



Worship resources

Moving on from last week's call to be agents of salvation, this week follows it up with a call to be those who confront evil – within ourselves, our communities and our world – which is, of course, a large part of what God's salvation is about!

We face another challenging week of worship this week, as we face the darkness that must be transformed within us and our world. May we not shy away from this work, but worship courageously and go out to be people of love – even for our enemies.



INTRODUCTIONS

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

The First Reading - [Exodus 12:1-14](#)

God gives Moses and Aaron the instructions for the Passover meal – for the animal that must be chosen, sacrificed and eaten, how it is to be prepared, and the way the Israelites must eat it, with urgency and ready to travel. The blood of the animal is to be placed on the doorposts of their homes so that the plague of death which comes on the Egyptians will not harm the Israelites.

The Psalm - Psalm 149

An exhortation for God's people to praise God both publicly (in the assembly) and privately (on their beds) and through their praises to proclaim and establish God's reign and overcome wicked kings and nations (Note: The sword image is a metaphorical reference to the power of the praise expressed by God's people, not a literal call to religious violence).

The Second Reading - Romans 13 : 8-14

Love sums up all commandments and rules of life. As Paul had written to other churches earlier, he now tells the Roman Christians that in this new age, the years of Our Lord, there can be no time wasted in anything that does not feed our spiritual growth.

The Gospel Reading - Matthew 18: 15-20

Jesus says that we must not be silent in the face of wrongdoing - but try not to make a big fuss about it; seek reconciliation gently. And when Christians are the catalyst for agreement and unity, there Jesus is present in his Kingdom.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Exodus%2012:%201-14%0Acw%20Psalm%20149%0ARomans%2013:%208-14%0AMatthew%2018:%2015-20

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty and everlasting God,
who art always more ready to hear than we to pray,
and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve;
Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy;
forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid,
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask,
but through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire, or deserve:
Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid,
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask
save through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

We pray for those who mourn and those who suffer – especially those who mark today an anniversary of loss or life-changing injury, and those most recently hurt by events in ————— throughout the Middle East and —————.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have power to change others' beliefs – parents and teachers, writers and preachers, charismatic individuals and those given power to wield.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have the burden of authority or leadership – Heads of State and Heads of Government, military leaders and warlords scattered across the earth, police and public servants, missionaries and aid workers.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have the equal burden of powerlessness – the poorest in the world and those who have no democratic voice, the ordinary soldier in every conflict, children treated as not yet human.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for The Church – saying unpopular things, still, after all these centuries, the same unpopular things, especially things about mercy, and love of the enemy, and the redeemability of all, and service of the whole world including the terrible parts of it.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

As we the faithful live to the Lord and die to the Lord, let every tongue give praise to God and pray for all in every danger and need.

Deacon or other leader

For *N* our bishop and *N* our presbyter/rector, for this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

Lord, have mercy.

For mercy, peace, and justice among all peoples.

Lord, have mercy.

For abundant fruits of the earth, and for safety from violent storms.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who feast and those who fast.

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick and the suffering, travellers by land, by water, and by air, prisoners, captives, and their families, and all those in desperate need.

Lord, have mercy.

For our city/parish and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all those we love.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

God of infinite mercy, hear the prayers we offer this day, and as you forgive us teach us to forgive our neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

God of compassion,
in this eucharist we know again your forgiveness
and the healing power of your love.
Grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that forgiveness and healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

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.**

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.**

Faithful God, we need your forgiveness, constantly renewing our lives,
freeing us to be a people of faith, hope and love made whole by your grace.
We pray for those struggling to forgive others; people who have had great
wrongs done to them or to those they love. Loving God, help us to forgive
from our hearts. **Amen**

We pray for those who cannot forgive themselves; people who cannot live
with the knowledge of what they have said or done. We pray for those in
desperate need of forgiveness; people torn apart by guilt or regret, their lives
in need of rebuilding. Loving God, help us to forgive from our hearts. **Amen**

We pray for ourselves, learning to offer forgiveness by absorbing hurts and
not returning them; learning to offer to all the forgiveness made known in
Christ upon the cross. Loving God, help us to forgive from our hearts. We
pray for ourselves, learning to accept forgiveness as we give our lives in faith
to you our loving Father, learning to accept the forgiveness offered by others
as we live in humble love with one another. Loving God, help us to forgive
from our hearts. **Amen**

Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary, Intercessions, Christine Odell

May you experience the breadth and length and height and depth of the
forgiving love of the trinity, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and
Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Christian Stewardship

Heavenly Father, we know that too often we focus on what is owed us rather than the great abundance that has been provided through you. With your help, we can become generous and grace-filled, using our resources as tools for ministry rather than for our own desires. Help our hearts understand how earthly wealth can be used for Kingdom work

For the anniversary of 9/11

Vulnerable God, God of the vulnerable, God who we see in the Cross of Jesus Christ, today we remember those so terrifyingly killed, those so violently bereaved, those so cruelly injured in body, mind and spirit last 11 September; as in Christ's wounds we find our salvation, so lead your suffering people through perplexity and pain to peace; show us how to overcome evil with good and, in the name of good, to rid the earth of all that disfigures your creation, all that sets at naught the value of human life, all that disables us from the love of neighbour; So help us on this terrible anniversary day to know the power of our crucified and risen Saviour and, in his power to seek the victory of love, **Amen**

A special anniversary prayer for 11 September by the Rt Revd Dr Finlay Macdonald -

God the compassionate one, whose loving care extends to all the world, we remember this day your children of many nations and many faiths whose lives were cut short by the fierce flames of anger and hatred. Console those who continue to suffer and grieve, and give them comfort and hope as they look to the future. Out of what we have endured, give us the grace to examine our relationships with those who perceive us as the enemy, and show our leaders the way to use our power to serve the good of all for the healing of the nations. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord who, in reconciling love, was lifted up from the earth that he might draw all things to himself. **Amen.**

The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold XXV

Presiding Bishop and Primate The Episcopal Church, USA

Loving God, help us to realize that true peacemaking can only become a reality in our world today if it is first a matter in our hearts. Help us to use our resources wisely in the service of others. We ask for the gifts of civility and charity so that we can treat others with respect and love. We ask for the gifts of faith and hope to strengthen our spirits by placing our trust in You rather than ourselves. We ask for the gifts of courage and compassion that will move us into action to help those in need throughout the world. We ask for the gifts of humility and kindness so that we may put the needs and interests

of others ahead of our own. We ask for the gifts of patience and perseverance to endure the long struggle for justice. We ask for all of this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Romans 13:8-14:

"Owe no one anything." Sigh. I wish someone would negotiate a deal for me with my student loan lender...

But we do owe one another love. I like that way of phrasing it – love is what is due from us to our neighbors. Have we paid up?

"The commandments . . . are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Plain enough, right?

Love fulfills the law. In this, Paul shows that the law is not abolished but fulfilled in Jesus' teachings, just as Jesus said.

"you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep." There is such urgency in this statement and in this passage. I dislike our obsession, in Paul's time and today, with the end times. But I do like a sense of urgency. What are we waiting for to get going with doing God's work? We know what time it is: time for peace. time for justice. time for grace. *Now* is the moment to wake and work. "make no provisions for the flesh, to gratify its desires." No provision? Poor Paul - so black and white sometimes in his thinking - body or spirit instead of body *and* spirit.

"salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers." - this is a good verse to plug John Wesley's idea of sanctifying grace - grace that grows in us as we become disciples. A time of conversion (justification) when we first come to 'be believers,' however we might define that, is not the end and all of our relationship with God.

Matthew 18:15-20:

What a passage with great potential for preaching in a congregation, eh? This passage talks about how to settle disputes in the community of faith. Do we ever put it into practice? Check out the policies in our *Book of Discipline*. Do our church trials follow the format Jesus suggests?

"whatever you bind" - note that these words are the same Jesus says to Peter after Peter proclaims him as Messiah in Matthew 16. Here, the authority is expanded to the whole group of disciples.

"if two of you agree," and "two or three" - Jesus is talking about the power of working together for the same godly purposes.

