



## *St. Thomas' Episcopal Church*

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# The 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

November 8, 2020

## Morning Prayer: Rite Two

**Prelude** *Lo! He Comes With Clouds Descending* Arne

**Opening sentence** p. 78

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:2*

### **Confession of Sin**

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Minister and People:*

**Most merciful God,  
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 neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*The Bishop when present, or the Priest, stands and says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

## The Invitatory and Psalter

*Officiant* Lord, open our lips. p. 80

*People* **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

*Officiant and People*

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: **Come let us adore him.**

**The Venite** (all recite in unison)

p. 82

**Come, let us sing to the Lord; \***

**let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.**

**Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving \***

**and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.**

**For the Lord is a great God, \***

**and a great King above all gods.**

**In his hand are the caverns of the earth, \***

**and the heights of the hills are his also.**

**The sea is his, for he made it, \***

**and his hands have molded the dry land.**

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, \***

**and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

**For he is our God,**

**and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. \***

**Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!**

**Psalm 78:1-7** (*read responsively by whole verse*)

<sup>1</sup> **Hear my teaching, O my people; \***

**incline your ears to the words of my mouth.**

<sup>2</sup> **I will open my mouth in a parable; \***

**I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.**

<sup>3</sup> **That which we have heard and known,**

**and what our forefathers have told us, \***

**we will not hide from their children.**

<sup>4</sup> **We will recount to generations to come**

**the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the LORD, \***

**and the wonderful works he has done.**

<sup>5</sup> **He gave his decrees to Jacob**

**and established a law for Israel, \***

**which he commanded them to teach their children;**

<sup>6</sup> **That the generations to come might know,**

**and the children yet unborn; \***

**that they in their turn might tell it to their children;**

<sup>7</sup> So that they might put their trust in God, \*  
and not forget the deeds of God,  
but keep his commandments;

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. A-men.**

## **The First Lesson**

**Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25**

A reading from the book of Joshua.

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God."

But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the LORD!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a

covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

*Lector* The word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God**

**Canticle 9**

*Surely It Is God Who Saves Me*

Daw

**The Second Lesson**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

*Lector* The word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God**

**Canticle 10 The Second Song of Isaiah** *Isaiah 55:6-11 (all recite in unison)* **p. 86**

**Seek the Lord while he wills to be found; \***

**call upon him when he draws near.**

**Let the wicked forsake their ways \***

**and the evil ones their thoughts;**

**And let them turn to the Lord, and he will have compassion, \***

**and to our God, for he will richly pardon.**

**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, \***

**nor 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 rain and snow fall from the heavens \***

**and return not again, but water the earth,**

**Bringing forth life and giving growth, \*  
seed for sowing and bread for eating,  
So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; \*  
it will not return to me empty;  
But it will accomplish that which I have purposed, \*  
and prosper in that for which I sent it.**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

## **The Gospel**

**Matthew 25:1-13**

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

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."

Lector The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God**

## **Sermon**

### **The Apostles' Creed**

p. 96

*Officiant and People together*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### The Prayers

*Officiant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Officiant* Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Then follows one of these sets of Suffrages*

**A**

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. **And grant us your salvation.**

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. **Let your people sing with joy.**

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. **For only in you can we live in safety.**

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. **And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. **Your saving health among all nations.**

p. 97

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;  
R. **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**  
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
R. **And sustain us with your Holy Spirit**

The 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.**

A Collect for Sundays

p. 98

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Peace

p. 99

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer for Mission

p. 101

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

**Instrumental Voluntary**

*My Lord, What A Morning*

Spiritual

For the Human Family

p. 815

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servants **Ashley Burnett, Jeanine Wilson, Al Cowand, Randy Tyler, Ben Procter, Joan Leggett, Kay Barnacascel, Becky Godwin, John Tolbert, Coley McCally, Karen Gudiksen, Bobbie and Rendol Cobb, Libby Smith, Marian Watts, Lena Evans, Charles Taylor Spruill, Larry Watson, Julia Credle, Joey Ezelle, Racheal Coward, Peggy Parker, Sylvia Dawson, David Dunn, Elsie Benson, Riley Raines, Andy Walker, The Rev. Jim Horton, Will Copeland, Jim Davis, Mary Gillam, Rita Hoggard, those with COVID-19, and others known to us**, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer from Episcopal Relief and Development (revised)

Compassionate God, source of all comfort, we pray for the people whose lives have been devastated by recent disasters of hurricane, tornado, and fire. Bring them comfort, we pray. Protect the vulnerable. Strengthen the weak. Have mercy on all those working to provide relief and to feed the hungry. And may our response to their suffering be generous and bring you praise. For we ask it in Jesus' Name. **Amen.**

*Authorized intercessions and thanksgivings may follow.*

**The General Thanksgiving**

*Officiant and People*

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks  
for all your goodness and loving-kindness  
to us and to all whom you have made.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation,  
and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives  
by giving up our selves to your service,  
and by walking before you  
in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,**

**to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

***A Prayer of St. Chrysostom***

p. 102

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

*The Officiant may then conclude with the following*

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.** *Ephesians 3:20, 21*

**Postlude**

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

Mason

**MINISTERS OF THE LITURGY**

**Officiant:** The Rev. Bonnie Smith

**Organist:** Tom Parker

**Soloist:** Mike Spruill

**Altar:** Lisa Rascoe, Kristy Copeland, Nancy Davis

**Lector:** Patti Farless

**Ushers:** Bob Capehart, Bill Pittman

**Hostesses:** Ann Cowper, Marti Tyler, Lisa Rascoe

**Money Counters:** Rosanna Rhea, Jane Hall

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Thank you for observing proper precautions for any gatherings during COVID-19: wear a mask, wash your hands, and wait 6 feet apart between households.

Under COVID-19 guidelines, the following changes must be made to our worship:

- Offering plates will not be passed. Please deposit your offering in the designated basket as you arrive or exit. Or you may mail your offering to St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, PO Box 400, Windsor, NC 27983.

- Congregational and choral singing are not permitted. A soloist is allowed, while physical distancing and wearing a face covering.
- Nursery care and children's Sunday School cannot be offered. A ziploc activity bag is available for each child. Please keep it in your car and bring with you each Sunday. A new activity sheet will be available each Sunday.
- No receptions or meals may be offered before or after worship.
- Please limit use of church restrooms.

Please take your printed bulletin home or drop it in the designated recycling container.

Small water bottles are available for your use.

Weather permitting, we will continue with outdoor Morning Prayer on Sundays at 11:00 a.m. with video on Facebook.

Please consider prayerfully what God is calling you to give to St. Thomas' Church in 2021 and return your pledge card by November 30.

The Diocese of East Carolina is offering an online session "Support for the Parents of Young Adults/College Students." You may choose between Monday, November 9 from 7:30-8:45 p.m. and Thursday, November 12 from 12-1:15 p.m.

The diocesan Department of Youth Ministries series on Mental Wellness for grades 6-12 continues November 15 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. Advance registration is required.

You are invited to join the diocesan-wide "Journey through East Carolina" November 29 through February 7, 2021. Details are available at <https://www.ecdio.org/journey.html>

Bishop Skirving's Visitation to St. Thomas' Church is scheduled for Sunday, January 24, 2021. If you are interested in being confirmed as a member of St. Thomas' Church, please let The Rev. Bonnie Smith know as soon as possible so that instruction can be planned.

New *Forward Day by Day* devotional booklets are available.

Reminder: The Opportunity Shoppe is open Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the first three Saturdays of the month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Masks are required. Donations are accepted on Mondays between 10 and 2 or by appointment. Leave a message at 252-794-5595.