



TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

*Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*  
September 26, 2021

### Thoughts of Preparation

But petitional (intercessory) prayer is only one department of prayer; and if we take the word in the wider sense as meaning every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine, we can easily see that scientific criticism leaves it untouched...Prayer in this wide sense is the very soul and essence of religion...Prayer is religion in act; that is, prayer is real religion. -- *William James, Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*

To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. -- *Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline*

I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer. -- *Martin Luther*

### **Welcome**

**Prelude**                      “ *The Old Rugged Cross* ”                      (*Mark Hayes*)

### **Tower Bell**

**\*Responsive Call to Worship**                      (*Mechthild of Magdeburg*)

O burning Mountain, O chosen Sun, O perfect Moon,  
**O fathomless Well, O unattainable Height, O Clearness beyond measure,**  
O Wisdom without end, O Mercy without limit,  
**O Strength beyond resistance, O Crown beyond all majesty:  
the humblest thing you created sings your praise.**

**\*Unison Prayer of Adoration & Confession** (William of St-Thierry)

**We were created for You by yourself, and towards You our face is set. We acknowledge You, our maker and creator; we adore Your wisdom and pray that it may order all our life. We adore Your goodness and mercy, and beg them ever to sustain and help us. Amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

*(Greatest)*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son  
and to the Holy Ghost  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

**Scripture Lesson**

From the Hebrew Psalms  
Psalm 102:23-28

God sovereignly brought me to my knees, he cut me down in my prime.  
“Oh, don’t,” I prayed, “please don’t let me die.  
You have more years than you know what to do with!  
You laid earth’s foundations a long time ago,  
and handcrafted the very heavens;  
You’ll still be around when they’re long gone,  
threadbare and discarded like an old suit of clothes.  
You’ll throw them away like a worn-out coat,  
but year after year you’re as good as new.  
Your servants’ children will have a good place to live  
and their children will be at home with you.”

## **Anthem**

*“How Can I Keep From Singing”*

*(Craig Courtney)*

My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation,  
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.  
It finds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?  
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die? The Lord my Savior liveth.  
What though the darkness gather round? Songs in the night He giveth.

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!  
All things are mine since I am His! How can I keep from singing?

**Scripture Lesson--**from Acts of the Apostles: Acts 6:1-7

(The Message)

During this time, as the disciples were increasing in numbers by leaps and bounds, hard feelings developed among the Greek-speaking believers—“Hellenists”—toward the Hebrew-speaking believers because their widows were being discriminated against in the daily food lines. So the Twelve called a meeting of the disciples. They said, “It wouldn't be right for us to abandon our responsibilities for preaching and teaching the Word of God to help with the care of the poor. So,

friends, choose seven men from among you whom everyone trusts, men full of the Holy Spirit and good sense, and we'll assign them this task. Meanwhile, we'll stick to our assigned tasks of prayer and speaking God's Word." The congregation thought this was a great idea. They went ahead and chose—

Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas,

Nicolas, a convert from Antioch. Then they presented them to the apostles. Praying, the apostles laid on hands and commissioned them for their task.

The Word of God prospered. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased dramatically. Not least, a great many priests submitted themselves to the faith.

## **Gathering in Prayer Together**

### **Silent Prayer --Pastoral Prayer**

#### **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.*

#### **Offertory Invitation**

Our model for giving is this: God, giving ALL of God's Self to us in love and trust! God trusts us to give our whole selves in turn, a relationship of mutual, flowing love! We bring our gifts so that this flow of love may spill over and drench the needy world around us.

## Offertory

*“As the Deer”*

*(Nystrom/Buryl Red)*

As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you.  
You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.  
For you alone are my strength, my shield; to you alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

## Scripture Lesson

From the Gospels John 15:1-17

(The Message)

“I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

“I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

“I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand



1 When we walk with the Lord  
in the light of his word,  
what a glory he sheds on our way!  
While we do his good will,  
he abides with us still,  
and with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

2 Not a burden we bear,  
not a sorrow we share,  
but our toil he doth richly repay;  
not a grief or a loss,  
not a frown or a cross,  
but is blest if we trust and obey. [Refrain]

3 But we never can prove  
the delights of his love  
until all on the altar we lay;  
for the favor he shows,  
for the joy he bestows,  
are for them who will trust and obey. [Refrain]

4 Then in fellowship sweet  
we will sit at his feet,  
or we'll walk by his side in the way;  
what he says we will do,  
where he sends we will go;  
never fear, only trust and obey. [Refrain]