



Sunday, February 16, 2025

Sixth Sunday After The Epiphany & First Anniversary Service

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.”

Thanksgiving and Blessing of Creation

Adapted from A Dedication and Blessing, St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, Universal City, TX

Celebrant On this, the first anniversary of our being in community with one another and gathering at The Trees, we offer this plant as a gift to The Trees and all those who visit this place. The beauty that surrounds us has enriched our worship and broadened our awareness of the beauty of God’s love. And, we are grateful.

Let us pray.

Celebrant God, our Creator, at the dawn of creation you placed your children in a garden and walked with them in the cool of the day:

People **Be present with us as we walk in this place, and open our eyes to the beauty of your creation.**

Celebrant Jesus, our good Companion, on many occasions you withdrew with your friends to a garden for quiet and refreshment:

People **Be present with all who come to meet you in this place, and teach them your ways.**

Celebrant Jesus, our Redeemer, you suffered anguish and betrayal in a garden, and there you submitted to your Father's will:

People **Be present with all who come in sorrow and pain to this place, and give them the grace of your redeeming love.**

Celebrant Jesus, our Savior, after your crucifixion your body was laid in a tomb in a garden, and there you first revealed yourself to your friends after you rose from the dead:

People **Be present with all who come to this place when it seems that all is lost, and awaken them to new life.**

Celebrant Holy Spirit of Truth and Power, our Advocate and Friend,

People **Be present with all who come to this place seeking direction and strength, fill their hearts with the love of God, and send them out filled with the love of God, so that they, as we, may share that love with all of your creation. Amen.**

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.**

A Litany of God's Mission for the Church

Holy God, in whom all things in heaven and earth have their being,
Have mercy on us.

Jesus the Christ, through whom the world is reconciled to the Father,
Have mercy on us.

Holy Spirit, whose glory fills the world and searches the depths of God,
Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, one God,
Have mercy on us.

From blind hearts and petty spirits that refuse to see our need for your love,
Savior, deliver us.

From pride, self-sufficiency, and the unwillingness to admit our own need of your compassion,
Savior, deliver us.

From discouragement in the face of pain and disappointment, and from lack of persistence and thoroughness,
Savior, deliver us.

From ignorance, apathy, and complacency that prevent us from spreading the Gospel,
Savior, deliver us.

O God, we pray for the gifts of ministry. Inspire our minds with a vision of your kingdom in this time and place.
Hear us, O Christ.

Open our eyes, that we may see your glory in all creation.
Hear us, O Christ.

Open our ears, that we may hear from every mouth the hunger for hope and stories of refreshment.
Hear us, O Christ.

Open our lips, that we may tell in every tongue the wonderful works of God.
Hear us, O Christ.

Open our hearts, that we may discern the work to which you call us.
Hear us, O Christ.

Send us with your Good News into our neighborhoods, communities, and all parts of the world.
Hear us, O Christ.

Strengthen us, that we may each accomplish the work you give us to do.

Hear us, O Christ.

Sustain and encourage all who minister in your name in lonely, dangerous, and unresponsive places.

Hear us, O Christ.

Open the hearts and hands of many to support your Church in this and every place.

Hear us, O Christ.

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 Gift of Song

The Architect

Ashley Clos

The Collect

Celebrant God be with you.

People **And within you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty God, to whose glory we celebrate the dedication of this house of prayer: We give you thanks for the fellowship of those who have worshiped in this place, and we pray that all who seek you here may find you, and be filled with your joy and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The First Lesson

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Reader A reading from Jeremiah.

Thus says the LORD:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
and make mere flesh their strength,
whose hearts turn away from the LORD.

They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see when relief comes.

They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.

They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;

in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse--
who can understand it?

I the LORD test the mind
and search the heart,

to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings.

Reader The words of holy scripture.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Psalter

Psalm 1

Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!

Their delight is in the law of the LORD, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.

They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.

**It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**

Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.

**For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, *
but the way of the wicked is doomed.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Second Lesson

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Reader A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ--whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

Reader The words of holy scripture.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

The Gospel

Luke 6:17-26

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

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

Jesus came down with the twelve apostles and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

“Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.”

“But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

“Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

“Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

Deacon The good news of our Savior.

People **Praise be to Christ.**

Quiet Reflection on the Reading

Lectionary Discussion

- 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, and Paul.

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

Blest Are They (text by David Haas)

Refrain:

Rejoice and be glad! Blessed are you, holy are you!

Rejoice and be glad! Yours is the kingdom of God.

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

belovedcommunitydurham.org

welcome@belovedcommunitydurham.org

919-244-2811

Rev. Phillip Bass: revphillip@belovedcommunitydurham.org

Rev. Deacon Dan Laird: deacon@belovedcommunitydurham.org

Jeremy Clos: formation@belovedcommunitydurham.org



**The
merciful
are blessed,
for they
will be
shown
mercy.**