



## **Worship resources Trinity 13**

This is going to be a challenging week. I don't need to tell you that this week is the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. The temptation here is to allow our worship to become all about triumphalism or even (in some countries) nationalism. But, if we are to apply the Lectionary to this significant moment, we will find no room for these approaches.

Rather, this week we will be asked to listen to the tough, but life-giving Gospel message of forgiveness. It is significant that in a search for videos for this week I could find no results when I searched on Christian video sites using a combination of the words "9/11" and "forgiveness". Am I the only one who feels that there is something wrong with this picture?

May our worship challenge us to move away from seeking to end violence through violence, and lead us into the path of forgiveness which alone can bring peace and healing.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

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

#### **The First Reading - [Exodus 14:19-31](#)**

Moses stretches his hands over the sea and it opens a path for the Israelites to walk on dry ground. Then, as the sun rises and all the people have crossed, he stretches his hands over the sea again, and the waters return to their place, drowning the armies of Egypt.

#### **The Psalm - Psalm 114**

A celebration of the earth's response to God's mighty acts, and a call for the earth to tremble before God.

#### **The Second Reading - Romans 14: 1-12**

Within any church, says Paul, there will be all sorts of people, to whom different things will have greater importance than for others. In all these matters of conscience, never judge who is right or wrong, better or worse, but respect other people's sincerity.

### **The Gospel Reading - Matthew 18: 21-35**

A parable of Jesus teaches us what God is like: his whole nature is forgiveness and mercy. And just because he forgives us so much, and loves us so much, we are to show these same graces in our lives.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=Exodus%2014:%2019-31%0Acw%20Psalm%20114%0ARomans%2014:%201-12%0AMatthew%2018:%2021-35](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Exodus%2014:%2019-31%0Acw%20Psalm%20114%0ARomans%2014:%201-12%0AMatthew%2018:%2021-35)

## **COLLECTS OF THE DAY**

### **Collect One**

Almighty and merciful God,  
of whose only gift it cometh  
that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service;  
Grant, we beseech thee,  
that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life,  
that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises;  
through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Collect Two**

Almighty God,  
who called your Church to bear witness  
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:  
Help us to proclaim the good news of your love,  
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;  
through him who was lifted up on the cross,  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P Blessed Lord, You have made Your house a place of prayer and given us the name of Your Son, that we may call upon You on behalf of all who stand in need.

*(Silence for prayer.)*

P That God may awaken our hearts from death to life, from unbelief to faith, by the power of the Spirit; that we may respond with trusting hearts to the good news of the Gospel; and that the whole world may hear of Jesus' death and resurrection through our words and actions . . . *(Silence for prayer.)* Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That God may bless those who teach God's Word and those who learn it—in Sunday school, confirmation classes, and Bible study; that such learning may equip God's people to serve Him well and do His bidding here on earth . . . *(Silence for prayer.)* Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That the trials and troubles of this life may not overcome our faith; that we may remain faithful in a world ever more unfriendly to our Saviour and His Kingdom; and that God may richly bless the work of those who labor to plant the Church both here and throughout the world . . . *(Silence for prayer.)* Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That the Lord of the Church may protect and defend His Church and all her clergy, missionaries, church workers and lay leaders; that together we may partner in the proclamation of the Gospel—both in words of witness and actions of love and compassion; and that God may grant His blessing to this congregation and all her ministries . . . *(Silence for prayer.)* Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That the sick may be healed, the suffering find relief, the grieving know comfort, and the dying be given peace, according to the good and gracious will of God. . . [*especially for \_\_\_\_\_*] that God would be their help in time of need and grant them grace sufficient for their struggle . . . *(Silence for prayer.)* Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That God may grant His blessing to those who protect and care for us here, especially police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel, and the service men and women who protect us throughout the world; that God may bless our leaders and prosper the work of peace between the nations . . . (*Silence for prayer.*) Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may rejoice in the blessings God has supplied to us and use them in support of the poor and those in need; that God may move us to welcome the stranger in His name; and that God may guide us in the care of those near life's end . . . (*Silence for prayer.*) Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That through confession and absolution God may break down every barrier among us and unite us in faith and service to Him; that we may worthily assemble at the Holy Supper of our Lord; and that we may acknowledge His gifts of grace with faith to receive the full benefit of this communion in His body and blood . . . (*Silence for prayer.*) Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may delight in returning to the Lord what is His in the time, talents, material goods, and financial treasures we bring; and that we may not withhold anything from the Lord but offer it in humble service to Him and for His glory . . . (*Silence for prayer.*) Let us pray to the Lord.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

P That our heavenly Father would grant us these things and whatsoever we have asked Him for through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we trust and rely both now and forevermore.

