



Trinity 18 Worship resources

One of the toughest question we face as people of faith concerned with justice and peace, is how to hold together the invitation of the Gospel with the confrontation that God's reign brings against personal and corporate sin and evil. But, as tough as it may be, we do not have the luxury of avoiding this question, and this week's Lectionary brings us face to face with it in dramatic and helpful ways.

May our worship this week invite us deeper into God's reign and confront the places in our lives where we refuse God's reign entrance into us.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Exodus 32:1-14: While Moses is on the mountain with God, the people, struggling with how long he has been gone, ask Aaron to make them gods. He agrees, takes their gold jewellery and makes a golden calf which the people then worship, even though he tries to remind them that their celebration is "to the Lord".

OR **Isaiah 25:1-9:** A song of praise to God who brings down tyrants, provides refuge for the poor and needy, brings an end to death and creates a celebration for all people on God's holy mountain, removing the shame of God's people.

Psalms 106:1-6, 19-23: A psalm of confession, remembering how God's people turned away, and traded God for an image of a calf, forgetting God's saving acts for them. Also, a recognition that God seemed intent on destroying the people, but for Moses pleading on their behalf.

OR **Psalms 23:** A song of thanksgiving and security, recognising that God cares for and guides God's people as a Shepherd.

Philippians 4:1-9: Paul encourages the Church to stand firm, to agree with one another, to live as those who await Christ's appearance, and to meditate on those things that are good, true and beautiful.

Matthew 22:1-14: Jesus tells a story about a king who prepares a wedding feast for his son, but the none of the originally invited guests want to go. So, he sends his soldiers to destroy those guests, and then he invites others from the streets to come in, but when someone is found without wedding clothes, that person is thrown out. Jesus finishes with the well-known saying that many are invited but few are chosen.

VIEW READINGS-

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=%0AExodus%2032:%201-14%0A%2BOR%0AIsaiah%2025:1-9%0A%20Psalm%20106:%201-6,%2019-23%0A%2BOR%0APsalm%2023%0APhilippians%204:%201-9%0AMatthew%2022:%201-14

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Lord, we beseech thee,
Grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh, and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee
the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty and everlasting God:
Increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Christ came into our midst saying, "The Kingdom of God has come near."
May we be bold to affirm this truth, praying likewise, "The Kingdom of God
has come near" and responding, "Amen."

For the baptised, that we might proclaim justice for those in prison and bring food to the hungry.

For the Kingdom of God has come near. **Amen.**

For the people of Ireland, that we might freely give refuge to those who come to our island home.

For the Kingdom of God has come near. **Amen.**

For those imprisoned by wealth, that they might be freed from the walls of fear.

For the Kingdom of God has come near. **Amen.**

For those in our community who are separated by unforgiveness, that they might be reconciled.

For the Kingdom of God has come near. **Amen.**

For the newly baptised, that, having received without payment, they might now give without payment.

For the Kingdom of God has come near. **Amen.**

For those who hang on to old injustices and ancient wrongs, that they might set their burdens aside and walk with a lighter step.

For the Kingdom of God has come near. **Amen.**

Give us eyes to see and ears to hear, O Christ, so that the Kingdom might be made known in our midst.

POST COMMUNION

All praise and thanks, O Christ,
for this sacred banquet,
in which by faith we receive you,
the memory of your passion is renewed,
our lives are filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory given,
to feast at that table where you reign
with all your saints for ever.

PRAYERS

You know each of us by name, O God,
and in your sight we have found favor,

yet our minds cannot comprehend the vision of your glory
or the vastness of your love.

Grant that as we glimpse your greatness,
reflected in your many gifts,
we may always return to you
the praise that is yours alone.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Creator of all,
you have called us and chosen us to be your people.
By the power of your Holy Spirit
may we bear witness with joy and conviction
to the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.

God of all who wander in the wilderness,
you go before us as beacon and guide.
Lead us through all danger,
sustain us through all desolation,
and bring us home to the land
you have prepared for us. Amen.

