

## Sunday Missive – July 12, 2020



### The Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

**Greetings, One and All**, and welcome back to St. Peter's by the Sea here in beautiful Morro Bay. Today, Marti Lindholm, Nancy Castle and I return to offer you a service of prayer, word and song with love. This Sunday Missive will be delivered live on Facebook at 11:00 A.M. on Sunday, July 12. Click on the link below, or cut and paste into your browser bar and you should be able to watch our service. If you keep this Missive open too, you will have the hymn lyrics ready to sing, and prayer responses ready to speak. If you are unable to watch, please let Padre Sid know afterwards and we will try to get you up and running for next time: [sssymington@gmail.com](mailto:sssymington@gmail.com) or (203) 209-2339. If you have a Facebook account, or would like to make one for the purpose of watching, be sure to go to "St. Peter's By The Sea, Morro Bay" using that exact spelling. There are a few other pages that are either inactive – and we can't take them down -- or another group entirely. Be sure to scroll down to "Posts" to see our service!

[https://www.facebook.com/StPetersMorroBay/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel&id=ARAUeH\\_DsZ8410oD17S5TKTja9nPlnamVaKKBDjC7zKd1Kvws0elUTfHmPTVaREXk2ty7B1jsL3bjxW](https://www.facebook.com/StPetersMorroBay/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel&id=ARAUeH_DsZ8410oD17S5TKTja9nPlnamVaKKBDjC7zKd1Kvws0elUTfHmPTVaREXk2ty7B1jsL3bjxW)

**Grace to you and peace**, from God our Creator, and from Christ our Redeemer, who by the power of the Holy Spirit sanctify and nourish us. Let us pray: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may more perfectly love, and more worthily magnify your holy Name. **Amen.**

**O Lord, mercifully receive** the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant, not only that we may know and understand what things we ought to do, but also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Hymn 653

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise.

Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire; speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire, O  
still, small voice of calm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1MN3chW1Hk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RByNhkyRGsc>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYL\\_-D\\_2sk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYL_-D_2sk)

### A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah – Chapter 55

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and so eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. You shall call nations that you do not know, and they shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, who has glorified you.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, my word shall accomplish that purpose for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and they shall be a memorial to the Lord, a sign that shall never be cut off. **Here ends the reading.**

## Psalm 65

All praise is due to you in Zion, O **God\*** To you we make our vows in **Jerusalem.**

Our evil deeds are too heavy for **us\*** But our transgressions you wipe **away.**

You are the hope of all the **earth\*** Of the farthest distant **isles.**

You establish the mountains with your **strength\*** You still the roaring of the **seas.**

You visit the earth, give it **water\*** And thus you provide for the **earth.**

You crown the year with your **bounty\*** Abundance flows in your **pathways.**

The hills are girded with **joy\*** The meadows clothed with your **flocks.**

The valleys are decked with **wheat\*** They shout for joy; yes, they **sing!**

### A Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans – Chapter 8

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but to set the mind on the flesh is death. To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. If Christ is in you, if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he will give life to your mortal bodies also through the Spirit.

### Wonder Love and Praise Hymn 752

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,  
And I know it is the Spirit of the Lord;  
There are sweet expressions on each face;  
And I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

Sweet Holy Spirit, Sweet heav'nly Dove,  
Stay right here with us, Filling us with Your love;  
And for these blessings, we lift our hearts in praise:  
Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived  
When we shall leave this place.

There are blessings you cannot receive  
'Til you know Him in His fullness and believe;  
You're the one to profit when you say,  
"I am going to walk with Jesus all the way."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9EGwkimNeQ>

### **A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew – Chapter 13**

Again, Jesus taught beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!” Then the disciples asked him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” He answered, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but not to them. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them.’ Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it. “Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.” This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All of us want to think of ourselves** as superior to the next person. Not in everything, mind you, but at least in some way or ways, we want to know that we are just a little smarter, a little more stylish, a little more morally, ethically or politically upright (or up left) than our neighbor. This desire for singularity or the inside track is not the same as pompous conceit or overweening pride. It’s not that we’re all *ongeblozn*, but everybody wants something to *kvell* about, personally.

Our stories today portray the sublime wisdom of both the third Isaiah and Jesus of Nazareth in touching this nerve of human pride. Each of them puts his listeners in a category apart from the rest of the world. There is an element of

buttering us up that might seem like manipulative flattery, but upon closer examination is more aptly described as deepened insight into how human beings function emotionally.

‘Incline your ear, and come to me,’ says Isaiah in the voice of God, ‘I will make with you an everlasting covenant, just as I did with David.’ All you have to do is listen to me and all nations shall run to your side. The prophet’s genius here is in realizing that this rarified status is potentially available to anyone. The word Israel itself means “triumphs with God;” the idea of chosenness is itself a conceit. The ones who triumph with God are defined as the ones who triumph with God. Chosen is as chosen does. But because of our natural appetite for uniqueness, we are much more inclined to listen and follow someone who picked us out of the crowd. We will choose to be chosen because we think we are chosen already.

When Jesus is born, this human desire to stand out is revealed as the central challenge of humanity. The family is in Bethlehem for the census. This is because they are of the “House and lineage of David.” But David lived a thousand years before Jesus did. That’s forty generations. So what makes Jesus any more ‘of the House and Lineage of David’ than of the house and lineage of everybody else on the continent, all of whom are related to each other after forty generations? No wonder there was no room at the inn.

