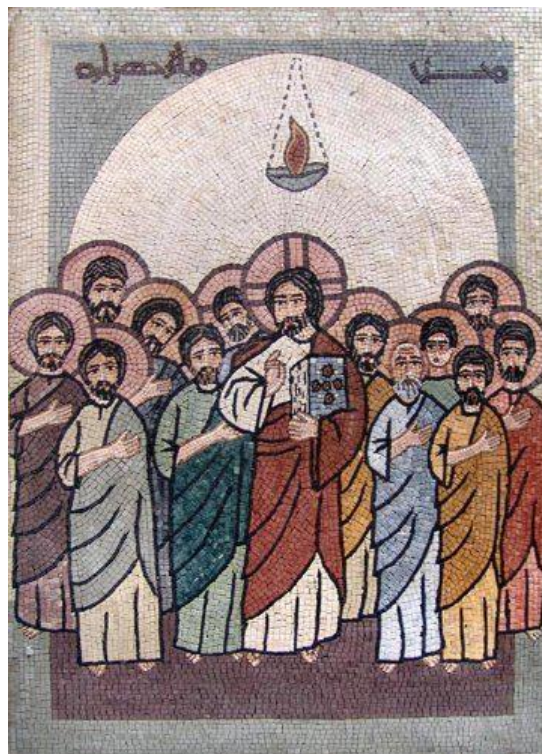


# THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(YEAR B - PROPER 21)



26 SEPTEMBER 2021

**The Holy Eucharist: Rite II**  
10:00 am



**St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church**  
500 South Country Road • Bay Shore, New York 11706

Phone 631-665-0051

Fax 631-665-0052

[www.stpetersbayshore.org](http://www.stpetersbayshore.org)



## WELCOME TO ST. PETER'S BY-THE-SEA EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*We extend a warm welcome to everyone, and especially any visitors who may be worshiping with us today.*

*If you do not already have a church home, please feel welcome to join this Parish family.*

*In the Episcopal Church, all baptized persons are welcomed to the table to receive Holy Communion.*

*Our Services begin with the Opening Voluntary. You are invited to enter quietly into the spirit of worship as the music is played.*

### — PARISH NOTICES —

**BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES ON SUNDAYS AT 9AM AND TUESDAYS AT 10:30AM.** All are invited!

**OUR STEWARDSHIP SEASON HAS BEGUN!** For the next several weeks we will be printing a weekly meditation from The Episcopal Network for Stewardship 2021 series "Every Perfect Gift." The first of these installments, printed on page 3, invites us to consider the Gift of Relationships. Each meditation this season will focus on the many gifts that we receive from God and how we might respond in thanksgiving. Commitment Sunday will be on November 28th, the Sunday in Thanksgiving weekend, and the First Sunday of Advent.

**SPECIAL EVENTS AT THE 10 AM EUCHARIST TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT THREE SUNDAYS:**

- Next Sunday, October 3: Baptism of Madison Marie Jackson, daughter of Alexandra and Patrick
- Sunday, October 10: Outdoor Eucharist with Blessing of the Animals celebrating St. Francis
- Sunday, October 17: Our Parish Choir will return to the Chancel following all established norms for singing during this pandemic period. Anyone who has not sung with the choir, but would like to give it a try should speak with Mark.

**MUSIC AT ST. PETER'S IS SET TO RETURN, TOO! THE POSTER ANNOUNCING THE 2021-2022 FALL PROGRAM FOR IS ON PAGE 13.** Close to the Edge, a concert by The Magical Orchestra will be presented tonight at 7:00pm. For more details, please see the poster on page 15. *(Please note: This program is presented under the auspices of The Magical Orchestra, Inc.)*

### — PRAYERS FOR THE WEEK —

**We pray for those who have asked our prayers:** Andrea, Ann, Annakutty, Anthony, Autumn, Ben, Betty, Betty C., Bill, Caroline, Chris, Diane, Donna, Elinor, Felix (Sr.), Gary, Greg, Hannah, Jackie, Joel, Joy, Joyce, June, Kamryn, Lorraine, Mark, Matthew, Mike, Muriel, Roger, Sarah Grace, Shanti, Sister Joy, Steve, Sue, Vincent, and William;

**We pray for those who have died;** that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom; and we pray for those grieving the death of a loved one that they may find peace and comfort.