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.
Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.
Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,

your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.
Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbors. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.
Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.
Holy One,
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards
of the fragile bounty of this earth
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.
Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,
you who hear the cries of those in need,
receive these petitions of your people
that all who are troubled
may know peace, comfort, and courage.
Life-giving God,
heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds

and offer you thanks from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,
hear our prayers
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings
with your unending compassion.
Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

Gracious God, you call us to fullness of life: deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Common Worship

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do also for you. Give us the will to be the servants of others as you were the servant of all; for you gave up your life and died for us, but live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and formed us in your own image. Teach us to discern your hand in all your works, and to serve you with reverence and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who reigns, with you and the Holy Spirit, supreme over all creation, now and for ever. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Heavenly Father, you taught us by your Son Jesus Christ that all our possessions come from you. Help us to be faithful stewards of our time, our talents and our wealth, and to consecrate gladly to you service a due proportion of all that you have given us. Take us and make us your own; for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen**

Almighty God, as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son, help us to see and know your love for us, so that in humility, love and joy we may place at His feet all that we have and all that we are, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your people, that richly bearing the fruit of good works, they may by you be richly rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

I know what must be done. Only now am I beginning to be a disciple. May nothing of powers visible or invisible prevent me, that I may attain unto Jesus Christ. **Amen** *Ignatius of Antioch*

May God grant that we who have worshipped Him may be witnesses to Him in His world, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do also for you. Give us the will to be servants of others as you were the servant of all; for you gave up your life and died for us, but live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

O Lord, you are the beginning of all my good, the wellspring of all my love and the source of all my freedom. Let your grace work on in me, that your will may be done through me, and that I may always rejoice in your presence; now and for ever. Amen *Mary Ward, 1585-1645*

LECTIONARY NOTES

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

This week's readings are a bit startling, perhaps even shocking, at first glance. The shock is found in the rather violent way that God's judgement is portrayed, especially in Jesus' parable. However, this image must be placed in context with another theme that also emerges from the readings this week – that of inclusive welcome. Let's begin with the Gospel. Here Jesus tells a parable of a king inviting guests to his son's wedding. When the guests refuse to come, the king responds in anger and violence, but then invites those who would not normally be welcomed to come to the feast. Following the other parables of the last few weeks, this invitation is a clear indictment against the religious leaders who should have been willing to accept God's invitation into God's reign, but who refuse. The king's response in the parable must not be taken literally as God's response to the leaders, but it does serve to indicate that God does not simply accept their rejection of Christ. Then, there is the further shock of the person who is rejected for having the wrong clothes. This would indicate that entrance into God's reign requires us to adopt the "clothes" (the ways of being) of God's reign. The invitation is open to all, but we only experience God's life when we allow God's reign into us. With that as

the background, then, we can see both the invitation and the confrontation of God's reign. This is expressed through the other readings as well. In Exodus, the people, who have been rescued from oppression, turn away from God and stir God to anger. But, in the person of Moses as a kind of "conscience" for God, God remembers grace and continues to lead God's people. In Isaiah there is the song of praise for the celebration (resonant of the wedding feast) on God's mountain for all people. The Psalms echo the two Old Testament readings, revealing that, as much as God saves us, we need to remember God's grace and allow it to change us (Ps. 106), and when we do allow this, we know the joy and peace of being like sheep nurtured by a divine Shepherd (Ps.23). Finally, in Paul's letter to the Philippians, the life of grace that is possible for all those who have come into God's reign and allowed God's reign into them is described – united, gracious, expectant and focussed on the best qualities of life, all leading to a sense of God's presence and peace. So, in spite of the seemingly violent first impressions of this week's lectionary, the conclusion the readings invite us to is the peace of God which passes understanding.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: It can be hard to hold both confrontation and invitation together as we seek to follow Jesus in the world. It is all too easy to emphasise confrontation, judge those with whom we disagree, stand against our opponents and embrace some form of violence in order to achieve our goals – and then, even though our goals may be good, or in line with God's reign, we end up becoming the same as what we oppose. On the other hand it is all too easy to emphasise God's invitation, be naive about evil, and run the risk of bringing those who need protection into harm's way because the ones who threaten them are allowed to continue unchecked. It is crucial then, that we hold these two elements of the Gospel together, recognising that God's reign does not seek only to bring all people in, but seeks also to get in to all people. It is important that we follow Jesus' lead in confronting evil and those who perpetrate it. It is important that we hold ourselves and others accountable to God's standards of grace and justice and peace. However, it is also important that we follow Jesus' lead in welcoming all people, especially the excluded, marginalised and vulnerable. It is important that, like Jesus, we seek to bring grace and healing, justice and basic survival requirements to those who need it. It is impossible to work for justice effectively unless we do both. And so, this week, we find ourselves challenged to stand against systems, leaders (political, economic, or religious) and structures in the name of justice, equality and peace. We may do this by speaking out, by using our vote, or by praying and living in ways that demonstrate the qualities of God's reign. But, we also find ourselves

challenged to stand with those who are excluded, hurting, marginalised, stereotyped and oppressed. We can do this by working at grass roots level to meet the needs of those who struggle, by marching with those who protest injustice, by giving of our resources to help those in need, or by simply developing relationships with those who need to be welcomed. Naturally, both invitation and confrontation happen together – often simultaneously – and we cannot help but seek to find our peace in both modes of living out the Gospel. Grace, then, is not “soft” or “cheap”. It is powerful and transforming if only we allow Jesus to teach us how to live it.

LOCAL APPLICATION: In every community and relationship there are times for invitation and welcome, and there are times for confrontation and holding people accountable. It is not ungracious to confront abusive spouses and hold them accountable. It is not ungracious to challenge those who mistreat their workers, or to confront those who stereotype or judge others because of insignificant differences. One of the strengths of the Wesleyan revival in England was that, in the class meetings, accountability and confrontation were built into the process of coming to Christ and joining the community. On the other hand, it is not a compromise to welcome those who have been excluded, those who are different, those who need love, direction, help, basic needs or a place to belong. It is not a compromise to put relationship above law, and to stay faithful to relationships even when we disagree. The challenge of the Gospel is to learn, in our homes, our marriages, our churches and our neighbourhoods, to confront graciously and to welcome with integrity. We are called to sacrifice for others, to love others and to welcome others. And we are called to hold ourselves and our companions to the standards of justice and peace of God’s reign. It is as we learn to allow others to hold us accountable, and as we learn to graciously challenge those with whom we journey, that we learn to live as citizens of God’s reign. And it is as we forgive, include and seek to understand others that we discover the richness of God’s grace and the power of God’s reign to transform us in meaningful and healing ways. The question is whether we are willing to do the work and to face the tough realities of living in this invitational/ confrontational community that God seeks for us.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"Dress codes or radical welcome?" the Rev. Dr. J. Barrington Bates,
Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2014/09/18/18-pentecost-proper-23-a-2014/>

"Why Bother?" the Rev. Dr. Cleo LaRue, Day 1

http://day1.org/1114-why_bother

"Sermon for Proper 23," Bishop Steven Charleston, Day 1

http://day1.org/958-sermon_for_proper_23

CHILDREN

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- [Worshipping with Children](#), Proper 24, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown,
- <http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2011/09/year-proper-24-29th-sunday-in-ordinary.html>
- ["Sermon of the Week," / "Mensajes para ninos,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.
- <http://www.sermons4kids.com/>
-
- [Faith Formation Journeys](#) Matthew 22:15-22, <http://faithformationjourneys.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/children-sermon-pentecost-18a-matthew.html>
-
- ["Being a Copycat,"](#) Proper 24A, Frances Woodruff, *On the Chancel Steps*.
- <http://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2011/10/03/being-a-copycat/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

- C of I Hymnal - recommendations on C of I site were unavailable at time of posting

[The King Of Love My Shepherd Is](#)

[Praise, My Soul, The King Of Heaven](#)

[Saviour, Like A Shepherd Lead Us](#)

[Come Sinners To The Gospel Feast](#)

[We Won't Stay Silent \(Link to YouTube video\)](#)

Never Let My Hunger Die
You Are
Love And Justice
What Grace (Father To You)

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title