



Sunday, March 2, 2025

Last Sunday After The Epiphany

Welcome to The Beloved Community at The Trees, an Episcopal faith community exploring together what a life of faith “outside of a church” may be. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we believe that all people are God’s beloved and all are welcome, regardless of race, gender identity, sexual identity, ability, faith background, or belief.

In our Baptismal Covenant, we affirm that we will strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being. To remember our baptismal promises, that all are God’s beloved, and that we are all one in Christ, we begin each worship gathering with the “Blessing of the Water.”

Blessing of the Water

Reader We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.

Celebrant Now bless this water, we pray you, that it may be a sign to us of our Baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant Blessed be God!
Almighty Creator, incarnate Word, abiding Spirit.

People **And blessed be God’s presence, now and forever.**

The Collect for Purity

People **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 perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name;**

through Christ our Lord. *Amen*

The Collect

Celebrant God be with you.
People **And within you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, who before the passion of your only begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Lesson

Exodus 34:29-35

Reader A reading from Exodus.

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Reader The words of holy scripture.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Psalter

Psalm 99

The LORD is King;

let the people tremble; *

he is enthroned upon the cherubim;

let the earth shake.

The LORD is great in Zion; *

he is high above all peoples.

Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome; *

he is the Holy One.

"O mighty King, lover of justice,

you have established equity; *

you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob."

Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God

and fall down before his footstool; *

he is the Holy One.

Moses and Aaron among his priests,

and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *

they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *

they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.

O LORD our God, you answered them indeed; *

you were a God who forgave them,

yet punished them for their evil deeds.

Proclaim the greatness of the LORD our God

and worship him upon his holy hill; *

for the LORD our God is the Holy One.

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Second Lesson

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Reader

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

Reader The words of holy scripture.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Gospel

Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a]

Deacon The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

People **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"--not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

[On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. I

begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And all were astounded at the greatness of God.]

Deacon The good news of our Savior.

People **Praise be to Christ.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

Lectionary Discussion

Led by Deacon Dan Laird

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- 1) *What did I learn about God from this week's readings?*
 - 2) *What did I learn about love from this week's readings?*
 - 3) *What did I learn about community from this week's readings?*
 - 4) *What did I learn about myself from this week's readings?*
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The Nicene Creed

Celebrant Let us affirm our faith with the words of the Nicene Creed.

People **We believe –**

In the One God:

Source of all,

ruler of all,

maker of heaven and earth:

of all things seen or unseen.

And in one Lord:

Jesus of Nazareth,

Christ the Messiah,

the only-born Word of God;

eternally issued of that of the One:

God of God, light of light, true God of true God;

issued, not made:

the same being as the One;

and through whom all things are made;
That for us mortals
and for our salvation
came down from heaven;
and was made flesh
of the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary;
and became human;
Was also crucified, for our sake,
under the reign of Pontius Pilate:
and suffered, and was buried;
and arose on the third day,
in accordance with the scriptures,
and went back up into heaven;
and sits in power beside the One:
and shall come again, in glory,
to judge those living and dead;
and whose presence shall have no end.
And we believe in the Spirit:
the Holy,
the Lord,
and the lifegiving;
that pours forth of that of the One:
that with One and Word together
we worship and glorify as God;
that speaks in the prophets.
In one holy, universal, and missionary church:
we accept one baptism for the forgiveness of sins;
we await the raising of the dead,
and the life of the age soon to come.
Amen.

Prayers of the People

Celebrant In peace and in faith, let us offer our prayers to God. We remember those among us and those we love in our prayers; especially Anthony, Gregory, Julia, Kathy, Laurie, Melody, Paul, and September.

You are invited to share your prayers aloud or silently in your heart. After each prayer is shared aloud, the following response is said. You are also invited to share your prayers on a prayer card and place it on the altar. Someone from The Beloved Community will take your card home and pray for you over the coming week.

This is my prayer.

This is our prayer.

After all prayers have been shared.

Celebrant God of love and mercy,

People **Hear our prayer.**

Celebrant O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, our most holy, glorious and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

Celebrant Therefore let us confess our sins to almighty God.

A moment of silence for private prayer.

People **Almighty and most merciful God;
maker of all, judge of all:
We confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.
We are deeply sorry and we earnestly repent.
Have mercy upon us, most merciful Lord,
for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ:
Forgive us our sins.
And grant that we may ever hereafter
serve and please you in newness of life;
to delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the honor and glory of your name.
Amen.**

Absolution

Celebrant May almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life, through Christ our Savior. ***Amen.***

The Peace

Celebrant May the peace of God be ever with you!
People **And within you.**

Announcements

During this time we will share announcements for The Beloved Community at The Trees and others.

The Offering

Celebrant Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

You are invited to share your gifts, financial or other, with the gathered community. During this time of preparation for the Holy Community, you are also invited to remember your baptism.