**C Amen.**

## **POST COMMUNION**

God our creator,  
you feed your children with the true manna,  
the living bread from heaven.  
Let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage  
until we come to that place  
where hunger and thirst are no more;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## PRAYERS

God, you are the power of liberation,  
calling your servant Moses  
to lead your people into freedom,  
and giving him the wisdom to proclaim your holy law.  
Be our Passover from the land of injustice,  
be the light that leads us to the perfect rule of love,  
that we may be citizens of your unfettered reign;  
we ask this through Jesus Christ,  
the pioneer of our salvation. Amen.

Through the waters of oppression and death, Lord God,  
you led a people into the burning presence of your love.  
As you fed them in the desert,  
now feed us with the finest of wheat,  
that we may know the liberating power of the paschal feast. Amen.

Your voice burns within the depths of our being,  
O God of our ancestors,  
and draws us into your presence and service.  
Hear the cries of your people  
and speak a word of comfort,  
that we may proclaim to all the earth  
the glory of your name. Amen.

On this day of rejoicing, O God of our ancestors,  
as we gather to break the bread,  
we remember that through the blood of the Lamb  
you redeemed us  
and made us pass over from death to new life.  
Grant that, as we celebrate your mighty deeds,  
we may be one with Jesus  
in offering you this sacrifice of praise. 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 neighbors 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 neighbours,  
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.

God of freedom,  
you brought your people out of slavery with a mighty hand.  
Deliver us from our captivity to pride  
and indifference to the needs and gifts of others,  
that we may be ready to love as you have loved us,  
and to give even as we have received. Amen.

O God of Joseph and all his brothers,  
your forgiveness transcends  
whatever wrong exists between us.  
Grant us the courage to forgive others,  
and to practice reconciliation

by the kindness of our speaking,  
the sharing of our resources,  
and the honoring of your desire for good. Amen.

O Lord we beseech you, mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you. and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have the grace and power faithfully to fulfill them; Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen. *Common Worship*

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us: open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Common Worship, Shorter Collect*

O God, you bear your people ever on your heart and mind. Watch over us in your protecting love, that, strengthened by your grace and led by your Spirit, we may not miss your way for us but enter into your glory, made ready for all in Christ our Lord. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

Go before us, Lord, in all that we do, with your most gracious favour, and guide us with your continual help, that in all our works, begun and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally by your mercy obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

## LECTIONARY NOTES 1

### ***Romans 14:1-12:***

"Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions." Great advice for churchy types, no? Sometimes I think we like arguing with each other in the church and in politics more than we care about *what* we are arguing *about*. Before you get excited and think this is a passage about vegetarianism being for the weak (vegetarians rock), put it in context. Paul is talking about the then-current practice of Romans who would eat meat that had been sacrificed in worship of the gods. Some Christians took part in eating the meat afterwards, but others thought it was wrong to eat meat used in other religious rites.



Paul says somewhat "to each their own" but that whatever our own way is, our purpose, and our reasoning, ought still to be in giving praise to God. And Paul reminds us that we've got enough to worry about thinking about our own decisions without worrying about our neighbours' choices.

"Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." Comforting words - no matter what happens, we belong to God. Check out hymn 356 in *The United Methodist Hymnal* to match this text.

### **Matthew 18:21-35:**

How often must we forgive? How much do we hope God forgives us? Jesus urges us to see the questions in similar ways. Forgiveness is a great gift, and those who receive it hopefully show more gratitude than the slave in Jesus' parable.

Forgiveness is personal. When have you been forgiven? Have you received forgiveness without asking for it? When have you forgiven? When have you given it without being asked? When have you withheld forgiveness and why? How does it feel to give forgiveness? Receive it? Withhold it?

Do you think, as Jesus suggests, that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others?

Like Peter, do you ever wonder "what's the least I can get away with doing?" He seems to want to know - how much do I have to love? Is this enough? Jesus' answer is predictable and always the same: "More."