The answer is that, like all our spiritual ancestors, David represented for Jesus, as he does for us, the basic stuff God chose to create in God’s own image and likeness: an Everyman and King, the Son of Man. He seemed to do everything wrong except give up on God, and everything right except control his impulses. We are all of the House and Lineage of David. If there is to be faith or folly, virtue or vice, triumph or tragedy, it’s up to us to live it. We are such stuff as dreams are made on.

The desire for singularity we all possess has resulted in the most wonderful and glorious accomplishments of humanity: through art and technology and statesmanship in the grandest ways; through devotion and affection and understanding in the most intimate relationships as well. But of course it is this quality that has produced most of the trouble in the world too. Emperors, Inquisitors and demagogues who cause untold misery, as well as murderers and bullies whose crimes are timebound and forgotten, all were fueled by the desire to ‘be somebody.’ Even when our strivings are meant to propel us to the high ground, we find it to be a shaky place. As the Sufi’s say, “One is led to suppose and believe that virtue is the only thing that matters in life, but it will be found that the greater number of sufferers from moral hallucination are to be met with among the self-righteous.”

Isaiah and Jesus both lure us into their narrative worlds with the promise of uniqueness, even if it might mean separation from those whom we love and revere and are used to. But we have to escape our cognitive biases. Anyone who is

eager to follow the words of the prophet, who will try to do as the psalmist exhorts and live in the light of the Lord's steadfast love will go out in joy, and be led back in peace. Not only that, the mountains and the hills before her shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Who wouldn't want to get in on that action?

Knowing human nature the way he does, Jesus is pointing out the age-old Israel and calling it new. A house and lineage of David for anyone who crosses Jesus' path and decides to follow it. He says to the ones he heals, "Don't tell anybody about this now, just go on home and go about your business." As if. He knows it doesn't feel good to be singular if nobody knows about it. Jesus butters up the disciples with so-called secret knowledge because he knows full well they won't be able to keep the parable's meanings to themselves any more than David could sing his psalms alone. He gets under their skin and turns them into ambassadors without their even knowing it.

"I came to heal, not the righteous but sinners." If they were truly righteous already, they'd be aware he was messing with them and say, "Thank you, Jesus, but we insist you heal everybody, us too, the sooner the better." But since they are at least a teensy bit flawed, a teensy bit fearful, a teensy bit proud, (like every one of us) he says, "To you has been given the key to the Kingdom of Heaven while, for the others outside, everything comes in riddles." They hear him, and for a split second – or maybe for an afternoon – they go around strutting: "See I am the chosen one. The rest of 'em, they ain't ready for this big time information." But then, because they listened, Christ is in them. They belong to him. They are no longer merely in the flesh; they are in the Spirit. And they recognize themselves as the ones who need to become healers in order to be healed.

And so they do less strutting, they develop an awareness that the only way to keep and enjoy their newfound singularity of emotion and experience is to share it; they learn that one who can quicken the feeling of another to joy or to gratitude, by that much adds to her own life. They realize that the good soil they want to be, is there to nourish others' growth. They come to know that the only way to truly be somebody is to turn towards everybody. And thus, Jesus has his way with them.

### **Prayers**

Spirit of All Creation: May our faith in you and one another guide us, as we cannot yet see our way through this time of crisis.

May our hope in you and the goodness of our neighbors strengthen us as we endure our discomforts and fears.

Give comfort to all who are emotionally, physically, and spiritually distressed. Bless our healthcare providers and all who are taking care of those who are ill.

Grant wisdom and discernment to those who are researching and searching for medicines to combat our diseases, the coronavirus, and other illnesses. Help us to reassure and comfort our children and protect them from harm and danger.

Grant, O God, those who lead our governments, institutions, hospitals, our schools and local organizations, safety and emergency services, and us, wisdom beyond our own wisdom to contain the coronavirus; faith beyond our own faith to help us to fight our fears and strength beyond our own strength to persevere through this time of turmoil.

Although we are physically separated from one another, help us, to maintain our social connections to one another by our creatively and ethically using social media. Help each of us to know that there is something in us stronger than fear. Birth in us a new sense of hope that will help us to rise above the clouds of despair. Grant, Eternal Love, that we emerge from this time of crisis a more loving people who are more committed to the welfare of all and the earth that sustains us. Amen

Merciful God

In a time of fear we pray for calm.

In a time of illness we pray for health.

In a time of isolation we pray for community.

As we worry about ourselves and those we love

Help us keep others in our minds and in our hearts:

The bereaved, the bereft, the workers, the healers.

May the night find us courageous and compassionate

And the dawn come soon.

### **LEVAS Hymn 196**

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms;  
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way, leaning on the everlasting arms;  
O how bright the path grows from day to day,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms;  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yhHIqsOanI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1r-aTbaA-c>

And now, may the peace which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God in Christ. May God's love be with you today and remain with you always. May you seek whatever transformative fires are necessary to bring you to that state of grace wherein the Spirit of love is your inspiration and the works of love your daily business. ***Amen***

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**If you would like to talk**, or are in need of any assistance, please call your Rector, The Rev. Sidney Symington on (203) 209-2339 and leave a voice message, write to 545 Shasta Avenue, Morro Bay, CA 93442, or email: [sssymington@gmail.com](mailto:sssymington@gmail.com)



Rex and Ana – Guess who's who