Voluntary: Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, BWV 647  J. S. Bach

Processional Hymn
635. If thou but trust in God to guide thee  *Wer nur den lieben Gott*

The Word of God

Opening Acclamation  BCP 355
Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
*And blessed be his Kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.*

The Collect for Purity  BCP 355
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.

Hymn of Praise  BCP 356
8:30  Gloria
10:30  S 280 Gloria (see pew card)

The Collect of the Day
O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*The children aged 3–11 are invited to process out for Christian Formation time.*
Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?” Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah’s eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful. Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.” Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.” So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.” So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?” Laban said, “This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 105:1–11, 45b

8:30  We will recite the psalm responsively, beginning with the Narthex side.
10:30  The psalm will be chanted by the choir, and the refrain will be sung by all.

Refrain:

Glo-ry in God’s ho-ly name; those who seek the Lord, re-joice!

[Refrain]

1 Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name; *
   make known his deeds among the peoples.

2 Sing to him, sing praises to him, *
   and speak of all his marvelous works.
3 Glory in his holy Name; *
    let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

4 Search for the Lord and his strength; *
    continually seek his face. [Refrain]

5 Remember the marvels he has done, *
    his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,

6 O offspring of Abraham his servant, *
    O children of Jacob his chosen.

7 He is the Lord our God; *
    his judgments prevail in all the world.

8 He has always been mindful of his covenant, *
    the promise he made for a thousand generations: [Refrain]

9 The covenant he made with Abraham, *
    the oath that he swore to Isaac,

10 Which he established as a statute for Jacob, *
    an everlasting covenant for Israel,

11 Saying, "To you will I give the land of Canaan *
    to be your allotted inheritance."

45b Hallelujah! [Refrain]

The Second Lesson Romans 8:26–39

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,
“For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SEQUENCE HYMN: 447. The Christ who died but rose again

The Holy Gospel
MATTHEW 13:31–33, 44–52

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus put before the crowds another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

The Rev. Stephanie Allen
The Prayers of the People

Bound together in Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray with one heart and mind to our God, saying: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

That the love which passes ceaselessly between the Father and the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit may renew and deepen the life of each Christian and draw us all gathered here into your unending life, we pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

For the church, and its leaders, and in the Anglican and Diocesan cycles of prayer—for Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America; Church of the Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount; St. Andrew’s, Rocky Mount; and St. Mark’s, Roxboro—that our lives may be for the glory of God alone, we pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

For the leaders of nations, that they may discern the ways to overcome division and mistrust, and may reflect your unity in every aspect of common life, we pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

For our families, our households, and our communities, that they may be places of communion and mutual support, which build us up and strengthen us in grace and truth, we pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Thankful for our world which you made through Christ, and renewed in the power of his resurrection, that we may be wise and careful stewards of creation, we pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

In the power of the Spirit, we pray for the sick, the suffering, and all who stand in need, especially those we name now. (Names are read from the Nativity prayer list.) We pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

For all who have died—especially Rodney Clos, Henry Halvorson, Wes Chavis, Maxine Highsmith, Ron Salter, and Diane Dougherty—we pray: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Seed-planting, fish-netting, bread-baking, pearl-hunting God, you shape us into living parables. Pray with your Spirit in us so that we may understand our experiences as healing metaphors, and become creative and abundant stewards of the environment you entrusted to our love. Amen.

The Confession

The Peace
THE HOLY COMMUNION

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: Your Hands, O Lord, In Days of Old  Carson Cooman
Your hands, O Lord, in days of old were strong to heal and save; They triumphed over pain and death, o'er darkness and the grave. To you they went, the blind, the mute, the palsied and the lame, The leper set apart and shunned, the sick and those in shame. And then your touch brought life and health, gave speech and strength and sight; And youth renewed, with health restored, claimed you, the Lord of light. And so, O Lord, be near to bless, almighty now as then, In every street, in every home, in every troubled friend. O be our mighty healer still, O Lord of life and death; Restore and strengthen, soothe and bless with your almighty breath, On hands that work and eyes that see, your healing wisdom pour, That whole and sick and weak and strong may praise you evermore.

HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS  (see pew card)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING: Eucharistic Prayer C  BCP 369

SANCTUS

8:30  BCP 362
10:30  S 129 (see pew card)

THE LORD’S PRAYER  BCP 364

FRACTION ANTHEM

8:30  Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
      Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia
10:30  S 154 Christ our Passover (see pew card)

COMMUNION HYMN: 609. Eternal Spirit of the living Christ  Flentge

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER  BCP 365

Benediction

FINAL HYMN: 594. God of grace and God of glory  Cwm Rhondda
DISMISSAL

Thanks be to God.

Voluntary: Fanfare

J.-N. Lemmens

Nativity Prayer List

For the sick in our community: Alice, Barbara, Betty, Bill, Carol, Dee, Diane, Don, Jack, Jane, Karen, Kelly, Marion, Maxine, Nancy, Stephen, Steve

For our friends, family, and neighbors: Anna, Arybella, Bob, Chris, Danielle, Danny, Dave, Emma, Gabe, Gemma, Ginny, Henry, Ian, Jackson, John, John, Kelvin, Licia, Michelle, Roy, Roy, Sara, Tom, Vivian

For those who are expecting a child: Annelise and Lennox, Adam and Sarah, James and Emily

For those who are preparing for marriage: Taylor and Drew

For those who have died: Rodney Clos, Henry Halvorson, Wes Chavis, Maxine Highsmith, Ron Salter, Diane Dougherty

Reflection Questions

1. What does the mustard seed parable say to you? What difference can a small amount make? Where have you seen that dynamic at work?

2. How about the parable of the yeast? Can you think of a time when a small influence had a great effect?

3. Have you ever pursued a pearl of great price, giving up everything for a particular goal?

4. What does the great catch of fish say about faith?

5. Do you think these four parables belong together, or are they conveying totally different messages?
YOUR GIVING
Week of 7/23 – 7/29
$9,092.30 operating income
– $10,450.00 operating expenses (2023 budget)
($1,357.70) net loss

Quick Links
Scan this QR code to fill out a welcome card, give online, and more.

We thank the following people for their service today:

Vestry Representative Eric Knapp
Altar Flowers Ailsa Tessier
Altar Guild Robin Rhaney, Mary Kingsley, Brian Fentress
Lectors Dee Wallis (8:30)
Lloyd Childers, Anne Ramirez (10:30)
LEM Rene Garces (8:30)
Cuyler O’Connor, Helen Armstrong (10:30)
Acolytes Logan Lee and Raylan Neece (10:30)
Crucifer Libby O’Connor (10:30)
Video Alfred Christensen, Rick Burts, Ken Tessier, and Duff McAdams

Church of the Nativity
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🌐 nativityonline.org  📞 @nativityonline

Clergy and Staff
The Rev. Stephanie L. Allen Rector
The Rev. Phillip Bass Associate Rector
Helen Moses Priest Intern
Jeremy Clos Lay Associate for Christian Formation
Bradley Burgess Lay Associate for Music,
Communications, and Administration
Nancy Reed Business Manager
Robert Krahel Sexton