*By Beth Quick*

## **LECTIONARY NOTES 2**

### **REFLECTIONS ON THEME:**

After last week's confrontation with evil, this week's emphasis is both surprising and elegant – the focus on forgiveness is clear in the readings and is the only appropriate response to evil if we are not to become what we oppose. The parable of the unforgiving servant is the centre around which all of the other readings rotate. The related Old Testament reading moves into territory that the continuous readings were covering a few weeks ago – the story of Joseph and his brothers. In this case, though, the focus is on Joseph's forgiveness of them. Psalm 103 picks up this theme with a celebration of God's forgiveness and grace, while in Romans we approach the subject from a different angle – that of not judging those who express their faith and live out the daily ramifications of faith differently from us. The connections in these readings are all very clear. The continuous Old Testament reading (Exodus 14), and the related Psalms (Exodus 15 & Psalm

114) seem to have the exact opposite message here, though. Pharaoh and the Egyptians have offended God and enslaved God's people and the response seems to hold no forgiveness at all. Rather, there is judgement, death and the celebration of the death of the enemy. On the one hand, this need not trouble us – the continuous readings are meant to be a separate focus, and don't have to be fitted into the other readings. However, on the other hand, there is a wonderful opportunity in this contrast. If nothing else, it demonstrates how Jesus changed things, and how important it is not to lift stories like the Exodus out of their context and make them directive for us today. Rather than adopt a Mosaic attitude of violence and judgement against enemies, and a celebration of their demise, Jesus invites us to a different response to those who hurt us – the response of forgiveness and relinquishing of judgement, and of ending the cycle of violence and retribution and choosing to actively seek peace through the tough, but healing act of forgiveness.

### **CONNECTING WITH LIFE:**

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** How are the words “peace” and “forgiveness” relevant in a world of war, crime, corruption and religious conflict? Last week's focus on resisting evil raises the challenge of how to stand against injustice and destruction without becoming what we resist. This week provides a strong answer to that challenge. In the last few months the world has seen war, terrorism and judgement on a massive scale. But, perhaps more disturbing, has been the discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping, vengefulness and violence breeding more violence that has followed close behind. In the face of all this, the call to forgive is more than just a call to deal with hurt feelings. It is a radical call for peacemaking, for ending the cycle of violence, and for refusing to exact retribution even on those who hurt us. Further, this week's readings call us to re-examine how we view God (through Mosaic eyes, as a violent overlord, or, through the eyes of Christ as a non-violent peacemaker), how we view other people of faith (refusing to impose our practices and conscience on others, but giving them the freedom to find and follow God according to their own conscience – or, perhaps, even religion) and how we view ourselves (not just as those who are hurt – like the indebted servant – but as those who are capable of hurting others – as the servant did to his debtor; not just as those who must give forgiveness, but also as those who must receive it). This call for forgiveness goes against our angry, human quest for “justice” and “retribution”, it does not satisfy or heal us of the deep wounds that enemies have inflicted on us. But, it does ensure that we do not make the hurt worse, for ourselves or others or for our world. It does ensure that healing can come. And it does challenge us to take the difficult, but transforming call of the Gospel seriously. I pray that we have the courage to proclaim this in our worship this week.

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** The work of forgiveness, on an individual and community level is easy to speak about – and we often do in the Church. It is less easy to put into practice, it seems. It is disturbing when Christians are seen to act in ways that are anything but forgiving – burning the sacred books of other faiths, calling natural disasters God’s judgement on certain groups of people we disagree with, preaching judgement as if we are God’s agents and have the right to choose who is “in” and who is “out”. When we do this, we are not reflecting the Reign of God, and we are not proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather, we have become part of the imperialistic, violent system that brings so much hurt into the world. The same is true when men use the Bible to suppress and control their wives, or when parents use God as a whip to keep their children in line. The same is true, whenever Christians in dispute with one another, or with others, turn to violent words or actions, and adopt methods that create more destruction in our world and communities. Into all of this – all of the ways in which our differences and brokenness result in conflict and pain – Jesus invites us into the difficult, but life-giving, peace-making and healing work of forgiveness. The challenge is whether we are prepared to release our need to be “right” and our need for “justice” and “retribution”. In the end, the “justice” we seek is not true justice at all. It is just a feeble attempt to balance the scales in our favour. But, the result is always a cycle of more pain. And so, once again, as hard as it is, we are faced with the shocking, but unrelenting call of the crucified one to follow his example, and offer forgiveness even to those whom we may feel don’t deserve it.

