

St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland
Tenth Sunday of Pentecost, August 1, 2021

Welcome and Introduction – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Hymn 573, stanzas 1-2

Father eternal, Ruler of Creation

Opening Sentence: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Confession

*Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and have done those things which we ought not to have done.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults,
restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

Absolution

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Invitation to Venite and Psalm

O Lord, open thou our lips,
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

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 Venite - seated

*O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
and the strength of the hills is his also.*

*The sea is his and he made it,
and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.*

Psalm 78:23-29 – see lesson insert

First Lesson – Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Second Reading – Ephesians 4:1-16 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God*

Hymn 707, stanzas 1-2

Take my life and let it be

The Gospel - John 6:24-35

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

The Apostles' Creed - standing

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer - seated

*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.*

Suffrages - seated

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
And grant us thy salvation.
Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
And make thy chosen people joyful.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in thee can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under thy care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let thy way be known upon earth;
Thy saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collects for Sundays, 10th Sunday after Pentecost, and Communities of Faith

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

Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Almighty and everlasting, God, from whom comes every good and perfect gift: Send down upon all communities of faith the healthful Spirit of your Grace. As individuals and as community, help us, Lord, to be instruments of Your Peace. Be with us as we strengthen the faithful and offer support to those searching for assurance of a Loving God. In your Son's Name, we pray. *Amen.*

The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable 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 beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.*

Announcements and America

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

Prayer of St. Chrysostom

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

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 287, stanzas 1 and 8

For all the Saints

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia.

Lessons for 10th Sunday after Pentecost – August 1, 2021

Collect: Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Then the Lord said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not." Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'" And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud, the Lord spoke to Moses and said, "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'" In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 78:23-29

So he commanded the clouds above
 and opened the doors of heaven.
He rained down manna upon them to eat
 and gave them grain from heaven.

So mortals ate the bread of angels;
 He provided for them food enough.
He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens
 and led out the south wind by his might.
He rained down flesh upon them like dust
 and winged birds like the sand of the sea.
He let it fall in the midst of their camp
 and round about their dwellings.
So they ate and were well filled,
 for he gave them what they craved.

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: John 6:24-35

On the next day, when the people who remained after the feeding of the five thousand saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the Sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw things, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manner in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Hymns for 10th Sunday after Pentecost – August 1, 2021

Hymn 573, stanzas 1-2

Father eternal, Ruler of creation

Father eternal, Ruler of creation,
Spirit of life, which moved ere form was made,
through the thick darkness covering every nation,
light to our blindness, O be though our aid:
thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done.

Races and peoples, lo, we stand divided,
and, sharing not our griefs, no joy can share;
By wars and tumults love is mocked, derided
his saving cross no nation yet will bear:
thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done.

Hymn 707, stanzas 1-2

Take my life and let it be

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King;
take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose.
Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

Hymn 287, stanzas 1 and 8

For all the saints

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy Name, O Jesus, be for ever blessed.
Alleluia, alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia, alleluia!

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 10th Sunday after Pentecost, August 1, 2021.

In this morning's insert, there is an interesting connection between the Collect and the three lessons that follow.

In the **Collect**, we pray for the "**cleaning and defending**" of the Church. Well, what is it exactly that needs cleaning and defending?

In the Exodus passage (**Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15**), the Lord says to Moses "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not." Moses then says to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation 'Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.'"

We do our share of complaining, don't we. We're good at that. Maybe better at complaining than giving thanks. So, yes, maybe we need some "cleaning and defending." Fair enough.

In the passage from Ephesians (**Ephesians 4:1-16**), St. Paul reminds us that "we must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming." Rather, Paul reminds us that "we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."

Are we "growing up in every way ... into Christ" or are we being tossed about? Well, sometimes we do feel "tossed about" when we should be "growing up in every way into Christ." So, yes again, maybe some "cleaning and defending" is appropriate.

And, in today's Gospel (**John 6:24-35**), Jesus reminds us that "whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Ouch. That touches a nerve, because often we want more of this and more of that and more of everything, when what we really need, whom we really need, is right in front of us, for the asking.

Do we need some help here? Let's be honest. Yes, we do.

The Collect reminds us that we "cannot continue in safety" without the "help and goodness of the Lord." Isn't that exactly why you and I are here? We seek safety. And we find that safety right here.

It's not perfection that we see right here. It's safety. Safety from what? From the imperfection that weighs us down.

We are imperfect people, who recognize this common condition, and give thanks to God for addressing this condition in Jesus. "Cleaning and defending." That's why we gather. We know we need it, and, in Christ, we're pretty sure that God has provided it. And so we first confess our shortcomings and then gratefully receive a second chance, and a third, and a fourth, and a lifetime's worth of chances.

We carry on with new life. We carry on with restoration. We carry on with renewed confidence. We carry on with the excitement that comes from being forgiven.

That "fine flaky substance" from the Exodus passage, the "bread that the Lord has given us to eat," is what now drives us to do the Lord's work more effectively. From **Psalms 78**: "So they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved." And we can add "what they needed."

One of the actions that we perform on a regular basis here is to provide an opportunity to offer. This offering, this deposit, can take the form of an envelope, loose change, a confession, and also a prayerful thank you for the assurance of God's love and forgiveness. It's a pretty routine action, but it carries great significance.

We feel safe in this routine action. We feel safe in one another's company. We feel safe in our common humanity. And we feel really safe in how God has chosen to provide the safety. Saved by a carpenter from Nazareth. Who knew?

Well, the Hebrews knew that someone was coming to fulfill a promise. Is Jesus that someone? You and I believe so. And we carry on our lives as if it is so. Could we be premature in our belief? Yes, that's possible. But it's also possible that our belief in Christ as "the One" is right on target. It sure feels that way. And until there's more compelling evidence of God's Love, we'll continue on the path that we are on. And happily, gratefully, so.

Will we continue to need "cleaning and defending"? Of course, that's our nature. Will we continue to seek "safety"? Of course, that's our nature. Will we continue to draw confidence from Scripture? You bet.

Scripture is exciting stuff, you see. In large part because Scripture is remarkably accurate. We see ourselves in Scripture. We recognize our freedom. We also recognize our tendency to misuse that freedom from time to time.

In other words, we recognize our desire for safety. And we recognize the importance and the healing power of being with others. Individuals, all of us, unique as we all are, somehow coming together for comfort and growth and promise and fulfillment.

Again, from Psalm 78:

He rained down manna upon them to eat * and gave them grain from heaven.
So mortals ate the bread of angels * he provided for them food enough.
So they ate and were well filled * for he gave them what they craved.

“And were well filled.” Sounds a lot like St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians:

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

“Working properly.” I don’t know about you, but if “working properly” is achieved through “cleaning and defending,” let’s do more of it. And as we do more of what we’re doing, let’s always remember those who have gone before and recognized that the “cleaning and defending” they did in their generations is what inspires us today.

In this spirit and with thanksgiving, our final hymn today will be “For all the saints.” Here’s stanza 1:

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy Name, O Jesus, be for ever blessed.

Yes, we are blessed. Cleaned and defended and blessed. What a combination. What a diet. What a gift. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

