

# Daily Prayer

## *Eastertide*

*Wednesday, May 4, 2022*

*We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys.*

*We begin by saying*

O Lord, open our lips.

**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

In your resurrection, O Christ,

**let heaven and earth rejoice, Alleluia.**

## **The First Reading**

And Saul approved of their killing Stephen.

That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralysed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in that city.

*Acts 8.2-8*

## The Psalm

Be joyful in God, all the earth; ♦  
sing the glory of his name;  
sing the glory of his praise.

Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds! ♦  
Because of your great strength  
your enemies shall bow before you.

'All the earth shall worship you, ♦  
sing to you, sing praise to your name.'

Come now and behold the works of God, ♦  
how wonderful he is in his dealings with humankind.

He turned the sea into dry land;  
the river they passed through on foot; ♦  
there we rejoiced in him.

In his might he rules for ever;  
his eyes keep watch over the nations; ♦  
let no rebel rise up against him.

*Psalm 66.1-6*

## The Gospel Reading

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son

and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

*John 6.35-40*

*In silence, we ask what the readings and reflection have to say to us today. Is there something that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?*

## **The Reflection**

*The Rev'd Jim Boyles*

The apostle Philip went down to Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah in word and deed. The people listened eagerly, and we're told that there was great joy in the city.

Our psalm begins, "Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth."

Our Easter season is a time to rejoice, to celebrate, in bold ways, the great power and presence of God's love. The time-honoured rhythm of our church year brings us to this point. The resurrection of Jesus inspires both hope and joy in our hearts.

In the days and weeks and even years following the crucifixion, the Romans and the temple religious leaders in Jerusalem conspired to persecute this newly emerging body of exuberant believers. Even Saul, later renamed as the great apostle Paul, was dragging people from their homes to prison simply because they were following Christ. Many fled, refugees just as we see those fleeing violence in Ukraine today. They went out from Jerusalem to the far corners of the vast Roman empire, and they carried with them this joyful and hopeful spirit that inspired so many. Philip didn't go too far – Samaria, just north of Jerusalem. There, among this estranged sect, he found a receptive audience, as he likely told the stories of Jesus, sharing his deep faith, his hope and his joy.

We're told that there were not just words, but also actions. Unclean spirits were cleansed. The lame were cured. I think that proclaiming

the Messiah, or proclaiming the Word as it states in another part of this passage, involves much more story-telling and action than mere sermonizing.

These days we hear the phrase, “decolonizing the church”. It’s a reaction to the colonial days when the church, particularly the Anglican church, the Church of England, came hand in hand with Empire to conquer and settle foreign lands. Some elements of the colonial church linger in our present practices. Recently, I’ve been wondering if the concept of ‘sermon’ is one of those colonizing elements.

Although we always have fine sermons at Church of the Redeemer, there may be a more Jesus-like way. Someone said that the purpose of a sermon is to tell people what to believe and how to live. A more sympathetic purpose might be that sermons interpret scripture, assisting people to find their own way to faith and to life.

Sermons are delivered usually by clergy, often from a raised pulpit or lectern, a one-way conversation, like a general giving marching orders to his soldiers neatly arranged in front of him in straight lines of pews. Even Jesus’ most famous sermon, the sermon on the mount, in Matthew 5 is actually labeled as, “Jesus taught them”. Our current understanding of teaching has moved a long way from lecture to small group shared discovery of knowledge.

I think we have much to learn from our Indigenous neighbours. They often meet in a circle. They share stories. They don’t debate. Each story is honoured, respected. The elders of the community share in the circle, their wisdom is honoured and respected. Indigenous Anglicans have developed a resource for approaching the Bible, called *Gospel-based Discipleship*, which places the Gospel in the centre of the sacred circle. (ref: <https://www.anglican.ca/im/introgbd/> ). Each follower of Jesus has an opportunity to share their

story in relation to a particular text.

Last Sunday night at Redeemer we had a service of lamentation, keeping in mind three things: the resignation of Archbishop Mark McDonald because of sexual misconduct; the complainant and all those who have been victims of sexual abuse or harassment; and the Anglican Indigenous church which has been deeply touched by this resignation. Andrew Kuhl presided, and read the gospel account of Jesus walking on the waters during a storm and calming the panic of the disciples, enabling them to continue on to their destination on the other side of the lake. The small group gathered in a circle shared in reflection on this story, a rich time of sharing, and lamenting.

Should the church decolonize itself by moving beyond sermons?

*When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle*

## **The Canticle ~ The Song of Christ's Glory**

*At the name of Jesus  
every knee shall bow.*

Christ Jesus was in the form of God, ♦  
but he did not cling to equality with God.

He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, ♦  
and was born in our human likeness.

Being found in human form he humbled himself, ♦  
and became obedient unto death, even death on a  
cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him, ♦  
and bestowed on him the name above every name,

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ♦  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth;

And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, ♦  
to the glory of God the Father.

*Philippians 2.5-11*

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.

At the name of Jesus  
every knee shall bow.

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions)  
and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

## **The Intercessions**

With faith and love and in union with Christ,  
let us offer our prayer before the throne of grace.  
Have mercy on your people,  
for whom your Son laid down his life:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations,  
and have pity on those torn apart by division:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Strengthen all who are persecuted for your name's sake,  
and deliver them from evil:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Look in mercy upon all who suffer,  
and hear those who cry out in pain and desolation:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Bring comfort to the dying,  
and gladden their hearts with the vision of your glory:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Give rest to the departed  
and bring them, with your saints, to glory everlasting:

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Let us commend the world, for which Christ died,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

**Amen.**

*Our prayers conclude*

Merciful God,  
who, when your Church on earth was torn apart  
by the ravages of sin,  
raised up men and women in this land  
who witnessed to their faith with courage and constancy:  
give to your Church that peace which is your will,  
and grant that those who have been divided on earth  
may be reconciled in heaven  
and share together in the vision of your glory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

*[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen

*We conclude*

May Christ our Saviour give us peace.

**Amen.**



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