

**Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.
St. Albert United Church**

Deborah: COMMUNITY WELCOME

Tawow, Bienvenue, Welcome to St. Albert United Church on this Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost as we continue to explore the gifts and resources granted us as we persevere through these moments and these days.

As we come together, we acknowledge that we do so on the traditional lands of Treaty 6 First Nations and at a significant trading community of the Métis Nation.

We also affirm all are welcome to share fully in our life and work regardless of age, race, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, belief, economic circumstance, ability or background. St. Albert United Church: a place where EVERYONE has room to grow.

If you have a concern regarding someone who is ill, grieving or in need, or would like to chat please inform the ministers.

- For your comfort, there's an accessible washroom with baby changing station near the front door

- If you have a concern regarding someone who is ill, grieving or in need, or you would like to chat, please inform the minister following the service.

We gather, cultivating space for everyone...

Please join with me in our responsive call to worship

Deborah: CALL TO WORSHIP:

We gather our voices and spirits in praise.

O God, quiet our souls so we may listen.

We seek within our heart Your call on our lives.

O God, quiet our minds so we may ponder Your words.

We long to join together in person;

However, we know You are with all of us now.

O God, united us together as one in worship of You.

Written by Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, <http://rev-o-lution.org>. Used with permission.

Deborah: GATHERING PRAYER: *(One voice)*

O gracious God, in joy and in sorrow, we gather here.

We come to you today with our hearts open, our nerves frayed...

We come to be healed and inspired.

We come to be moved by song and held by prayer.

We come to be with one another,

nurtured by one another virtually and in-person

We come for the illumination of ancient wisdom and for the revelation of present insight.

No matter what, we come...Amen.

Written by Sheryl Spencer. **Gathering** Pentecost 2 2020 (Year A) page 38 Used with permission.

Deborah: HYMN: “In Christ There Is No East or West” *Voices United 606*

Amy: TIME FOR ALL AGES

Mervin: HYMN: “It’s a Song of Praise” More Voices 30

We listen, attentive to the voice of Jesus

Mervin: SCRIPTURE READINGS:

[Paul O. Myhre](#)

Associate Director of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology

Wabash Center

Crawfordsville, Indiana

In Psalm 103, the writer contends that praise is something to be called forth from the people. It is an invitation to all who would listen to join with the writer in offering praise to the living God.

But, what is praise? Of what does it consist? Is it something that only people can offer? Can animals and even plants offer praise? Do they have a capacity to render praise to God for life? Do we run the risk of anthropomorphizing everything if we even ask the question? Yet, there is something about the essence of praise that tugs at one's skin, moves beneath the surface like blood through veins, and touches the sparks that travel along our brain's axon and dendrite trails.

A reading from the Psalms:

Psalm 103:1-13 **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

Thanksgiving for God's Goodness (*Of David*)

- ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless God's holy name.
- ² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all God's benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- ⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live^[a]
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.
- ⁷ God made known God's ways to Moses,
God's acts to the people of Israel.
- ⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ God will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- ¹⁰ God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is God's steadfast love toward those who fear her;

- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
 so far God removes our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion for his children,
 so God has compassion for those who fear him.

One: Herein we seek wisdom. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Audrey West

**Visiting Associate Professor of New Testament;
 Project Administrator, Moravian Clergy Connections**
 Moravian Theological Seminary
 Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

It is no problem to keep track of the number seven, as if that were all the effort required to forgive a brother or sister who “sins against me.” Seven is a measurable number. Seven seas, seven colors of the rainbow, seven days of the week—even seven loaves to feed a crowd with seven baskets full of leftovers to gather at the end (Matthew 15:32-37)—each of these represents an amount that is easy to trace, even if its referent is something great.

However, Jesus’ response to Peter’s question (including the parable) takes forgiveness out of the “countable” category and places it into the realm of the incalculable. The forgiveness to which Jesus points is beyond one’s capacity to keep tabs, beyond one’s capacity to offer on their own strength or ability. It is God’s compassion and abundant mercy that make forgiveness possible, whether transgressions are large or small.

A reading from the Gospels:

Matthew 18:21-35 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Forgiveness

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church^[a] sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven^[b] times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents^[c] was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;^[d] and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister^[e] from your heart.”

One: Herein we seek wisdom. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Mervin: SILENT REFLECTION:

We take a few moments to reflect on all we have heard.

Mervin: HYMN: “How Deep the Peace”

More Voices 95

Deborah: MESSAGE: “The Grace and The Persistent Patience of God -
It is a good thing God has it, because I don’t”

Margaret Mitchell: SOLO:

Mervin: PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and THE LORD’S PRAYER

Mervin: SHARING OF GIFTS

Since its beginning, the church was meant to be a place of chosen family—a community of outcasts and outlaws, dreamers, prophets, and humble disciples of Love. In the company of Divine Presence, we create belonging and nurture justice. With gratitude for the sacred labours of love in this place, let us offer our gifts to God and one another.

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Mervin: PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Holy God, we humble ourselves as we offer these gifts. How wonderful that we can take [art in your work. Bless these gifts that they may bring healong where there is hurt, compassion where the is indifference, and new beginnings where there are dead ends. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Written by Elaine Bidgood Sweet. **Gathering** Pentecost 2 2020 (Year A) page 43.Used with permission.

Mervin: SHARING OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD'S WORK

Mervin: HYMN: "Spirit Open My Heart"

More Voices 79

Deborah: BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH:

Let us go as listening, pausing, responding people,
called to live the gospel's love.

And as we go, we know that we are comforted by a God of many stories;
we know that Jesus is moving alongside, a friend for the journey,
God's embodied love in human form;
and we know that we are inspired by the spirit's call to respond. Amen.

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