

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Stockbridge, Massachusetts
October 18, 2020 – The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost**

Sacred Choices

Just as we are coming down to the wire in the upcoming election, our lectionary presents Jesus wrestling with a question about church and state. ([Matthew 22:15-22](#)) As you go to the ballot box, does your faith influence your vote?

The Pharisees approach Jesus with a “gotcha” question—it seems that any answer to the either/or question they pose will get Jesus in trouble. But Jesus recognizes a greater truth: we are people subject both to human law and divine law. Both are valid subjects for allegiance and obligation. But just as Jesus points to a coin as evidence of what belongs “to the emperor,” perhaps we should consider what falls in the realm of God and faith.

When we enter the voting booth, we would do well to consider the values of those for whom we vote. Do they align with our own values? Does the candidate treasure the people and principles that we do? If we vote in this way, our ballot becomes more than a mark in a particular column; it is a prayer for the world.

Welcome to St. Paul's, where we value God's people and their welfare above all, and where we continue to pray for justice and peace.

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Exodus 33: 12-23

Moses said to the LORD, “See, you have said to me, ‘Bring up this people’; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’ Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.” He said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” And he said to him, “If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.”

The LORD said to Moses, “I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The

LORD; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.” And the LORD continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.”

Psalm 99

- 1 The LORD is King; let the people tremble; *
he is enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth shake.
- 2 The LORD is great in Zion; *
he is high above all peoples.
- 3 Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome; *
he is the Holy One.
- 4 “O mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; *
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.”
- 5 Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God and fall down before his footstool; *
he is the Holy One.
- 6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *
they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.
- 7 He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *
they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.
- 8 O LORD our God, you answered them indeed; *
you were a God who forgave them, yet punished them for their evil deeds.
- 9 Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God and worship him upon his holy hill; *
for the LORD our God is the Holy One.

Matthew 22:15-22

The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.” Then he said to them, “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

List of Faithful Departed: Our worship service on Sunday, November 1 will include the reading of names of the faithful departed. You may add to the list simply by printing the names of deceased loved ones clearly on the list at the back of the church, emailing their names to stpaulsstockbridge@gmail.com, or leaving a voicemail message at the office, 413-298-4913 by **Thursday, Oct. 29.**

Outreach Ministry Reaches Milestone

The Berkshire Community Diaper Project, one of the Outreach Ministries for which we pray regularly, just announced a big milestone: over one million diapers donated in just six years! https://www.berkshireeagle.com/news/1-million-diapers-donated-in-six-years-berkshire-county-nonprofit-celebrates-milestone/article_e3815ac6-0e06-11eb-bd2c-bfdb83677945.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

New Sacred Ground Circle Forming

There's still time to join a Sacred Ground Circle. Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based discussion group intended to help folks like us understand the deep roots of racism in our communities. Sacred Ground takes place over ten sessions with each session about two weeks apart to allow everyone time to go over the material. This new circle will be starting soon with a Harvard Divinity School graduate and member of St. John's, Williamstown facilitating the circle. The circle will meet at a time and frequency that best suits the participants. For more information about Sacred Ground, please visit the Sacred Ground website, <https://episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground>. If you are interested or have questions, please email Jim Kolesar, jimkolesar60@gmail.com.

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

Continuing this Tuesday, 7:00-8:30 pm, on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609960553?pwd=U05FZ1FIZHhTeWNWbitkWINOOFk3Zz09>

or call in: 646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 826 0996 0553 Passcode: 446609

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. Continuing this Tuesday, October 20, we will gather on the Zoom platform, 7:00-8:30 pm. **Please read chapter three in preparation for this 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, October 18

Celebrant & Preacher: The Rev. Sam Smith
Ushers: Duncan Pollock
Reader: Jean Rousseau

Next Sunday, October 25

Celebrant: The Rev. Sam Smith
Preacher: The Rev. Jane Tillman
Ushers: Don Temples
Reader: Carl Sprague

Parish Prayer List

- People we pray for on Sundays: **Cecilia, Thelma, Kensey**
- Long-term prayer list: **Piers, Katrina, Khali, George, Jeff, David, Doug, Barbara, ZsuZsa, Charles, Tom, Rich, Ronnie, John, George, Christy, Michael, Karen**
- 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: **Good Shepherd / Grace Lutheran, West Springfield**
- Anglican Cycle of Prayer: **Episcopal Church**
- Anniversaries: **Robin & Tom Race (20th)**