

## The First Sunday after Trinity YEAR C May 29, 2016

Following on from last week's reflection on the Trinity – part of which explored the community within the Godhead – it is fitting that this first week of Ordinary or Kingdom Time, should call us to be people of welcome, inclusivity and service of all – challenging our tendency to legalistic exclusivism and petty factionalism, and calling us to embrace all people in Christ's name.

May our worship open our hearts and lives to our brothers and sisters in the human race!

### INTRODUCTIONS

*For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines*

**1 Kings 18:20-21, (22-29), 30-39:** Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal inviting them to build an altar and place a sacrifice on it, and then to call on their god for fire. When no fire comes, Elijah does the same, calling on God, who sends fire to consume the sacrifice, even though it is drenched in water.

OR **1 Kings 8:22-23, 41-43:** Solomon prays for the newly built Temple, and for the foreigners who will pray in it, that God would hear their prayers and do as they ask, in order that God may be praised, and the Temple recognised as God's house.

**Psalm 96:** A song in praise of God as Lord over all nations, and inviting all people to declare God's glory, and to celebrate that God brings justice to the earth.

OR **Psalm 96:1-9:** A shorter excerpt of the above reading.

**Galatians 1:1-12:** Paul confronts the Galatians because they are following a different Gospel than the one they received from Paul, and which he received not from human beings, but from a revelation of Jesus.

**Luke 7:1-10:** A centurion, whose servant is sick, asks Jesus to heal him, declaring that there is no need for Jesus to go into his house, but only to say the word. Jesus is impressed by the centurion's faith and does what he asks.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=1%20Kings%2018:%2020-21,\[22-29\],%2030-39%0Acw%20Psalm%2096%20%0AGalatians%201:%201-12%0ALuke%207:%201-10](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=1%20Kings%2018:%2020-21,[22-29],%2030-39%0Acw%20Psalm%2096%20%0AGalatians%201:%201-12%0ALuke%207:%201-10)

### COLLECTS OF THE DAY

#### Collect One

O God,  
the strength of all them that put their trust in thee;  
Mercifully accept our prayers;  
and because through the weakness of our mortal nature  
we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace,  
that in keeping of thy commandments  
we may please thee both in will and deed;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### Collect Two

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God,  
the strength of all those who put their trust in you:  
Mercifully accept our prayers  
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature  
we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace,  
that in the keeping of your commandments  
we may please you, both in will and deed;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider or deacon

Let us pray to God whose mighty hand and outstretched arm work deeds of healing and power.

Deacon or other leader

For Christians and Jews and all people of faith.  
Lord, have mercy.

For this holy assembly gathered in God's name.  
Lord, have mercy.

For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families.  
Lord, have mercy.

For immigrants and refugees  
and for all who appear to us as strangers.  
Lord, have mercy.

For those who are ill or close to death.  
Lord, have mercy.

For those who have entered into eternal life.  
Lord, have mercy.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.  
Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with St \_\_\_\_\_ and all the saints,  
let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.  
To you, O Lord.

Presider

God of health and salvation, hear our prayers  
this day and speak the word of healing for  
your servants everywhere; through  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## POST COMMUNION

Eternal Father,  
we thank you for nourishing us  
with these heavenly gifts.  
May our communion strengthen us in faith,  
build us up in hope,  
and make us grow in love;  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## PRAYERS

Beckoning God,  
as you moved in the lives of Elijah and Elisha,  
move in our lives,  
inviting us to journey to unknown territory,  
to listen for your voice,  
and to speak your prophetic word  
in a world that does not want to hear.  
empowered by your Spirit,  
grant us the courage we need  
to journey, trust, listen, speak,  
and accept your commission  
to be your faithful servant people. Amen.

Friends in Christ,  
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers  
as dear to us as our own needs.  
Loving our neighbors as ourselves,  
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions  
on behalf of the church and the world.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Hear our prayers, God of power,  
and through the ministry of your Son  
free us from the grip of the tomb,  
that we may desire you as the fullness of life  
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,  
and guided them in the way of your love,  
so listen not to those who call upon you.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Move us to praise your gracious will,  
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death  
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.

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We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,  
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens  
and healed our spirits.  
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,  
those seeking healing,  
those in need within the church and the world.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Hear our prayers  
that we may love you with our whole being  
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbors. Amen.