## **SERMON OUTLINE 1**

### **Matt 18:21-35:- the Unforgiving Servant..**

memorable parable told by Jesus in answer to Peter’s query

**1. Forgiveness:-** Peter: *How many times?* thought he was:-

**a) good** - *how often should I forgive?*

**b) generous** - *7 times?* Jesus replied: *seventy-seven times..*

Parable - a servant owed vast sum of money - *10,000 talents* - 10 times the annual taxation of Israel...

**a) the Cry of the Man:-** *“Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.”* – a forlorn hope!!

**b) the Compassion of the Master:-** *27 out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt* - could have lost everything - *his wife & children..*

**2. Failure:-** to appreciate the greatness & graciousness of his master’s forgiveness - took it all for granted.. He found *a fellow-slave who owed him*

*100 denarii - 3 month's wages – still quite a sum but a massive disparity!  
seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe."*

**3. Forgetfulness:-** how much he himself had been forgiven - refused to heed the man's plea for mercy - *threw him into prison until he should pay the debt.* Result? the other slaves *were greatly distressed & went & reported to their lord all that had taken place* > thrown into prison..

**4. Forfeiture:-** of forgiveness - important lesson to teach..

**a) Punishment:-** *you wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me..* <sup>33</sup>*Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?"* > put in jail (34) until he should pay his entire debt.

**b) Punchline:-** v35 *This is how my heavenly Father will treat you unless you forgive your brother from your heart - cf Lord's Prayer - forgive us our trespasses*

*By Norman Porteous*

## ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

### Ministry Matters

Excellent expositions of each of the readings to stimulate thought.

<http://www.ministrymatters.com/library/#/ptrcl/4d609e6a89fbea0dca442aa9b51314b6/proper-nineteen-sunday-between-september-11-and-17-inclusive.html>

### Ministry Matters

Sermon on "The practice of forgiveness". Based on the Matthew reading, this gently encompasses 9/11 without permitting it to dominate: "Let's be very clear about what we are talking about. Forgiveness is a practice, a discipline made possible by the grace of God, not some heroic act of the will. It is something that we practice again and again, on a daily basis, until it becomes a part of who we are.

"Forgiveness is not forgetting. One cannot forgive that which is forgotten. Forgiveness involves telling each other the painful truth, not to hold something over the other person but to find a way forward that breaks the cycle of eye-for-an-eye violence in which we so often find ourselves trapped. Forgiveness is not about becoming a doormat and relishing the role of victim. Forgiveness is about being victorious, freed from the horrible things others might have done to us. Likewise, forgiveness is not a strategy for turning our enemies into our friends; it is instead a grateful response to what God has done for us. We forgive others as a way of saying "thank you" to God, who in Christ has graciously forgiven us.

“Finally, practicing forgiveness does not deny the possibility or the necessity of justice. Rather, it redefines justice, and ensures that it is God’s peculiar brand of justice we are practicing and not the retribution and retaliation that often masquerade as justice. In calling us to forgive, Jesus offers us a different kind of justice that holds open the possibility of a new future, a way through the hurt and pain that can lead to resurrection and new life. Forgiveness is about having our lives defined by the justice of God’s kingdom rather than the justice of the kingdoms of this world.”

<http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/article/entry/1589/sermon-the-practice-of-forgiveness>

### **America**

The usual basic, profound treatment by Fr John R Donahue

[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=2459](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2459)

### **Magdalene’s Musings**

A sermon on the Epistle - Unconditional welcome. Uses the plot of the film “Lars and the Real Girl” to introduce the biblical context and message.

<http://magdalenesmusings.blogspot.com/2008/09/unconditional-welcome-sermon-on-romans.html>

## **CHILDREN**

### **Sermons4kids**

God's forgiveness and our forgiving others. Needed - A large assortment of pencils with the erasers all worn off

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/over-and-over-again.html>

## **HYMN SUGGESTIONS**

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

[How Can We Sinners Know](#)

[Blest Be The Tie That Binds](#)

[Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive](#)

[Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Let There Be Peace On Earth](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[White Ribbon Day](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[History Maker](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[In Your Mercy, Lord](#)