

## **Sunday, June 18, 2023 – Third Sunday after Pentecost**

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### **Introduction**

Moses tells the Israelites that they are called to be a priestly kingdom and a holy people. Jesus sends out the disciples as laborers into the harvest. In baptism we too are anointed for ministry, sharing God's compassion with our needy world. From the Lord's table we go forth to proclaim the good news, to heal the sick, and to share our bread with the hungry.

### **Prayer of the Day**

God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### **First Reading: Genesis 18:1-15 [21:1-7]**

*God, in the form of three messengers, announces to Sarah and Abraham that they will have a child. Sarah, because of her advanced age, laughs at this seeming impossibility. But nothing is impossible for God, and in due course Isaac is born (Gen. 21:1-7). Now, Sarah confesses, everyone will share in her joyous laughter.*

<sup>1</sup>The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

<sup>9</sup>They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." <sup>10</sup>Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. <sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. <sup>12</sup>So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" <sup>13</sup>The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' <sup>14</sup>Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will

return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>15</sup>But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.” [<sup>1</sup>The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup>Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup>Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” <sup>7</sup>And she said, “Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”]

## **Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19**

<sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, who has | heard my voice,  
and listened to my | supplication,

<sup>2</sup>**for the LORD has given | ear to me  
whenev- | er I called.**

<sup>12</sup>How shall I re- | pay the LORD  
for all the good things God has | done for me?

<sup>13</sup>**I will lift the cup | of salvation  
and call on the name | of the LORD.**

<sup>14</sup>I will fulfill my vows | to the LORD  
in the presence of | all God’s people.

<sup>15</sup>**Precious in your | sight, O LORD,  
is the death | of your servants.**

<sup>16</sup>O LORD, truly I | am your servant;  
I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me | from my bonds.

<sup>17</sup>**I will offer you the sacrifice | of thanksgiving  
and call upon the name | of the LORD.**

<sup>18</sup>I will fulfill my vows | to the LORD  
in the presence of | all God’s people,

<sup>19</sup>**in the courts of | the LORD’s house,  
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. | Hallelujah!**

## Second Reading: Romans 5:1-8

*We are no longer God's enemies but have peace with God because we were brought into a right relationship with God through Christ's death.*

<sup>1</sup>Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

## Gospel: Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]

*The mission of Jesus' followers is to continue the mission of Jesus himself. Here, he instructs his first disciples as to how they might proclaim the gospel through their words and deeds.*

<sup>35</sup>Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

<sup>10:1</sup>Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' <sup>8</sup>Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. [<sup>9</sup>Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, <sup>10</sup>no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. <sup>11</sup>Whatever town

or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. <sup>12</sup>As you enter the house, greet it. <sup>13</sup>If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup>If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. <sup>15</sup>Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

<sup>16</sup>“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. <sup>17</sup>Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; <sup>18</sup>and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup>When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; <sup>20</sup>for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. <sup>21</sup>Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; <sup>22</sup>and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>23</sup>When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”]

## Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need, saying "God, in your mercy," and responding, "hear our prayer."

*A brief silence.*

For the church here and around the world, we pray. Seek out disciples and send them out with authority to proclaim good news, bring healing where there is pain, and counter the forces of evil. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the earth and all its creatures, we pray. Equip farmers, farm workers, and all who labor on the land to produce a harvest. Nourish crops with ample rainfall and abundant sunshine. Restore lands ruined by pollution or misuse. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who govern, we pray. Empower those who seek peaceful solutions to conflict and embolden those who advocate for all who are oppressed. Work through systems of government to establish justice throughout the world. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who suffer, we pray. Accompany those who feel helpless, alone, or abandoned. Embrace any who long for successful treatment for mental illness or freedom from addiction. Heal those who are sick (*especially*). God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For fathers and father figures, we pray. Console all who long to be fathers, children estranged from their fathers, anyone grieving the death of a father, and fathers who have lost a child. Draw near to all for whom this day stirs up difficult emotions. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all the saints, we give thanks. Receive into your eternal care all those who have died and fill us with hope that does not disappoint. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive our prayers and answer us, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

***A reflection for this Third Sunday after Pentecost...***

In today's gospel reading, Jesus speaks of the church's mission with images drawn from daily life. The harvest is already plentiful, he says, but laborers are needed for work in the fields of daily life. What are we to do? We are to do what our worship invites us to do: let our conversation be shaped by the good news, extend Christ's peace wherever we find ourselves, and share our bread with the hungry.

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