

Order of Service and Sermon for Sunday September 27, 2020

17th Sunday after Pentecost

St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, OR

Welcome Pamela Lyons-Nelson, Convenor,

Diocesan Commission on Poverty and Homelessness

A Greeting

Today's Collect:

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Two Readings from Isaiah: 61: 1-3 and 65:17-20

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.....

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

- Hear with the Spirit is saying to God's People
- ✦ **Thanks be to God**

A reading from Genesis 4: 8-10

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.

A Reading from the Epistle of James 2: 14-17

What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

- ✦ Hear with the Spirit is saying to God's People
- ✦ **Thanks be to God**



Readings from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke

A Reading from Matthew 25:34-46

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'
"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'
"He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Two Readings from Luke 4:16-20 and 10:25-37

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

And ... And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?



And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

- ✦ This is the Gospel of the Lord
- ✦ **Thanks be to God**

Homily – “From ‘My Brother’s Keeper’ to ‘My Neighbor’ to The Present” - Pamela LyonsNelson

Good Morning! This is quite an honor to be here in the pulpit with you this morning— Thank you so much for inviting me.

When I spoke with Sara, my question was, “What on earth do I have to say to this congregation, which has been working on meeting Holy Needs practically for as long as I’ve been hearing about this congregation?” I was gently reminded me that we all need to nourish our connection between faith and works, beliefs and action. If we stretch out our wing of faith, and our wing of action, we can see and feel that that they are joined by our heart and our spine, and that’s what it takes to do God’s work. Let’s take a look.

Archbishop Desmond TuTu wrote “God has a Dream” -read it if you get the opportunity--and in it this dream is spelled out scripturally, as it is in both the Hebrew and the New Testaments. In fact, you could say the entirety of the Bible is, in reality in, several accounts of us struggling to understand and live out that dream, only to get lost, feel the numbness, pain and terror of being lost, and rediscovering once again, the dream. It’s a dream of love, restorative justice and healing. So, let’s open the cover.

Pretty much right off the bat—at least after the Fall, we see God looking for Abel. [Genesis 4:9] He happens on Cain and asks him where his brother is. And Cain, being not unlike you and me, comes up with this spiritually “disastrous” reply: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” And, it turns out, the answer is unequivocally, YES!

A little later on in those first books [Leviticus:25], God explains the Jubilee, The Year of Release—his dream for us. The Jubilee is basically a do-over. Debts are forgiven, people are reconciled, communities are healed and so on. In this life. Here! Now! No waiting for heaven. Prophets later rail about the colossal consequences of greed and corruption—stealing from the widows and children, etc. taking even more money for yourself when those widows and orphans, the afflicted and oppressed, are leading miserable, shortened, sorrow-soaked lives. But God has a dream, where we are part of his Beloved Community, where Holy Needs are met.



Wait—what’s a holy need? Jesus makes it abundantly clear in Matthew 25:34-45: feed, clothe, visit, and, later on, He says HEAL. These are needs we, and Jesus, all have because we are incarnated. We have a body and therefore, bodily needs to keep body and soul together. When we tend to each other’s needs we tend to His. That’s why they are Holy—they are His needs.

Then we come to Luke the Physician, who fills his Gospel with story after story of Jesus ‘s healings., but it starts with Luke 4:16-23, where He’s the reader for that morning in the temple, and the Scripture is Isaiah 61. In essence, He says, “That’s me and the time is now” Here’s a bit of Isaiah 65:20 later, on that glorious new creation, the New Jerusalem, the Year of the Lord’s Favor, (the Year of Jubilee) that we don’t usually read.

“I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime”

And Jesus immediately goes out and starts healing and feeding people, breaking laws to do so and repeatedly having to defend Himself for meeting Holy Needs, telling his disciples they can do everything He does and more. We tend to forget that, don’t we? We’re like Peter who got a little roughed up for repeatedly saying, “I can’t”. Jesus tells us not only can we, we must, or we are spiritually lost [Matt.25]

So the question becomes for us, “There are so many! How can we heal them? And who is worth healing?” Well, we have Luke 10 for that. The disciples are sent out with specific instructions that include, “Whenever you enter a town and the people welcome you...cure the sick who are there..” and later in the same chapter, the Good Samaritan parable. A Pharisee asks Jesus “What is the greatest commandment?”, and Jesus turns the question back on him, and the Pharisee answers, “Love God and your neighbor”. So far so good. Then the Pharisee, wanting to show off a bit says, cleverly, “But who is my neighbor?”, and Jesus, instead of answering, tells a health care parable:

A badly injured and bloodied man is laying dying in the road. Along comes a priest, who can’t afford to become ritually unclean, literally skirts the issue as does the next person, a temple assistant. That’s you and I: the ones who usher, sing, teach, lead prayer do alter guild, fold bulletins, etc. Lastly comes a Samaritan, who will make the injured Jew ritually unclean if he helps him, but help him, he does: he cleans his wounds and binds them up (provides EMT service)es, transports him on his own donkey (ambulance service) and takes him to an inn (field hospital) where they spend the night and he tends to him (E.R. doc/nursing). The next morning he tells the innkeeper to take good care of the injured man, gives the innkeeper 2 denarii—that’s 2 days wages, and in today’s wages it’s \$4-500, says he’ll come back and pay the rest of whatever it took to get his patient healed (The work of the insurance industry). Jesus asked the Pharisee, who was the real neighbor to the beaten-up man? And his answer was, “The one who showed mercy.” Jesus then tells the Pharisee—us—“Go and do likewise.” (our co-pay).

