

**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER 2023 - TRINITY 19**

**COLLECT**

O God, forasmuch as without you  
we are not able to please you;  
mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit  
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Psalm 23**

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦  
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul ♦  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; ♦  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦  
you have anointed my head with oil  
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life, ♦  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians, chapter 4, verses 1-9**

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

### **Exhortations**

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation (for Communion services only)*

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Your word is truth, O Lord: consecrate us in the truth.

Alleluia!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, chapter 22. 1-14.

Glory to you, O Lord

## The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

## **A Reflection from Hannah...**

What stops us embracing the joy of God's kingdom? It's a complicated question, and a deep one. In a world full of distractions, misplaced priorities and pressures, there are many reasons that an invitation to life in all its fullness- the wedding feast, as the parable has it- is sidelined, ignored or rejected. But in this example, the story gets even bleaker. Rather than simply saying 'no thank you, I won't be coming', when the slaves are sent out to gather up the guests, some of the guests actually seize and kill the messengers. That in turn brings violent retaliation. Sound familiar?

Violence and counter-violence have been writ large this past week. The agony of destruction, loss and death in the middle East has been heartbreaking. The dread of what is to come- both there and globally- lingers in all our minds, and we desperately hope that the situation can somehow be de-escalated, and quickly. Our human tendency to ignore the faithful and ever-present invitation of God to a life of joy and peace can take us into these most diabolical of places. In our longing and in our desperation for it to stop, in our questions and lament, we turn to prayer- praying for that peace which the world cannot give. Peace which is the constant beckoning hand of God who says 'come'- come into the kingdom of love.