



Image: Till Gerhard, Germany

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 1 AUGUST, 2021

No matter how bad I am feeling,
how lost or lonely or frightened,
when I see the faces
of the people at my church,
and hear their tawny voices,
I can always find my way home.

—Anne Lamott, *Travelling Mercies*

GATHERING

Opening Sentences

When the Christ candle is lit and baptismal waters poured
we remember who we are: ***Christ's own for the world.***

We behold each other in community, gathered in by force of Spirit,
breathing oneness into our diversity: ***Christ's own for the world.***

We entrust ourselves to the grace of God,
thread of goodness within, between and beyond: ***Christ's own for the world.***

Prayer of Invocation

Open my lips, O God, and my mouth will bring you praise.
For nothing can mute my gratitude
for your love and the gift of life
which you are always birthing within and around me.
Though winter clouds and chill linger
and an unseen virus leaves us masked and under threat,
you are my source of hope and joy.

Come to me, Spirit of God,
that I might know your love
and be renewed in faith as I worship.
Amen.

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING WORD

(You might wish to read the Brief Introduction to the Letter to the Ephesians if you haven't already to set the context for today's reading.)

Scripture Reading—Ephesians 1:1–14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. God destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

May your Word live in us
And bear much fruit to your glory.

Reflection on the Word

Song

“Christ has no body now but yours”

based on words by Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body now but yours
No hands, no feet on earth but yours
Yours are the eyes with which he sees
Yours are the feet with which he walks
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world
Yours are the hands

Music: David Ogden
Performed by Quintijn Tempelman

(Listen to this song on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=04NFik2YO4A

RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES

Prayers of the People

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit: We give you thanks that we can enter into your presence and pray to you as your own.

Gather us into you, O Christ, that we might embody your love.

We give thanks that in your plan and purpose for this world, your love has enabled us to hear and respond to your Word, embodied in Jesus and transforming us by the Holy Spirit.

Gather us into you, O Christ, that we might embody your love.

Teach us what it means to be separate from the world, but remain as your presence in it. Show us how to live a life worthy of our sacred calling.

Gather us into you, O Christ, that we might embody your love.

Pour upon us your grace, so we can pour out grace-filled lives. Give us your eyes that see hurt, injustice and fear, your heart that loves unconditionally, your hands that lift up the broken and your enduring Spirit that acts on behalf of this community.

Gather us into you, O Christ, that we might embody your love.

As the light kisses the damp green in our gardens each morning, we are reminded of newness, growth and possibility. May we rise from this time of prayer to be the Body of Christ in our world.

Gather us into you, O Christ, that we might embody your love.

Disciples' Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen

Affirmation of Faith

based on the *Basis of Union*, paragraph 3

We give thanks to God our maker
whose Spirit gives a foretaste
of that coming reconciliation—
vision of love and aim of history.

We are one in this same Spirit
brought together by an unseen force
bound by a hidden thread
woven within the foundation of earth.

We confess Jesus as Lord over our shared life
head over all things
the beginning of a new creation
and of the new humanity for which we hope.

We are called to serve this end:
To be a reconciling people
an instrument of love
bearing witness to Christ in the world.
Amen. May it be so.

Blessing

Be imitators of God,
and live in love, as Christ loved us
and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering to God.

Peace be to the whole community,
and love with faith,
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Ephesians 6:23, 24)