**We pray for those in military service,** and especially for Christian, Erik, John, Robert, and Stephen;

**We pray for** the unemployed and underemployed; for all who suffer from addictions; for all who suffer chronic illness, and for all caregivers;

**We pray for** our companion dioceses of Torit & Ecuador-Central; and for mercy, peace, and justice among all peoples, especially those whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters, terrorism, war, famine, tyranny, or injustice;

**In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer** we pray for St. Gabriel's, Hollis; St. Mark's, Jackson Heights; Staff & Board of Directors of the Mercer School; Grace Church, Jamaica; Committee on Dispatch of Business; St. James the Less, Jamaica; St. Stephen's, Jamaica;

**In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer** we pray for The Episcopal Church; and these Dioceses of the Anglican Communion: Southwest Florida, Fond du Lac (The Episcopal Church); Fredericton (Canada); Free State (Southern Africa); Freetown (West Africa); Gahini (Rwanda).



# Every Perfect Gift

## The Gift of Relationships

Maria joined her nearby Episcopal Church many years ago, deeply moved by the liturgy and the way her church looked at faith and Holy Scripture. She became very active, began teaching Adult Sunday school, eventually heading up the adult Christian formation program. Then 'Life' stepped in. After going through several personal and family crises, Maria found herself attending church less and less. With her faith at its lowest point ever, Maria felt she had no place to go for help. What surprised her the most was that **no one from church seemed to notice she stopped coming.**

So, she decided to wait until someone from church called to check on her. Twice the annual pledge campaign letter arrived in her mailbox like clockwork, with pledge card duly enclosed. But the letter was always addressed, "Dear Member of All Saints Church." **Into the trash went the anonymous letter and pledge card, and Maria's relationship with All Saints Church.** What is most sad about this story, however, is that **the loss of Maria from All Saints Church was entirely preventable.** An active TeleCare ministry at her church would make it extremely unlikely that this story would ever happen.

In short, TeleCare ministry is a lay-led ministry that expresses your church's care and concern to *every member—and "permanent visitor"—on your parish membership list.* You call with one question: "We're just calling to see how you are and if there's anything you want us to pray for?" That's it. *Best of all, it's free!* All it takes is a little organization, commitment, and people who are willing to call others, to pray with them over the phone and remind them of your congregation's love for them. Such a small act upholds the care for others demonstrated in today's lesson from James, and the Gospel lesson, looking out for those new to the faith. Unfortunately for All Saints, Maria attends a different church now.

Developed in the 1990's by the Rev. David Davidson-Methot and Deacon Fran Sweet in California, **TeleCare ministry is a true form of stewardship:** It is the care and tending of **relationships.** Bestselling author Brené Brown writes, "Connection, along with love and belonging (two expressions of connection) is why we are here, and it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives." Jesus models for us the ideal of self-giving relationships, relationships based on mutual love, compassion, and respect, which is essential to being human. Elegantly simple and lacking presumption, *TeleCare ministry fosters that sense of connection* in that it is an expression of the church's love and belonging for its members.

Do you feel called to start a TeleCare ministry in your church, to prevent a story like Maria's from happening? If so, please send me an email for a free PDF that outlines a basic form of TeleCare ministry, with ideas for training callers and practice scenarios. Discover how this "phone call of love" might be just the thing your people need from their church following a year of COVID-19 induced separation and isolation. | [tens.org](https://tens.org)

*The Rev. Canon Timothy M. Dombek is Canon for Stewardship and Planned Giving for the Diocese of Arizona, Rector of Advent Episcopal Church in Sun City West, AZ, and a member of the board of TENS. He can be reached at [timothy@adventaz.org](mailto:timothy@adventaz.org)*



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Was there a time when someone contacted you just at the right moment in friendship and love? How did it change you?



THE EPISCOPAL NETWORK FOR STEWARDSHIP

# THE HOLY EUCHARIST: RITE II

## THE WORD OF GOD

Opening Voluntary *Allegro* from Symphony IV

William Boyce

Opening Hymn

*The Hymnal 1982, #477*

Christ, whose glory fills the skies

*Ratisbon*

1 Christ, whose glo - ry fills the skies, Christ, the true, the on - ly Light,  
2 Dark and cheer-less is the morn un - ac - com - pan - ied by thee;  
3 Vis - it then this soul of mine! Pierce the gloom of sin and grief!