Creator God,  
you call us to love and serve you  
with body, mind, and spirit  
through loving your creation  
and our sisters and brothers.  
Open our hearts in compassion  
and receive these petitions  
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Holy One,  
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards  
of the fragile bounty of this earth  
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,  
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,  
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.  
We offer these prayers of love  
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,  
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Loving God,  
open our ears to hear your word  
and draw us closer to you,  
that the whole world may be one with you  
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,  
you who hear the cries of those in need,

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receive these petitions of your people  
that all who are troubled  
may know peace, comfort, and courage.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Life-giving God,  
heal our lives,  
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds  
and offer you thanks from generation to generation  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,  
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,  
hear our prayers  
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,  
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings  
with your unending compassion.

*Intercessions may follow concluding with:*

Redeeming Sustainer,  
visit your people  
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,  
that we may hurry to make you welcome  
not only in our concern for others,  
but by serving them  
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

O God, living Lord,  
you are the author of faith.  
engrave on our hearts  
the gospel revealed in Jesus Christ  
and brought near to us by your Holy Spirit,  
that we may attest to this faith  
in lives that are pleasing to you. Amen.

O Singer, your song is welcome and holiness,  
healing and trust.  
Teach us a new song to sing your praise,  
and tune our ears to melodies we have never heard,  
that we may add our voices to the harmony  
uniting all creation as one  
in adoration and thanksgiving of you,  
through Christ, your all-embracing song. Amen.

**SEND IN THE ANGELS: Prayers of Intercession**

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The word angel originally meant “messenger.” For God’s angels on this earth, let us now pray.

We thank you, loving God, that you do not leave us without helpers. We thank for your special agents, those guardian angels- both human and heavenly- who never cease to care.

Wherever there are situations of confusion, where doubts proliferate and anxieties spawn, please send in your angels of light.

Wherever people are crippled by guilt, or deeply regret damage to others which they can never rectify, send in your angels of mercy.

Wherever there is arrogance and deceit, corruption and rapacious greed, send in your fiery angels of judgement.

Wherever ignorance reigns or superstition cripples individuals or communities, please send in your angels of truth.

Wherever persons or nations become obsessed with aggression, or resort to terrorism and warfare, send in your agents of peace and goodwill.

Wherever families are at loggerheads, or in the workplace folk feel alienated from one another, send in your angels of reconciliation.

Wherever people see their future as bleak or dangerous, and fall into the trap of inertia or despair, please send in your angels of hope.

Wherever the church becomes exclusive, or gets caught up in its own regulations, traditions, or inflexible dogma, send in your angels of reformation.

Wherever ministers lose their passion for the Gospel, or congregations become self satisfied or apathetic, please send in your angels of rebuke.

Wherever there are people who are afflicted by disease or injured in accidents, struggle against mental ills or suffer from criminal violence, send in your angels of healing.

Wherever the dying endure fears or pain, and the bereaved either shed the hot tears of a fresh grief or endure the long-term loss of a partner or friend, send in your angels of comfort.

Loving God, Lord of all the messengers of grace on earth and in heaven, hear our prayers and enlist us, please God, within the ranks of your caring angels. Through Jesus Christ your only True Son, our Saviour and our inspiration.

*Amen*

*Bruce Prewer*

## LECTIONARY NOTES

### REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The Gospel reading seems almost to be in contradiction to the other readings for today. Where the Elijah story describes a conflict of faiths, the Psalm challenges all people to

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accept Israel's God alone, and the Epistle warns against following any other Gospel, the Gospel reading shows Jesus crossing the boundaries of race, culture, and religion to touch and heal a Gentile's servant. In the light of this, perhaps the other readings must be revisited. Solomon's prayer certainly indicates that he believed that God would accept foreigners who prayed to God in God's Temple – implying that, at least to some extent, they would be allowed into the Temple. The "other Gospel" that Paul warned against, of course, was not another religion, but was a legalistic distortion of Christ's message, which would make the Gospel exclusive rather than inclusive and welcoming. Psalm 96, while it can be read in a triumphalist way, rather seems to be invitational. The focus is less on a competition between Israel's God and other gods, than it is about how God brings justice and goodness to all people. Elijah's duel with the prophets of Baal happened in a time when everything, from health care to politics, was defined by religion, and gods were seen as being in competition with each other. In this context, for Israel to turn to other gods was not just a religious choice, but was a betrayal of their national identity. Linked, of course, with this apostasy was the oppression and violence of the king who supported this idolatry and sought to execute the prophets of God. So, perhaps this was less about competing religions and more about the people choosing how they would live, and what values would guide them. Nevertheless, when all of these readings are held together, the message is invitational. God seeks to call all people into God's grace and justice, leading us all to be people of inclusion, welcome and love who reject oppression, violence and factionalism.

