

2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Introduction to the day

This Sunday's texts paint startling pictures of the horrific nature of sin. The church's repeated celebration of holy communion counters that tragic reality in a continued showing forth of the death of Jesus until he comes again. It is a dramatic declaration of "how much God has done for you."

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

O Lord God, we bring before you the cries of a sorrowing world. In your mercy set us free from the chains that bind us, and defend us from everything that is evil, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 65:1-9

A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet announces God's impatience. The people's self-absorption is idolatry, and images of practices that displease God fill this reading. Like a vintner who crushes the grape to release the wine, God will use Israel's exile to establish a new community of the faithful.

PSALM: Psalm 22:19-28

In the midst of the congregation I will praise you. (Ps. 22:21)

SECOND LESSON: Galatians 3:23-29

A reading from Galatians.

For Paul, baptism is a powerful bond that unites people not only with God but with other believers. Those who call themselves children of God experience a transformation that removes prejudices of race, social class, or gender in favor of true unity in Christ.

GOSPEL: Luke 8:26-39

Jesus' mission includes foreigners and his authority extends to the casting out of demons. Some who witness Jesus' work are seized with confusion and fear, but the man who was healed is commissioned to give testimony to God's mercy and power.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Real Healing

Today we resume our journey through the Gospel of Luke. Luke has a clear agenda: to share the gospel to the ends of the earth—to whomever, however, and whenever the opportunity presents itself! Luke boldly declares that the gospel is the gift of healing offered for all creation.

It is with this evangelical and healing bias that we approach this scripture passage. The nakedness, the tombs, and the swine speak to a reality of a lack of ritual purity. The world is not perfect. Demons in turn remind us of the various pressures and temptations that surround and distract us from God's presence and holiness. The swineherds are confused. On one hand, a man is healed; on the other, they lose their livelihood when the swine throw themselves over a cliff. And all of this happens in Gentile land: Jesus shares the good news in non-Jewish lands and to non-Jewish people. Jesus is willing to enter the reality of life. Jesus is willing to enter the reality of *our* lives.

What better message for Luke to share than that Jesus meets this broken human being right where he is. No need to clean up beforehand. No need to be someone he is not. No need to play any games or wear different

hats. He simply gets to be himself. Jesus meets him and shows him that he is seen, not only in his truth of the moment, but also in the fullness of his humanity.

Demons, be gone. Confusion, be gone. Peace enters. Love enters. God enters and envelops each of us in true healing. To know we are enough with God is the heart of healing. Then comes an invitation to share news of the healing Jesus does each day.

What has Jesus done for you today?

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn into the embrace of the holy Trinity, we lift our prayers for the wholeness of the church, the world, and all creation.

We pray for the church. Clothe us in Christ, shower us in mercy, send us in love. Strengthen the faith and witness of Christians across the planet and Christians in our community. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for creation. Deliver the earth from disaster, bring forth life amid uncertainty, inspire wonder at all you have made. Sustain all people who delight in the well-being of your creation: farmers, agricultural workers, gardeners, birdwatchers, conservationists, scientists, advocates, and policy makers. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations. Pave a way to justice, drown the forces of oppression, bring peace on earth. Give leaders the will to turn from war and violence, especially in Israel and Iran, Gaza; Ukraine and Russia. When people must flee their homes, guide them to safety. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people in need. Satisfy all who are poor, soothe those in pain, accompany all who are sick especially Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Cassie Jessup, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. Give perseverance to each of us living with mental illness, and shield us from discrimination due to race, class, gender, or any other human distinction. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this assembly. Listen to our cries, come to our aid, make us one. Weave among us the fabric of belonging so that we rejoice in each person gathered here, and enliven our proclamation of how much you have done for us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We offer our thanksgiving for all people who have died in faith. Keep them in your peace, comfort us in sorrow, raise us to new life. As we remember their faith and witness, may we trust your promise that we are yours forever. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gather all our prayers in your mercy, O God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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