Sun of Right-eous - ness, a - rise! Tri-umph o'er the shades of night:  
joy-less is the day's re - turn, till thy mer - cy's beams I see,  
Fill me, ra - dian - cy di - vine; scat - ter all my un - be - lief;

Day-spring from on high, be near; Day-star, in my heart ap - pear.  
till they in - ward light im - part, glad my eyes, and warm my heart.  
more and more thy - self dis - play, shin - ing to the per - fect day.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788) Music: *Ratisbon*, melody from *Geistliche gesänge Buchleya* 1524; adapt. alt. William Henry Havergal (1793-1870); harm. William Henry Havergal (1793-1870), alt.

### The Greeting

*Bishop* Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*People* And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever Amen.

*The Celebrant says the Collect for Purity*

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.**

## **The Song of Praise (Trisagion)** *(Said Three Times)*

*Bishop* Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,

**People** Have mercy upon us.

## **The Collect of the Day** *(The Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost—Proper 21)*

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

**People** And also with you.

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **The Lessons**

**The First Lesson:** Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

*Lector* A reading from the Book of Esther

The king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me-- that is my petition-- and the lives of my people-- that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king.” Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?” Esther said, “A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

*Lector* The Word of the Lord.

**People** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm 124

- 1 *If the LORD had not been on our side, \**  
let Israel now say;
- 2 **If the LORD had not been on our side, \***  
when enemies rose up against us;
- 3 **Then would they have swallowed us up alive \***  
in their fierce anger toward us;
- 4 **Then would the waters have overwhelmed us \***  
and the torrent gone over us;
- 5 **Then would the raging waters \***  
have gone right over us.
- 6 **Blessed be the LORD! \***  
he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.
- 7 **We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; \***  
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.
- 8 **Our help is in the Name of the LORD, \***  
the maker of heaven and earth.

### The Second Lesson: James 5:13-20

*Lector* A reading from the Letter of James

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

*Lector* The Word of the Lord.

**People** Thanks be to God.

### The Gospel: Mark 9:38-50

*Celebrant* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

**People** Glory to you, Lord Christ.

John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye

causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. "For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

*Celebrant* The Gospel of the Lord.

*People* Praise to you, Lord Christ.

### The Sermon

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty

### The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven:

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## The Prayers of the People, Form IV (BCP, p. 388)

*Intercessor*

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Guide the people of this land, and of all nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good. We pray especially for those in the Armed Forces: Christian, Erik, John, Robert, and Stephen;

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation. We pray especially for Andrea, Ann, Annakutty, Anthony, Autumn, Ben, Betty, Betty C., Bill, Caroline, Chris, Diane, Donna, Elinor, Felix (Sr.), Gary, Greg, Hannah, Jackie, Joel, Joy, Joyce, June, Kamryn, Lorraine, Maria, Mark, Matthew, Mike, Muriel, Roger, Sarah Grace, Shanti, Sister Joy, Steve, Sue, Vincent, and William;

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

For the unemployed and underemployed; for all who suffer from addictions; for all who suffer chronic illness, and for all caregivers;



For our companion Dioceses Torit & Ecuador-Central; and for mercy, peace, and justice among all peoples, especially those whose lives have been devastated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, natural disasters, terrorism, war, famine, tyranny, or injustice.

*Silence*

Lord, in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

*Silence*

*The Bishop says*

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **The Confession of Sin and Absolution**

*Bishop* Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Bishop* *Most merciful God,*

*All* **we confess that 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.**

**We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,**

**have mercy on us and forgive us;**

**that we may delight in your will,**

**and walk in your ways,**

**to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*Bishop* Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

### **The Peace**

*Bishop* The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People** **And also with you.**

# THE HOLY COMMUNION

## Hymn at the Offertory

*The Hymnal 1982, #609*

Where cross the crowded ways of life

*Gardiner*

1 Where cross the crowd - ed ways of life, where sound the  
2 In haunts of wretch - ed - ness and need, on sha - dowed  
3 The cup of wa - ter given for thee still holds the  
4 O Mas - ter, from the moun - tain side, make haste to  
5 fill all the world shall learn thy love, and fol - low

1 cries of race and clan, a - bove the noise of  
2 thresh - olds dark with fears, from paths where hide the  
3 fresh - ness of thy grace; yet long these mul - ti -  
4 heal these hearts of pain; a - mong these rest - less  
5 where thy feet have trod; till glo - rious from thy

1 self - ish strife, we hear thy voice, O Son of Man.  
2 lures of greed, we catch the vi - sion of thy tears.  
3 tudes to see the true com - pas - sion of thy face.  
4 throngs a - bide, O tread the ci - ty's streets a - gain;  
5 heaven a - bove, shall come the ci - ty of our God.

Words: Frank Mason North (1850-1935); alt. Music: *Gardner*, from *Sacred Melodies*, 1815; arr. William Gardiner (1770-1853)

## The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer A (BCP, p. 361)

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*The Celebrant proceeds*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Celebrant and People*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

*The Celebrant continues*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*The Celebrant continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*People and Celebrant*

**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,**

**for ever and ever. Amen.**

## The Breaking of the Bread

*Bishop* Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

*People* Therefore let us keep the feast.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **grant us peace.**

*In the Episcopal Church, Baptized Christians from any denomination may receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion.*

## The Postcommunion Prayer

*Bishop* Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## The Postcommunion Hymn

Fight the good fight with all thy might

*The Hymnal 1982, #552*

*Pentecost*

1 Fight the good fight with all thy might, Christ is thy  
2 Run the straight race through God's good grace, lift up thine  
\*3 Cast care a - side, lean on thy Guide; his bound - less  
\*4 Faint not nor fear, his arms are near; he chan - geth

strength and Christ thy right; lay hold on life, and  
eyes and seek his face; life with its way be -  
mer - cy will pro - vide; trust, and thy trust - ing and  
not, and thou art dear; on - ly be - lieve, and

it shall be thy joy and crown e - ter - nal - ly.  
fore us lies, Christ is the path and Christ the prize.  
soul shall prove Christ is its life and Christ its love.  
thou shalt see that Christ is all in all to thee.

Words: John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875). all Music: *Pentecost*, William Boyd (1847-1928)

## The Blessing and Dismissal

*The People's Response*      **Thanks be to God.**

**Closing Voluntary** Processional in D Major

David N. Johnson

### — FOR THE SERVICE —

*Officiant and Preacher*

*Lector*

*Lay Eucharistic Minister and Intercessor*

*Acolyte*

*Organist*

*Usher*

*Altar Guild*

The Right Reverend Johncy Itty

Suzanne Smith

Juanita Moon

William Logan

Mark Engelhardt

Sara Alves, Marc Johnston

Rosemary Johnson, Dawn Johnston, Irene Feola

## MUSIC AT ST. PETER'S FALL & WINTER 2021

### CONCERTS AND SPECIAL SERVICES



— SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 AT 7 PM —

#### THE MAGICAL ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

CLOSE TO THE EDGE SYMPHONIC

*Note-for-note recreations of 14 legendary progressive rock classics from the '60's and '70s including the Close to the Edge album by YES performed live by a 50-piece orchestra, and special guests Wonderous Stories, Mostly Moptop, Tommy Bowes and harpist Erin Hill.*

TICKETS: \$50VIP/\$30 ADULTS/\$20 CHILDREN

— SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7 AT 4 PM —

#### A PIANO RECITAL IN MEMORIAM

MARK ENGELHARDT, PIANO

*Performed within the Octave of All Saints'/All Souls' this concert is offered to give thanks for the lives of several parishioners who died during the past two years. The program will feature works by J. S. Bach and Claude Debussy.*

SUGGESTED: \$20/\$15 STUDENTS AND SENIORS

— SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 7:30 PM —

#### THE HOFSTRA CHORALE SEASONAL CONCERT

DR. DAVID FRYLING, DIRECTOR

— SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 4 PM —

#### LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

THE PARISH CHOIR

*The traditional Candlelight service of Nine Lessons and Carols in the style of that sung at King's College, Cambridge*

