



Sunday, November 8, 2020

Morning Prayer • Proper 27

Dear friends:

*"Never, in peace or war, commit your virtue or your happiness to the future. Happy work is best done by the man who takes his long-term plans somewhat lightly and works from moment to moment "as to the Lord". It is only our daily bread that we are encouraged to ask for. The present is the only time in which any duty can be done or any grace received."*

"Learning in War-Time" by C. S. Lewis

A sermon preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, October 22, 1939

It looks like Thanksgiving may come a little early this year for about half of voting Americans. Much of the other half will be in a state of shock and grief. Then there are the roughly 35% of citizens who are eligible to vote, but for one reason or another chose not to. Once again, we have gone through a years-long exercise called the 'election cycle' that, once again, has highlighted more about our divisions than it did our commonalities as Americans. In the coming days, the work on the next election cycle will begin, consuming vast amounts of energy, emotion, and money, with results that seemed destined to please about half and disappoint about half of the electorate. This seems to be our fate, at least for the foreseeable future. Our system is set up to create winners and

losers, and it is bitter to be on the losing side. (Perhaps that is why so many people choose not to vote; neither side is giving them a clear path to what they see as a win.)

I wish I had some healing words to offer or some helpful idea that might bring the stark opposites a little closer together. Historically, external threats have often untied opposing sides in a common mission, but we face enough of those already; we don't need any more. What we can all do is to be true to our values, constantly examine them (which will mean listening to an opposing opinion from time to time), and act on our convictions. All of this is an expression of faith in the future, certainly, but more importantly in the current moment. While campaigns are, by their nature, future focused, we live in this moment now. While we can, and should, plan and work for some future goal, we must never lose sight of the fact that the only time we truly have is now.

May we always see every moment for the precious gift from God that it is, and act as though we truly appreciate it. If there is any hope for our future, this moment, now, is where it starts.

God bless, Fr. Alan

**Sunday, November 8**

- [WATCH THE SERVICE](#) at 10:00 am
- COFFEE HOUR on Zoom at 10:45 am

**Navigating this Service**

Use our [Morning Prayer text](#) or follow the Book of Common Prayer, pg. 75.

# Upcoming Events

## SJM Election Discussion

**Online Discussion:** November 10

The Social Justice Ministry will host an election discussion on Tuesday, November 10 from 7:00 - 9:00 pm on Zoom. The goal is to have open, safe, nonjudgmental spaces to pray and seek wisdom together.

**Join Zoom Meeting:**

[https://zoom.us/j/97330254220?  
pwd=WS9NT1JieC8yVG50ZnNEbjduQ0F4UT09](https://zoom.us/j/97330254220?pwd=WS9NT1JieC8yVG50ZnNEbjduQ0F4UT09)

**Meeting ID:** 973 3025 4220   **Passcode:** 724685  
*For one tap mobile and dial by location information, see page 2 of the [November 1 eService Bulletin](#).*

## LEARN & SHARE with SJM

**Online Discussion:** November 14, 10-11:30 am

Our first book selection is "STAMPED: Racism, Antiracism, and You" by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds. An online discussion will be held Saturday, November 14 from 10-11:30 am on Zoom. Contact session leaders Jude Wilson ([judelwilson@gmail.com](mailto:judelwilson@gmail.com)) and Patricia Bard ([PBard460@aol.com](mailto:PBard460@aol.com)) to register.

## Virtual Christmas Pageant

Rehearsals for our virtual Christmas pageant begin Monday, November 16 from 6-7:00 pm on Zoom. Contact Norm Richert ([nrichert@comcast.net](mailto:nrichert@comcast.net)) to join or for more information.

## Announcements

### Black Lives Matter Yard Signs Available

We have work to do ending racism and support our African-American neighbors! The Social Justice Ministry has created a yard sign for you. To collect your sign or ask for delivery please contact Marjory Luther (665-8106) or Shirley Harden (674-0951).



## 2021 ANNUAL GIVING

**Current Campaign Progress (2021)**  
162 Cards for \$608,426

**Last Year's Campaign Progress (2020)**  
157 Cards for \$588,558

\$0      \$250,000      \$500,000      \$750,000      \$900,000

**As of November 8,** we have received 162 pledge cards totaling \$608,426 or 68% of our \$900,000 goal.

## Community Giving Opportunities

### Winter Gear for Breakfast Guests

**Donate Online via WeShare**

Typically this is the time of year that we would collect gloves, hats, and socks for our guests. *In lieu of donating physical items we are asking for financial donations this year to fund the purchase of socks, gloves, and a hat for each guest.* It will cost \$22 per guest with a total expenditure of around \$2,200. Monetary donations for the purchase of these items can be sent to the church or made online at [WeShare](#) as a donation to the breakfast.