### **CONNECTING WITH LIFE:**

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** There is no shortage of ways that we can divide and separate ourselves from one another. Besides the obvious categories of race and religion, there are issues of gender, sexuality, economic level, educational level, geographic location, political affiliation, and generation. If we so choose, any of these small differences can become the source of competition and conflict – and they have done throughout human history. The Gospel of Jesus, and the example he gave of how to live this Gospel out, is all about grace and inclusivity. It's about crossing boundaries and finding the connections rather than the conflicts. Coming a week after Trinity Sunday, when we affirm the unity and community within the Godhead, it is appropriate that the Lectionary should call us to manifest that same unity and community in our world. When we recognise that God is God of all – regardless of whether people believe in God or follow Jesus or not – we cannot help but heed Gods' call to learn to love and serve all – even our enemies (as the centurion would naturally have been for a Jew like Jesus). This love and service is demonstrated in practical ways – ensuring that adequate health care is provided for all, rather than allowing the profits of pharmaceutical companies to take priority; ensuring that sufficient food is available to all, rather than allowing aid and resources to be diverted to corrupt officials; ensuring that peace becomes our highest priority instead of believing that violence is our most effect method of conflict resolution. When we recognise God as the God of all people and all creation, we cannot help but recognise that all is sacred, and when this realisation hits home, it changes everything.

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** It's very tempting to build our faith on exclusivity, believing that we are 'in' with God, and others aren't. It's very tempting to build strong personal and group identities in oppositional ways – built on hostility (as Brian McLaren observes) rather than in invitational ways – built on hospitality. But, when we allow ourselves to yield to this temptation, we not only undermine our own security and sense of belonging (because it's only a matter of time before we have a disagreement with the group, and then what happens to us), but we create greater conflict and hardship in our communities, and by extension, in the world. However, when we allow the Gospel to shift our hearts toward inclusion, we discover, in spite of the pain that relationships always bring, a sense of

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healing, connectedness and being "at home" in the world that is profound and transforming. When we allow our identity to be built on how we welcome and heal others, rather than on how we look after ourselves, our sense of identity and of our humanity expands and grows richer. Imagine if our worship focussed on opening our hearts and lives to others, rather than on making us feel secure in an isolated religious bunker that shields us from those who are different!

### ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"False gods or the One True God," the Rev. Dr. J. Barrington Bates, *Sermons that Work*, Episcopal Digital Network

The Bible stories appointed for today have a considerable resonance. That is actually something quite unusual in these days of the Revised Common Lectionary, as the lessons are no longer chosen to relate to each other. The resonance, therefore, is more coincidence than a result of any intentionality.

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2013/05/06/2-pentecost-proper-4-c-2013/>

**"An Unexpected Faith,"** the Rev. Dr. Eric Barreto, Day 1

Jesus had a terrible reputation. He spent time with the wrong kind of people. He ate with the grungy and despised of the world. He associated with the worst among us. He reached out to the poor, the broken, the marginalized. In this expansive vision of hope, the gospel reaches full flower. But Jesus also found himself among the powerful of his time. He associated with people of means and influence. He even drew near to the purported enemies of Israel and dared to praise them. Here too the gospel reaches full flower.

[http://day1.org/4886-an\\_unexpected\\_faith](http://day1.org/4886-an_unexpected_faith)

Ministry Matters, June 2, 2013.

<http://www.ministrymatters.com/bin/5391/this-sunday-6213#axzz2TN2t8h71>

The Faith of an Outsider - scroll down

<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocC/C38sun9.htm>

### CHILDREN

Worshiping with Children, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/year-c-proper-4-9th-sunday-in-ordinary.html>

"Sermon of the Week," Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

### HYMN SUGGESTIONS

All Are Welcome (All Are Welcome)  
Christ From Whom All Blessings Flow  
There's A Wideness In God's Mercy  
Come Let Us All Unite And Sing – God Is Love  
You Are  
Everyone Belongs



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Everyone Under The Sun  
Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace