

September 13, 2020
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP¹ (Based on Exodus 15:1-21)

Pastor: In sacred times of word, wonder, and awe,
in ordinary days of work and play:

Congregation: in every moment, Almighty God is with us.

Pastor: Whether we are stuck in the mud of fear or doubt,
or standing on faith's hopeful shoreline:

Congregation: in every place, Almighty God is with us.

Pastor: In those who teach us,
and those who trouble us,
in those who surprise us,
and those who forgive us:

Congregation: in every person, Almighty God is with us.

HYMN

Come, Now Almighty God

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CALL TO CONFESSION

Pastor: Confident in the mercy and grace of our Almighty God, let us confess our sin before God
and one another using the Prayer of Confession printed in our bulletin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION²

*All: Merciful God, when we have inflicted injuries upon others, forgive us. (Silent confession)
When we have laughed and sung as our enemies faced calamity, pardon us. (Silent
confession) When we have belittled the convictions of others through word or deed, restore
us in your mercy. (Silent confession) Reclaim us, Almighty God, that amidst the trials of
life, we might walk on the dry land of your powerful hope and your loving grace, through
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Sisters and brothers in Christ, hear the Good News: God's almighty hand of mercy is
stretched out to us, touching us with grace, and making for us a way through all that threatens
us.

In the presence of God, let us sing a hymn of praise to the One who turns our despair into
joy, our fears into faith.

All: Amen!

HYMN OF PRAISE

*Come Now, Almighty God (verse 4, only)
To you, great One-in-Three, eternal praises be.
Forever more, your sovereign majesty,
may we in glory see and to eternity, love and adore.*

¹ Shuman, Thomas. Call to Worship. Lectionary Liturgies: Pentecost 14. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/2014/09/liturgycommunion-for-september-14.html>

² Ibid.

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Exodus 14:19-31 (New Revised Standard Version)

¹⁹ The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. ²⁰ It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²² The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴ At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵ He clogged^[a] their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹ But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

GOSPEL READING - Matthew 18:21-35 (New Revised Standard Version)

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents^[c] was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;^[d] and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister^[e] from your heart."

SERMON*Surrounded on All Sides***Rev. Laura C. Bair**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: With hearts filled with singing, let us bring forth our gifts and offer our lives to Christ, that God might work miracles of hope through our giving *and* our living. Let us dedicate all that we give and all that we are to the Spirit's work, using the Offertory Prayer printed in our bulletins.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All: Triune God, transform our gifts into gifts of hope and joy for a world acquainted with despair. Receive our very lives, and fashion us into instruments of your grace, that we may become love and laughter in places of sorrow and mourning. Mold us into your people—a people of promise and hope, a people who live and die in the Lord. Ask it in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN

Be Now My Vision

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BENEDICTION³

Pastor: Go now into the world and live for Christ.
 Whatever you do, do it in honor of the Lord, giving thanks to God.
 Show forgiveness to one another as you have received forgiveness in Christ.

And may God provide an escape from all that threatens you,
 May Christ Jesus shower mercy on you and through you,
 And may the Holy Spirit uphold you as you stand in Christ.

*All: In the Spirit of Christ, we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
 Amen.*

³ Nettleton, Nathan. Commission & Benediction. Year A. Proper 19: 13, September 2020. www.laughingbird.net.

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Be Now My Vision

Ancient Irish text, c. 8th century; transl. Mary E. Byrne, 1905
 Versified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912; adapt.

Unison

1 Be now my vi - sion, O God of my heart;
 2 Be now my wis - dom, and be my true word;
 3 Rich - es I need not, nor life's emp - ty praise,
 4 Sov - ereign of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

noth - ing sur - pass - es the love you im - part—
 ev - er with - in me, my soul is as - sured;
 you, my in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!

You my best thought, by day or by night,
 Moth - er and Fa - ther, you are both to me,
 You and you on - ly are first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, your pres - ence my light.
 now and for - ev - er your child I will be.
 great God, my trea - sure, may we nev - er part.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

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Come Now, Almighty God

Anon., English, c. 1757; alt.

1 Come now, Al - might - y God, help us your
 2 Come now, In - car - nate Word, by heaven and
 3 Come, Ho - ly Com - fort - er, your sa - cred
 4 To you, great One in Three, e - ter - nal

name to laud; our songs we raise:
 earth a - dored; our prayer at - tend:
 wit - ness bear in this glad hour.
 prais - es be for ev - er - more.

Rul - er all glo - ri - ous, o'er all vic - to - ri - ous,
 Come, and your peo - ple bless, and give your word suc - cess;
 Your grace to us im - part, now rule in ev - ery heart,
 Your sov - ereign maj - es - ty may we in glo - ry see,

come and reign o - ver us, An - cient of Days!
 grant us your ho - li - ness, Sav - ior and Friend!
 nev - er from us de - part, Spir - it of power!
 and to e - ter - ni - ty love and a - dore.

This anonymous English hymn to the Trinity was first published in George Whitefield's Collection, 1757. This tune was composed especially for this text by Giardini, who was a brilliant violinist.

Tune: ITALIAN HYMN 6.6.4.6.6.6.4.
Felice de Giardini, 1769