### Christmas Adopt-a-Family

**December 5:** Gift Cards Due at the Church

This Christmas, as we have for many years, St. Andrew's will support clients of the Ann Arbor Community Center with our Christmas Adopt-a-Family program. **The Community Center asks that gift cards for \$50 be obtained from the following sources:** Meijer (call 800-487-9460 to order), Walmart (walmart.com), or Target (target.com). You can also send a check, made out to St. Andrew's, to the church and a gift card will be purchased in that amount. Be sure to include "Gift Card" on the memo line of your check.

**Please bring the gift cards to the church by Saturday, December 5** and drop them in the mailbox located to the right of the memorial garden gate. *Do not send cards through the mail.* Contact Scott Gerstenberger (734) 678-0914 or Liz Sweet (734) 320-4968 with questions.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**  
[standrewsaa.org/thisweek.html](http://standrewsaa.org/thisweek.html)

**Prelude: Hyfrodol**

arr. Jason Krug (b. 1978)

St. Dunstan Handbell Choir

**Opening Hymn: Lift Up Your Heads**

Hymnal, no. 436

1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the  
2 O blest the land, the ci - ty blest, where Christ the  
3 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a  
\*4 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to  
5 So come, my Sov - ereign; en - ter in! Let new and

1 King of glo - ry waits! The King of kings is  
2 ru - ler is con - fessed! O hap - py hearts and  
3 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for  
4 thee: here, Lord, a - bide! Let me thy in - ner  
5 no - bler life be - gin; thy Ho - ly Spi - rit

1 draw - ing near; the Sa - vior of the world is here.  
2 hap - py homes to whom this King of tri - umph comes!  
3 heaven's em - ploy, a - doned with prayer and love and joy.  
4 pres - ence feel: thy grace and love in me re - veal.  
5 guide us on, un - til the glo - rious crown be won.

**Opening Sentences**

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 78

**Confession**

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 79

**Preces**

Hymnal, no. S-33

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 80

**Invitatory**

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 80

## Venite

Enriching Our Worship, no. 159



Come, let us sing / to the Lord;  
let us shout for joy to the Rock of / our salvation.  
Let us come before God's presence / with thanksgiving  
and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.

For you are a / great God;  
you are great a/bove all gods.  
In your hands are the caverns / of the earth,  
and the heights of the / hills are yours also.

The sea is yours, / for you made it,  
and your hands have mold/ed the dry land.  
Come, let us bow down and / bend the knee,  
and kneel before the / Lord our Maker.

For you / are our God,  
and we are the people / of your pasture  
and the sheep / of your hand.  
Oh, that today we would / hearken to your voice!

## Psalm 70

- 1 Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; \*  
O LORD, make haste to help me.
- 2 Let those who seek my life be ashamed  
and altogether dismayed; \*  
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune  
draw back and be disgraced.
- 3 Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back, \*  
because they are ashamed.
- 4 Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; \*  
let those who love your salvation say for ever,  
"Great is the LORD!"
- 5 But as for me, I am poor and needy; \*  
come to me speedily, O God.
- 6 You are my helper and my deliverer; \*  
O LORD, do not tarry.

## Old Testament: Amos 5:18-24

Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:

Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!  
Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light;  
as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear;  
or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,  
and was bitten by a snake.

Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,  
and gloom with no brightness in it?

I hate, I despise your festivals,  
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals  
I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

**Canticle:** *The First Song of Isaiah*

Hymnal, no. S-213

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 86

**The Gospel:** Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus said, “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

**Sermon**

Fr. Alan Gibson

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

“The kingdom of heaven will be like....” With these words Jesus, again and again, introduces images familiar to his listeners to describe what a life lived in the presence of God is like. A pearl, yeast, a door, a candle, salt,

a shepherd, are just some of the real-world examples he uses to connect us with a truth beyond this world. Today we have another one: A wedding banquet, something that just about anyone can understand. While such gatherings can be for us, in non-pandemic times, elaborate affairs with singing, dancing and a great feast, in the time of Jesus they could be multi-day celebrations for the population of an entire village. In the course of events the bride left her parents' home to take up residence in her husband's home for the final stage of the party which would start with the arrival of the bridegroom who is ushered in by his new wife's attendants.

