

Let the little children
come to me

MARK 10:14



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

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www.stpaulsyork.org

www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Facebook: *St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George*

WELCOME Thank you for being with us.

We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 185 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

Restrooms are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex. Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms.

The 10:30 AM Liturgy is live streamed on YouTube. Search St. Paul's Lutheran Church S. George, York, PA. or use this link to our St. Paul's YouTube home page www.youtube.com/channel/UCYCFdMzkJo_Xvbdkxn2IYIg. You may also view the service at a later time on YouTube.

The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God in loving memory of our fathers by Mike & Becky Bingham.



Guidelines for Worship during the time of COVID-19

Entering and Leaving the Church:

Please wear a mask while in worship and take your service bulletin with you and dispose of it properly.

Offerings:

Monetary offerings may be placed in the basins provided at the entrances to the nave prior to the service or immediately following the service. You may also donate via our website at www.stpaulsyork.org

While in the Nave:

Please sit in designated pews only. You may sit together as a family. We ask that you practice social distancing from one family to the next within the pew. Occasionally an usher may seat a guest in the red zone.

Communion Procedure:

- *Ushers will direct you to the Chancel step alternating pulpit side (left) then font side (right).*
- *Extend your arms and cup your hands together to receive the host There is no need to hurry.*
- *We are receiving communion in one kind only (bread/host).*
- *Return to your pew by the side aisle.*

Our COVID-19 task force is assisting us as we remain open. Please thank Dr. Jessica Ericson, Sheridan Palmer, Deacon Harold Sargeant, Norma Shue, and Dr. Martha Thomas for their dedication and service.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, October 3, 2021
Holy Communion 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

PRELUDE

Prelude on When Love is Found

John Ferguson

Stand turning to face the Baptismal font

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Let us pray. Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom 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 Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



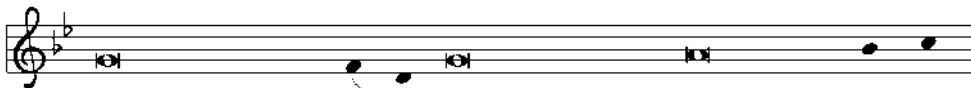
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of



God, and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this ho - ly house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and

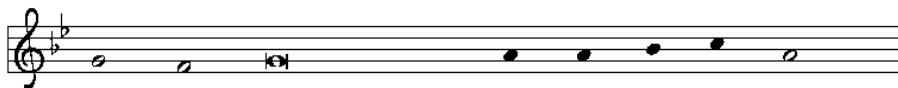


praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

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Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.

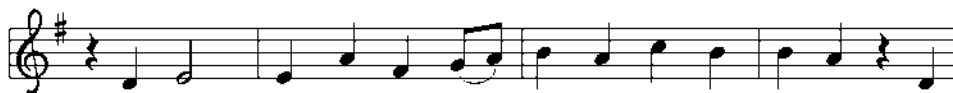


A - men.

HYMN OF PRAISE *The refrain is sung by all. The verses are sung by the cantor. The assembly joins in singing the final "Amens".*



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav'n - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we



wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of



God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

Continued on next page...

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the

Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the

Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.

A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Our Lord Jesus, you have endured the doubts and foolish questions of every generation. Forgive us for trying to be judge over you, and grant us the confident faith to acknowledge you as Lord. **Amen**

Sit

FIRST READING

Genesis 2:18-24

(back cover)

PSALM

Psalm 8 ¹ O | LORD our Lord,*

Spoken responsively by half verse.

¹ O | LORD our Lord,*

how exalted is your name in | all the world!

² Out of the mouths of in- | fants and children*

your majesty is praised a- | bove the heavens.

³ You have set up a stronghold against your | adversaries,*

to quell the enemy and | the avenger.

⁴ When I consider your heavens, the work | of your fingers,*

the moon and the stars you have set | in their courses,

⁵ what is man that you should be mind- | ful of him,*

the son of man that you should | seek him out?

⁶ You have made him but little lower | than the angels;*

you adorn him with glo- | ry and honor;

⁷ you give him mastery over the works | of your hands;*
you put all things un- | der his feet:
⁸ all | sheep and oxen,*
even the wild beasts | of the field,
⁹ the birds of the air, the fish | of the sea,*
and whatsoever walks in the paths | of the sea.
¹⁰ O | LORD our Lord,*
how exalted is your name in | all the world!

SECOND READING

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

(back cover)

Stand

HYMN

When Love is Found (WOV 749)



1 When love is found and hope comes home, sing and be
 2 When love has flow'ed in trust and cure, build both each
 3 When love is tried as loved - ones change, hold still to
 4 When love is torn and trust be - trayed, pray strength to
 5 Praise God for love, praise God for life, in age or



glad that two are one. When love ex - plodes and fills the
 day that love may dare to reach be - yond home's warmth and
 hope though all seems strange, till ease re - turns and love grows
 love till tor - ments fade, till lov - ers keep no score of
 youth, in calm or strife. Lift up your hearts. Let love be



sky, praise God and share our mak - er's joy.
 light, to serve and strive for truth and right.
 wise through list - 'ning ears and o - pened eyes.
 wrong but hear through pain love's Eas - ter song.
 fed through death and life in bro - ken bread.

HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 10:2-16

(back cover)

The Holy Gospel according to **St. Mark.** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON

Pastor Stan Reep

Stand

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.* On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Almighty and Everliving God, you have raised up faithful leaders throughout history. Empower those discerning a call to ministry, encourage all seminarians, raise up men and women to be formed for gospel ministry. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You have established a diverse and beautiful creation. Revive declining species and preserve endangered lands. Cultivate in us a sense of wonder for your creation. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You desire for us not to be alone and to live in community with one another. Strengthen relationships between nations and peoples. Help us celebrate and support the gift of human family. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You share in our experiences and struggles. Bless all who live with mental or physical disability. Give support for creative communities, spaces, and environments that are accessible and hospitable. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You have established and nurtured relationships that extend beyond those gathered here today. Bless members who can no longer travel to worship with us (*especially*) and remind us of their continued role in this community of faith. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You promise eternal life to all your children. Thank you for the people of faith who have gone before us. Especially we remember Betty Mehring and Jean Flagg. Strengthen our trust we have in you. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord Our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS *Please sing in 4-part harmony*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.

Continued on next page...

Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

The image shows a three-system musical score for a hymn. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are written below the staves. The first system contains the first line of the hymn. The second system contains the second line, with a long note in the bass staff for 'comes' and a slur over the final notes. The third system contains the third line, ending with a double bar line.

THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

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

THE 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,
forever and ever. Amen

FRACTION RITE *The bread is broken. A brief silence is kept.*

Sit *The pastor cleanses hands and prepares for the distribution of Holy Communion.*

COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Instructions for receiving the sacrament are on the inside front cover of the bulletin.

Communion Solo: *We are a Garden Walled Around* Robert Buckley Farlee
 Carolyn Kapoun, soloist

Stand

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

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

HYMN *O God beyond All Praising* (WOV 797) Next Page

POSTLUDE *Sunburst* Carson Cooman

*The congregation remains standing
until the procession and ministers have taken their leave.*

O God Beyond All Praising



1. O God be-yond all prais-ing, we wor-ship you to - day
2. The flow'r of earth - ly splen - dor in time must sure - ly die,
3. Then hear, O gra-cious Sav - ior, ac - cept the love we bring,



and sing the love a - maz - ing that songs can-not re - pay;
its frag - ile bloom sur-ren - der to you, the Lord most high;
that we who know your fa - vor may serve you as our King;



for we can on - ly won-der at ev - ery gift you send,
but hid - den from all na - ture th'e - ter - nal seed is sown -
and wheth - er our to - mor - rows be filled with good or ill,



at _ bless-ings with - out num - ber and mer - cies with - out end.
though small in mor - tal stat - ure, to heav - en's gar - den grown:
we'll tri - umph through our sor - rows and rise to bless you still,



We lift our hearts be - fore you and wait up - on your word;
for Christ, the Man from heav - en, from death has set us free,
to mar - vel at your beau - ty, and glo - ry in your ways,



we hon - or and a - dore you, our great and might - y Lord.
and we through him are giv - en the fi - nal vic - to - ry.
and make a joy - ful du - ty our sac - ri - fice of praise!

Words: sts. 1 & 3, 1982; st. 2, 1987 | Michael Perry (1942-1996) stanza 2 based on 1 Corinthians 15:35-49
Music: *Thaxted*, 1916 | Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

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This Week at St. Paul's September 26—October 3
Church office open 7:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Tues—Thurs

Sunday, October 3

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
9:15 AM Sunday School
9:15 AM Pantry shelves stocking
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - live streamed.
3:00 PM York Music Teacher's Association Concert
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm
6:30 PM Confirmation Class-Youth Rm

Monday, October 4

6:30 PM Scout Leaders Mtg—ZOOM
7:00 PM Scout Meeting—ZOOM
7:00 PM Mid-week Adult Studies—ZOOM

Tuesday, October 5

9:30 AM Pantry
6:00 PM CREATE—Youth & Music

Wednesday October 6

No Parking Springettesbury

10:30 AM Bible Study-Christ Hall

Thursday, October 7

TBD Pantry Delivery
6:30 PM Handbell Choir—NO REHEASAL
7:30 PM Chancel Choir—Music Rm

Sunday, October 10

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
9:15 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - live streamed.
1:00 PM Matinee Musical Club Recital
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm
6:30 PM Confirmation Class-Youth Rm

In our prayers we remember...

