus tells a parable in which some workers are angry about what they perceive as unfair treatment. Those who work the most are paid the same as those who have worked the least. The anger is about the mercy of the employer---about jealousy and envy---not exactly about fairness. In today's parable, God's mercy exceeds standards of human fairness and that may be difficult for us to comprehend. Jesus tells us that we are not to measure God's mercy by our standards, and that as recipients of God's mercy, we are to rejoice when grace abounds.

Come to St. Paul's to experience the holy mystery of God's mercy.

Music	Estudios (Studies) by Fernando Sor	Doug Schmolze, guitar
Prelude:	Estudios No. 1	
After Sermon:	Estudios No. 7	
Offertory:	Estudios No. 14	
After Communion:	Estudios No. 5	
Postlude:	Estudios No. 10	

Collect

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Readings

Exodus 16:2-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land

of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?” And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.”

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.’” And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD and call upon his Name; *
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him, *
and speak of all his marvelous works.
- 3 Glory in his holy Name; *
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
- 4 Search for the LORD and his strength; *
continually seek his face.
- 5 Remember the marvels he has done, *
his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,
- 6 O offspring of Abraham his servant, *
O children of Jacob his chosen.
- 37 He led out his people with silver and gold; *
in all their tribes there was not one that stumbled.
- 38 Egypt was glad of their going, *
because they were afraid of them.

- 39 He spread out a cloud for a covering *
and a fire to give light in the night season.
- 40 They asked, and quails appeared, *
and he satisfied them with bread from heaven.
- 41 He opened the rock, and water flowed, *
so the river ran in the dry places.
- 42 For God remembered his holy word *
and Abraham his servant.
- 43 So he led forth his people with gladness, *
his chosen with shouts of joy.
- 44 He gave his people the lands of the nations, *
and they took the fruit of others' toil,
- 45 That they might keep his statutes *
and observe his laws. Hallelujah!

Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Invitation from the Berkshire County NAACP to Join a White Learning Circle

NAACP Berkshire County, reminding us that the most important step white people can take on the journey to live as an anti-racist is to become well versed in the history of racism, is organizing a *White Learning Circle* to facilitate and support this learning. The group will explore the history of Black and other marginalized people in the U.S., the systems of oppression at work

in our country, unconscious biases, and how to combat white supremacy. The group will begin this October, meeting on Zoom for 90 minutes every other Sunday afternoon. For more information, and to learn how to participate, go to the White Learning Circle Invitation on our website, www.stpaulsstockbridge.org.

Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven

Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm, on Zoom – beginning September 29

Dr. Amy Jill Levine, Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University, has built her career on helping Christians understand the Jewish context of Jesus' life and ministry. Her newest book, *Sermon on the Mount*, is a readable and thought-provoking look at these fundamental teachings from Matthew's gospel. Father Sam will use this book (available in paperback or for the Kindle) as the guide to our six-week study, in partnership with the folks of Grace Church of Great Barrington and Christ Trinity Church of Sheffield. Beginning September 29, we will gather on the Zoom platform on Tuesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm. Please read the introduction and chapter 1 in preparation for the first session. Questions? Ask Father Sam.

Worship Teams (If you exchange shifts with someone, please notify the Church Office by Thursday morning at stpaulsstockbridge@gmail.com.)

Today, September 20

Celebrant
& Preacher: The Rev. Jane Tillman
Ushers: Deb Pege
Matt Fillio
Reader: Diane Dillon

Next Sunday, September 27

Celebrant
& Preacher: The Rev. Sam Smith
Ushers: Don Temples
Jorja Marsden
Reader: Sebastian Bonner

Parish Prayer List

- People we pray for on Sundays: **Cecilia, Thelma, Donnice, Joan Ann, Sue, Kennedy, David**
- Long-term prayer list: **Piers, Katrina, Khali, George, Jeff, David, Doug, Barbara, ZsuZsa, Charles, Tom, Rich, Ronnie, John, George, Christy, Michael, Karen**
- Prayers of thanksgiving that **Kendra MacLeod** is now a US citizen.
- Our partners at Grace Church, Great Barrington and their priest Libby; Christ Trinity Episcopal-Lutheran, Sheffield and their priest Erik; the Austen Riggs community and the Riverbrook Residence; victims of violence, abuse, persecution and disaster at home and abroad; those impacted by the pandemic
- Outreach Ministries of the Week: **Cathedral of the Beloved**
- Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: **St Paul's, Stockbridge**
- Anglican Cycle of Prayer: **Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan**
- Birthdays: **Don Temples** (24th), **Carl Sprague** (27th)
- Anniversaries: **Pam & Bill Drumm** (25th)