In Jesus' story the bridegroom is delayed, and everyone grows sleepy as the night creeps on. It would be rude to start the party without him, so they wait. As Jesus tells the story some of the attendants made provision for just such a delay. Perhaps they knew from experience that punctuality was not one of this young man's strengths, so they were prepared to keep the lights on for him. Others were not so sensible and were left in the dark, excluded from the festivities, unrecognized by the host when the moment came. It sounds pretty harsh, and it is, especially if the intent is for everyone to have a good time and share in the unique joy of the newly married couple.

If the kingdom of heaven is going to be like that, then what are we facing? Some people are out, and some are in? Some get to enjoy the party, while others are left out in the dark? Excuse me, but that sounds pretty much like what we have now, and no one would confuse our world, as we have fashioned it, for heaven. At least I hope they wouldn't; and I don't think Jesus would want that, either.

So, what is Jesus getting at? He speaks of being prepared; but prepared for what? And how? Look again at the images in this story. There is, of course, the banquet and the various people in attendance. There are also more fundamental images on which the larger ones depend: light and darkness, lamps and, most importantly, their oil. Without oil, the lamp is useless, a lesson that those who failed to bring extra with them learned the hard way in the dark early hours of the new day. Procuring a supply didn't seem to be a problem. Even at midnight a shop was open that could provide as much oil as was needed. Such convenience! But for these bridesmaids the important opportunity had passed.

The sad thing is that it doesn't take much oil for a lamp to cast light. A few drops would do it. Their anxious faces would have been recognized and the

door held open for them, and then everyone for whom banquet had been planned would be there to enjoy it, but for a few drops of oil.

The kingdom of heaven is like that. It doesn't take some monumental effort to experience it. It doesn't have to be something extraordinary to get us in. A Hollywood floodlight is not needed to show the way. A single flame from even a small lamp will do.

An act of compassion offered when none is expected.

Listening to someone who is rarely heard.

Seeing what others willingly overlook.

Working to undo a wrong that is unthinkingly accepted.

Responding to needs that the system is eager to ignore.

Kindness shown even when none is given.

A word of truth spoken with sensitivity.

Love serving as our primary motivation.

These are just a few examples of precious drops of oil that can enlighten our world bit by bit. But they require a commitment on our part. They take a certain level of personal preparation and readiness. There's nothing casual about any of this, just as there is nothing casual in being invited to a wedding banquet. This is serious stuff, lived out each day. Sort of like a marriage, but with our own selves and who we are called to be.

Jesus is asking us: are we prepared to love, as he loves us? Are we ready to be instruments in the world to bring the warmth and healing power of his light? Or are we just content to sit in the shadows and yet wonder why we have been left out of the festivities?

It's not a question of who is "in" and who is "out." That's a silly, self-defeating political game in which Jesus has no interest. As his story tells, the supply of oil for our lamps, the supply of his love to feed and replenish our souls is bountiful and conveniently available anywhere, any time of day or night. But if we fail to avail ourselves of it, we will run dry and find ourselves empty and in the dark, unrecognizable for who God has made us to be. If we do, it will be because we put ourselves there.

Jesus recognizes us by how we love. It is how we are made to shine and now is our moment to do so. Our world could use some of that light right now. We have it to give and the ability to give it. Jesus asks, are we ready?

## Apostles Creed

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 96

## The Prayers

### Collect of the Day

O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### Voluntary: *Come Christians Join to Sing*

arr. Charles Maggs

St. Dunstan Handbell Choir

### General Thanksgiving

Book of Common Prayer, pg. 101

### Prayer of St. Chrysostom

### Concluding Versicle

Hymnal, no. S-54

### Closing Hymn: *The Lord will Come and not be Slow*

Hymnal, no. 462



1 The Lord will come and not be slow, his foot - steps can - not err;  
2 Truth from the earth, like to a flower, shall bud and blos - som show;  
3 Rise, God, judge thou the earth in might, this wick - ed earth re - dress;  
4 The na - tions all whom thou hast made shall come, and all shall frame  
5 For great thou art, and won - ders great by thy strong hand are done:



1 be - fore him right - eous - ness shall go, his roy - al har - bin - ger.  
2 and jus - tice, from her heaven - ly bower, look down on us be - low.  
3 for thou art he who shalt by right the na - tions all pos - sess.  
4 to bow them low be - fore thee, Lord, and glo - ri - fy thy Name.  
5 thou in thy ev - er - last - ing seat re - main - est God a - lone.



### Postlude: *Salvation has Come for All* Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562-1621)