Music for Preparation

We are Marching in the Light of God (*Siyahamba* a Zulu song of South Africa)

The Holy Communion

Eucharistic Prayer H

Celebrant God be with you.
People **And within you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them up to the Lord!**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is good and right that we do so.**

Celebrant It is very good, right, and our joyful task, always and everywhere to lift thanks up to you, O Lord, our holy Creator, almighty, everlasting God.

For you alone are the one God, the font of all being and the form of all good,
resting beyond time and forever.

That through Christ your eternal Word brings all things into being: sun, moon and stars;
earth, wind and waters; and every living thing. That makes all that is made, and breathes
life into the earth.

And so raising our voices with angels and archangels and all the chorus of heaven who
forever exalt your glory, we praise you rejoicing as we say:

Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy,

Lord God of all power and might:

Heaven and earth are full of your glory;

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

Celebrant

Most holy and gracious God, in your infinite love you made us in your own image.

And when we fell into sin and met with evil and death, you did not abandon us. For you are the Lord
our God. You called your people as a light to the nations. You led them out of bondage and into a
new land. You handed down the law, and spoke in the prophets.

And then, in the fullness of time, you in your mercy sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Word, to
be born for our sake: to live and die as one of us; to reconcile us to you. Born of a woman, of our very
nature, Jesus taught the law, healed the sick, and fed the poor.

And when the time had come, Jesus stretched out arms upon the cross, and died for our salvation.
Almighty God, in Christ you bring us out of error into truth, out of sin into grace, out of death into
life.

For in the night before God died for us, Jesus took bread; and after giving thanks, our Lord broke it,
and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the
remembrance of me."

Likewise after supper, Jesus took the cup, and after giving thanks, the Lord gave it to them, saying,
"Drink of this, all of you: for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and the many
for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore O God our heavenly Maker, offering to you your own from your own, we here celebrate the sacrament of faith:

Celebrant and People

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Celebrant

And we beg you, most merciful God, to hear us, and of your almighty goodness to pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, to bless and sanctify these your creations of bread and wine: that they may be to us the body and blood of your only-born Word, our Saviour Jesus Christ; and that we receiving them may share in that most blessed presence; so that we, and all those who share in your holy communion, may be filled with your grace and heavenly blessing, and in pure love and charity be made one body with Christ our Savior: that Christ may live in us, and we in Christ.

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, our almighty Creator, time without end.

Amen!

Celebrant

And now as our Savior has taught us, let us pray:

Celebrant and People

Our Lord that is in heaven:

blessed be your name.

Your dominion come:

your will be done

on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us today our next day's bread:

and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

And leave us not prey to temptation:

but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the dominion: the power and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Alleluia! The bread of life!

People **Alleluia!**

Celebrant The gifts of God for the people of God!

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and
feed on God in your heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

Taize & Contemplation

Bless The Lord My Soul

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.

We will observe a few moments of quiet for personal prayer and reflection following the Eucharist. You are invited to pray where you are, light a prayer candle, or move about the space. Deacon Dan is available for healing prayers and anointing during this time.

Post Communion Prayer

People **God of abundance,
you have fed us
with the bread of life and cup of salvation;
you have united us
with Christ and one another;
and you have made us one
with all your people in heaven and on earth.
Now send us forth
in the power of the Spirit,
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world
and continue for ever
in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

The Blessing

Celebrant You are one in whom Christ delights and dwells.
You live in the strong and unshakeable kingdom of God.
The kingdom is not in trouble, and neither are you.

And the blessing of God almighty,
our most holy, glorious and undivided Trinity,
be among you this day, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Prayer for Our Shared Meal

Blessing over Food at Easter from The Book of Occasional Services 2022

Deacon Blessed are you, O Lord our God; you have given us the risen Savior to be the Shepherd of your people:
Lead us, by him, to springs of living waters, and feed us with the food that endures to eternal life;
where with you, O Father, and with the Holy Spirit, he lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Dismissal

Deacon Let us go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

You are invited to join our community for a shared meal of soup/salad and bread immediately following our worship service.

We are grateful for our sending parish, The Church of the Nativity, Raleigh, which supports our community through their prayers and the sharing of their resources.

We are grateful for the use of The Trees, graciously provided to us at no cost by St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Durham. We also give thanks to St. Philip's for the gift of flowers and printing. Each Sunday, St. Philip's shares their flowers with The Beloved Community so that we too may enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

We acknowledge that we are gathering on the ancestral territory of the Eno, the Tuscarora, the Occaneechi, and others.

We are grateful that you are with us. Your presence is a gift to The Beloved Community at the Trees, and that is enough. If you would like to support our community financially, you can do so by leaving your offering in the basket.

The Beloved Community at The Trees

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