The priest and the temple assistant certainly could have done the same, but they did not. But we can! That’s what universal healthcare is all about. It affirms that your healthcare is not dependent on your pocketbook, your social status, or anything other than your Holy Need. So,



here's a way right here and right now that we can participate in God's dream for us. Here is where credo meets action. Right at our hearts and our backbones.

Our hearts sometimes seem to have been created to break when we are in the presence of hurting/suffering, of Holy Need, where we can feel paralyzed or moved to action. This takes us directly into conversation with James 2:14-15. Here's a man who does not mince words:

"What good is it to say you have faith when you don't do anything to show it? If you know someone who doesn't have food or clothing, you shouldn't just say, 'I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat' ". He goes on in verse 21-24 to say: "Our ancestor Abraham pleased God by putting his son on the altar to sacrifice him. He proved his faith was real by deeds.... That's how he became God's friend." Faith wasn't the measure for God; Faith put into action was!

So, to sum up: Yes, I am my brother's keeper, and yes, all those others are my neighbors. Our Beloved Community, you and I, have an opportunity to meet Holy Needs with universal health care. We get the blessing of living out the contemporary good Samaritan story and God's Dream, right here and right now.

Blessed be God forever!

Litany for Social Justice:

Brothers and Sisters: God commands us through Jesus Christ to love one another. In baptism, we promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves and to strive for justice and peace, and respect the dignity of every human being. Let us now honor those vows and pray for our nation in this election season, for wise and just leaders, and for the needs of others throughout our country and the world. We pray for continued blessings on all peacemakers, on leaders who value peace, and on everyone who promotes nonviolent solutions to conflict. We pray for a speedy end to all violence and warfare around the world.

God of peace and gentleness,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the strength of heart and mind to look beyond ourselves and address the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world; for the rural and urban poor; for the rebuilding of our communities; and for an end to the cycles of violence that threaten our future.

God of generosity and compassion,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all nations, that they may live in unity, peace, and concord; and that all people may know justice and enjoy the perfect freedom that only God can give.

God of liberty and freedom,
Hear our prayer.

We pray that the Holy Spirit may embrace the most vulnerable members of our society; we pray also for an end to the growing disparity between the rich and poor; and for the grace and courage to strive for economic justice.



God of all gifts and blessings,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for an end to prejudice throughout our country and the world; that we will respect all people as precious children of God; and that racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination will be forever banished from our hearts, our society, and our laws.

God of fellowship and equality,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for a reverence of creation; that we will have the tools and the will to conserve it; that we will use its bountiful resources in the service of others; and that we will become better stewards of all that has been entrusted to us.

God of nature and the universe,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all immigrants, refugees, and pilgrims from around the world, that they may be welcomed in our midst and be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

God of outcasts and wanderers,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, the aged and the infirm; for those with physical or mental disabilities; that all may have access to proper health care; and that God's loving embrace may be felt by all who suffer.

God of comfort and healing,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all prisoners and captives; that a spirit of forgiveness may replace vengeance and retribution; and that we, with all the destitute, lonely, and oppressed, may be restored to the fullness of God's grace.

God of absolution and mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all children and families, and particularly for the orphaned, neglected, abused, and those who live in fear of violence or disease; that they may be relieved and protected.

God of children and families,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the reconciliation of all people, and for the Church throughout the world, that it may be an instrument of your healing love.



God of outreach and restoration,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who have died as a result of violence, war, disease or famine, especially those who died because of human blindness, neglect, or hardness of heart.

God of eternal life and resurrecting love,
Hear our prayer.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear what we ask in the name of your Son. Watch over our country now and in the days ahead, guide our leaders and all who will vote, guide them in all knowledge and truth and make your ways known among all people. In the passion of debate give them a quiet spirit; in the complexities of the issues give them courageous hearts. Accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

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.**

Prayer for St. Martin's

God of Love, open our eyes and ears to perceive you at work in creation, the church, and our parish. Fill our hearts with your love that we may reach out in love to others. Stir up our imagination with your Holy Spirit that we may find new ways to live into life with you. Give us a vision of your mission that we may share your love and your spirit in all the places where we work and play and worship you. In Jesus' holy name, **Amen.**

Blessing & Dismissal: Let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the spirit!
Thanks be to God!

**Followed by LIVE INTERACTIVE ZOOM PRESENTATION on Universal Health Care at 10:30 on Sunday September 27 with Q & A with Pamela Lyons Nelson and David Young, Diocese of Oregon, Commission on Poverty & Homelessness
ZOOM Link will be sent out Sunday Morning**