FREE WILL OFFERING

— SUNDAY, JANUARY 30 AT 2 PM —

#### ISLAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA BACH FESTIVAL CONCERT

DR. ERIC R. STEWART, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

FREE WILL OFFERING



### St. Peter's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church

500 S. Country Rd.

631-665-0051

Bay Shore, NY 11706

[www.stpetersbayshore.org](http://www.stpetersbayshore.org)





**Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22**

Esther is perhaps the most fun of all the biblical books! A hilarious cast of characters, comedic turns of fate, and a clear commendation of enjoyment make this story a delight! And, of course, the story of Esther animates the wonderful Jewish holiday known as Purim. It is remembered on this day how Queen Esther and her cousin Mordecai saved the Jewish people of Persia from the plots of the wicked Haman. Purim includes costumes and noisemakers which are sounded whenever the name “Haman” is mentioned in the text! Another Purim tradition derived from the ancient Babylonian Talmud is that Jews are to drink until they cannot tell the difference between the phrases “cursed be Haman” and “blessed be Mordecai!”

While the book of Esther conveys much wisdom and is a joy to recite, let’s focus on two brief points. First, the book does not mention God. Rather, we intuit that God is at work in events and in the characters’ choices and intuitions. Isn’t it much the same for us? Like Esther and Mordecai, we are called to discern and act in our circumstances as best we can. The invitation is to trust that God is mysteriously, quietly at work beneath the surface. What’s more, our reading concludes with a call to celebrate and enjoy! We don’t often hear such an enjoinder under the auspices of religion. Our ancestors in faith understood that life is above all a gift to be celebrated and enjoyed; that there indeed should be days of “feasting and gladness”!

- How can we make days of “feasting and gladness” a spiritual practice, as commended by the book of Esther?

**Psalm 124**

Our psalm verses this week strike themes of new life, redemption, and the trustworthiness of the Lord. Verse 8 expresses a truth that is key to the Christian journey – “Our help is in the name of the Lord.” In other words, we can’t do it on our own. Our ultimate security, peace, meaning, and future require our cooperation with God’s transformative grace. Though we value “independence” and have internalized the non-biblical teaching that “God helps those who help themselves”, Psalm 124 stands as a counter-witness to this kind of thinking. The authors of this poem lived through a trial that threatened their very survival (perhaps the Babylonian Exile). They teach us that in the experience of having nowhere else to turn but God, one is initiated into the reality of human limits and vulnerability, and also the power of God to deliver from the flood that would have swept us away (v. 4).

- How have you experienced the truth that “Our help is in the name of the Lord?”

**James 5:13-20**

James emphasizes the importance of rituals in the life of faith. The instruction to call for the elders to pray over the sick, using oil in the name of the Lord, has been interpreted in our tradition as a forerunner of the sacrament of anointing. Similarly, the teaching that we should confess our sins to one another is held as a prototype of sacramental confession. James recognizes the need for human contact through ritualized gestures. These speak in a powerful way to the human heart.

James concludes by underscoring his major theme – faith in action. Christians are called to hear the word and put it into practice. Faith in action is faith that works for the building up and preservation of the community. Although individual members of a community might be sinners, the good work to maintain the unity of the group serves to counteract, to “cover a multitude of sins” (v. 20).

- How have ritual gestures and prayers been important to your experience of Christian faith?

**Mark 9:38-50**

The metaphor of the body was a commonly used teaching tool in the ancient world, and we see Jesus take it up in our verses this week. While often used to symbolize the community (see also 1 Cor. 12), Jesus creatively uses “body” to address the matter of scandal. We might find Jesus’ language harsh, for he says in effect if a member of the community is leading others astray, that member should be removed, before the whole body is damaged. And his concluding proverb about salt is not innocuous. Salt was used in the ancient Near East as a catalyst to start fires. He is telling his audience to be confrontational at times. Verse 50 could be interpreted to mean that trouble-makers should be confronted so that the community can have peace. This passage, when read in this light, is among the “hard sayings” of Jesus. In the context of our modern church communities, we are invited to carry the

tension between protecting the integrity of the community and being compassionate toward the wayward.

- How might we go about discerning when scandal is a danger to the community, and how we might confront it?

*Brian B. Pinter is a teacher of religious studies at Fordham Preparatory School in the Bronx and a Pastoral Associate at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in Manhattan.*

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500 South Country Road • Bay Shore, New York 11706

Phone 631-665-0051 Fax 631-665-0052

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