Laurie Tyminsky, Betty Hoffmaster, Bill & Lyda Horn, Karen Missising, Rick Lloyd, Deirdre McManama, Drew Herdson, Kristine Gross, Porter Stacey, the family and loved ones of Jean Flagg (Stan Reep's aunt), and the family and loved ones of Betty Mehring

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Cantor	Acolytes	AV Team	Ushers	Early: Altar Set-up Late: Altar Clean-up
10/3	Early	Denise Rider	Mike Hanson	Lois Ann Schroeder	Needed			Joe Triggs John Monk	Lois Ann Schroeder Kathy Monk
	Late	Tonya Cave	Allen Reep	Chris Lipp	Sarah Throckmorton		Palmers	Steve Heistand Dave Kopp	Peggy & Byron LeCates

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	preep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Youth Director	Kelly Moore-Spencer	kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Organist, Choir Director	Victor Fields	vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Children's Music Director	Cody Messersmith	cmessersmith.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Sexton	Ted Weikert	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Announcements and Updates

The Nominating Committee has been actively securing individuals to serve in areas of leadership in our congregation. They have been successful in the areas of Congregation Council and Benevolence Committee. They remain in need of persons to serve on Mutual Ministry Committee. This committee has the important job of supporting our staff through annual evaluations, budgeting, compensation, and keeping up morale during challenging times such as throughout the most recent renovation, and during these day of pandemic. Please prayerfully consider serving for a single three year term. For additional information speak with a member of the Nominating Committee, Becky Bingham, Patty Snyder, or Kem Vaught.

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Jean Flagg (Stan Reep's aunt) and Betty Mehring.

The Harvest Wine Dinner is two weeks away! Tickets (\$100) are available through the Church Office. The October 16th fund raising event is quickly approaching. Silent Auction items are on display in the Good Shepherd Room. The original water color paintings donated by Pastor Reep for the live auction are listed in the September *Our Church* newsletter and can be viewed on the church website by following the link to the Harvest Wine Dinner.

Christ in Our Home devotional booklets for Oct/Nov/Dec are available in the narthex and in the Good Shepherd Room.

Sex Trafficking Symposium—It's here. We can fight it. But first we have to recognize it. Join us, as we hear how to protect ourselves and our loved ones. Wednesday, October 13, 7-8:30 PM, Door open at 6:30 PM. New Freedom Community Center, 150 E. Main St., New Freedom. Sponsored by New Freedom Lions Club.

Altar Flowers

The Springettsbury Hallway bulletin board has the sign-up sheet to sponsor flowers for available dates for the year. And for 2022. Many Sundays are still available! Cost is \$30

Food Pantry—October

Items needed: Pancake mix, 4 pks of toilet paper, canned or boxed potatoes, stuffing mix, jelly, boxed rice. We also need paper grocery bags with handles. Anyone able to help can contact Teresa Rohrbaugh, Patty Snyder, or Janet and Larry Moore. Plastic Bags are always needed. Money donations are gratefully accepted. Please place cash or check in a "special" envelope marked "Pantry".

Sunday Morning Classes Have Begun 9:15-10:15 AM.

Children up to Grade 3 are gathering at 9:15 in the church nave with Pastor Reep telling the story. They will then move to their classrooms upstairs. The story with Pastor Reep is also livestreamed on our YouTube Channel [St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York - YouTube](#)

The age groupings for classes are as follows:

Infants- Pre-K: Red room #213

Kindergarten-Grade 1: Yellow room #214

Grades 2-3: Orange room #204

Grades 3-5: Go directly to classroom at 9:15 AM: Multicolored room #202

Children in grades 4-6 will go directly to their classroom at 9:15 to meet their teachers for the story and learning activities. This group will be studying one of the Bible lessons heard each Sunday in worship.

Adult Classes Sunday mornings....

Now – October 17th “*by what authority? Rethinking early church history*” a video series followed by discussion will meet 9:15-10:15 am and be led by Pastor William Snyder. During this 5-week session we will see how the drama of the early church’s formation has direct connections to our life of faith today. Meet upstairs in Youth Room #208

October 24-November 14th *Isaiah: messages of hope* is the second course offered for adults this fall. Pastor Judith McKee will lead this video series and discussion on the book of Isaiah. In a time when we long for peace in the world we will look at the peace theme in Isaiah through bible study aided by visual expressions by major artists who have been inspired by Isaiah’s words.

Monday Evenings...ZOOM

Christian Conversations: Connecting Sunday worship with daily life. Five Monday evenings 7-8 pm on ZOOM. (October 4, 11, 18, 25, & November 1.) Join with our active and retired pastors as one of them will lead the discussion each week reflecting on what we heard in worship on Sunday morning and what we will take with us on our week-long walk with God. Contact the office 717-843-8155, or Patty Snyder for the Zoom link.

And....

Wednesday morning Bible Study at 10:30 AM, Christ Hall. Primary focus this month will be on the Book of Hebrews.

Proper 22 B, 2021

Genesis 2:18-24

Psalms 8

Hebrews 1:14; 2:5-12

Mark 10:2-16

Jesus is teaching about kingdom life. We have been following along on the way to Jerusalem. We are not there yet. We haven't reached our destination. But we are making the journey. Somehow, kingdom life gets upstaged again. This is a common reality. And kingdom life gets pushed aside for a hotter more controversial topic. This morning in Mark chapter 10 it is divorce.

With kingdom life sidestepped we hear about the hardness of the human heart. Our hard heartedness permeates the gospel scene. The Pharisees are setting a trap, gathering data so that they can judge pointing an accusing finger toward Jesus. Divorce just happens to be the hot topic in the region of Judea, beyond the Jordan River. It is a topic that gets in the news and is bound to make or break this prophet, teacher, healer from Nazareth. What will Jesus say? How will he respond? And into this scene add the twelve disciples who when left alone with Jesus raise the same topic again. Jesus' response to them is to state as a matter of fact that anyone who divorces and remarries commits adultery.

Yes commandment number six broken, shattered, left in pieces. But remember this same Jesus sharpens the Law by saying that anyone looking, with longing or desire at another, breaks the same commandment. And no sooner does Jesus recap the Decalogue with the disciples when people begin bringing children, little children to him in order that he might touch them and bless them. The disciples try to send the children away but Jesus reprimands them! He is in a gathering together moment.

Jesus uses the situation to teach about kingdom life in the realm of God. *Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.* It is the "such as these" that resumes the focus for the day. It is not on the Pharisees or on their knowledge of the Law, or on their ability to craft appropriately worded probing questions, or on their self-secured position in God's realm. Jesus identifies the children in his midst as an example of "whom" and "how" one enters the kingdom of God.

This is a reminder for us that we are to be more like children and less like the knowledgeable adults identified as Pharisees. We are to be more trusting and less judging. We are to be more caught up in the moment than perplexed about tomorrow. We are to be gathering together seeking blessing rather than pointing fingers and setting traps. We are to be more reliant on God than deluding ourselves thinking that it is by any effort of our own that we come into God's realm.

Nearly twenty years ago I was privileged to officiate at my cousin's wedding. Both my cousin and his bride had been previously married. They both had children. Both of their marriages ended in divorce. The guests assembled, on that particular au-

turn evening, in their back yard. Fairy lights sparkled in the trees, illuminated tent peaks, and flowed freely through flower beds making chrysanthemums glow with brilliant reds and yellows. At the appointed time the bride and groom along with their sons and daughters gathered on the steps of their back garden. The bride and groom exchanged vows. They made outrageous promises. They voiced their love, commitment, and hopes and dreams.

As the sky darkened candle light danced across the table tops and guests dined at a sumptuous buffet and danced on the patio to up-beat music. It was a joyous event.

For a brief moment I was reminded of another garden, that of Eden, the garden in Genesis, when at least for a time everything was perfect. Relationships were in tack. The man and the woman were beside each other caring, tending, naming, and living in God's realm.

And I thought of that other garden too, that heavenly banquet when we will all gather at the table of the Lord, the marriage feast of the Lamb, a feast with no end; a marriage feast that will not end in brokenness, separation, or with shattered promises. No, this feast provided by our gracious Lord Jesus is celebrated in love, commitment, with hopes and dreams all brought together through his victory of sin and death. We are given a foretaste of this feast in the Holy Communion.

This morning we come with our hard hearts and the hot topics of our own time. We often have more in common with the Pharisees, with our pointing fingers and attempts to trap and blame. And just so, Jesus reminds us that we are his children. He reminds us that we are welcomed and forgiven, and are promised a place at the table. We hear from Jesus in whose presence we assemble that we are forgiven and made whole because of his love and his promise to us through baptism. This love is from the beginning bigger and greater and richer and fuller, it is more excellent than anything that we can imagine. The Pharisees that day didn't seem to imagine anything much beyond the Law and how it could be applied in any given situation. God in Christ Jesus applies the law of love beyond what we can comprehend. Jesus points out the obvious to us by showing us how much he loves us by giving his life for us on the cross. Jesus' outstretched arms on the cross embrace all of humanity. He blesses us with his joyous welcome, announcing the forgiveness of our sins. He is present with us now restoring life and opening us to a heavenly vision where there are no hard hearts but only joy in his presence. Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 2:18-24

The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken."

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Psalms 8

SECOND READING: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

^{2:5}Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

"What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?"

⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;

you have crowned them with glory and honor,
⁸subjecting all things under their feet."

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers
and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

GOSPEL: Mark 10:2-16

Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"

⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." ⁵But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Next Sunday's Readings: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31.

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