By Beth Quick

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

After the last few weeks in which we have explored God's salvation and our call to share it with the world, we come this week to the challenging issue of confronting evil, which is an inevitable result of our commitment to bringing God's reign into visible manifestation in our world. The Moses story leaps forward from Moses' call, to the final result of Pharaoh's failure to negotiate the Israelites' freedom – the judgement of the Egyptians and the rescue of the Israelites. Paul encourages God's people to go further than those of Moses' time by loving all people and seeking to live pure lives even in the face of wickedness. Jesus, on the other hand, brings the confrontation right into the gathering of believers, making it clear that we will face conflict and injustice inside the church as well as outside of it. Finally, the Psalms support this theme in their challenge to praise God both privately and publicly and in so doing manifest God's reign in our lives and world (Psalm 149) and in the plea for God's laws to guide our lives and for God to nurture love for God's ways in our hearts (Psalm 119). So, we are challenged this week to confront evil – within ourselves, in our communities and in the world – and overcome it with praise of God and in living lives filled with and expressing God's love.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: Overcoming evil with good – the good of love – is a seemingly naïve approach to injustice in our world, yet there are so many powerful examples of people who did exactly this. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa – the list is long and challenging. There is much evil to be confronted in our world – this goes without saying – and it takes strength and boldness to stand against it. But, as Henri Nouwen said, "If, in order to overcome the beast, we in turn become the beast, the beast has won." Herein lies the problem of Christians who take on a dominating and aggressive view of Christian influence in the world – seeking to overcome terrorism through war, violence and "shock and awe" tactics, seeking to overcome the structures of wealth and power that lead to poverty and oppression through argument, slander, corporate warfare and public attack, seeking to stop abortion by killing those who practice it, or seeking to "protect" heterosexual marriage by attacking gay marriage. In all of these situations, our actions are not those of love, or of Christlike goodness, but are those of the very systems we seek to change. We cannot bring peace by declaring war, we cannot heal poverty by destroying the rich, or empower

the weak by disempowering the strong. We cannot protect our children by killing adults, or bring security to our nation by embracing violence against the violent. We cannot protect “our” relationships by undermining those of others (irrespective of how we may feel about the morality of those relationships). No, as we seek to bring peace, justice, community, equality and responsibility into our world, we must embody the principles we preach, by loving those we oppose and seeking their well-being as well as our own and that of those we defend. And, lest we fall prey to “us and them” thinking, let us heed the challenge of Jesus to face the conflicts and disagreements we have in the Church with grace, love and compassion, even as we stand strongly against the evil that lives within us and within our brothers and sisters. It is not an easy task, nor, usually, a pleasant one, but the Gospel’s call is both an invitation and a confrontation, and our journey into Christ-likeness is about learning to embrace and proclaim both of these elements even as Jesus did.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It is a sorry state, and a massive blow to our witness for Christ, when Christians point fingers at one another, argue with one another, and treat one another with disdain and violence. It is a sorry state, and a massive blow to our witness for Christ, when Christians “circle the wagons” and throw accusations and aggressive words out at those we disagree with. In both cases we are only projecting our own evil outward, and in both cases we have abandoned the example and the teaching of Christ as we seek to confront evil in the world. As a friend once said, “The problem with the Church is not that it has a dark side. The problem with the Church is that it tries to deny that it has a dark side.” But, when we can face the evil within us – both as individuals and communities – honestly and with a true desire to change, evil is overcome. In the same way, when we can confront the evil we see in others with a genuine love for them and a concern for their well-being and that of the community in which they live and work, we will find that evil can be overcome. Sometimes, as Moses found with Pharaoh, and as so many people through history found, this loving confrontation will require us to be strong and to embrace suffering, pain and possibly even death at the hands of those we seek to lovingly confront. But, if choose to abandon the way of love and become like the evil we seek to address, we have become part of the evil, rather than a solution to it. This is as true of calling “sinners” to repentance, as it is of facing criminals, abusers or addicts. Judging others never brings change. Loving them enough to enable them to see their own goodness and nobility and desire to live into it, does. Our calling is hard, sacrificial and will often cost us dearly. But, this is the work of Ezekiel’s watchman (or woman), and of Paul’s encouragement for us to live pure and loving lives.

SERMON OUTLINE 1

Mt 18:15-20 If your brother sins against you

What course of action should be followed when disputes arise between members of churches? Arise they will... Jesus teaches about settling matters in the best way...

1. Privately 15:- *If your brother sins against you go & show him his fault just between the 2 of you* - required under the Law - **Lev 19.17.**

Seek an explanation of his action privately & settle it...

- a) chance to explain - perhaps all a misunderstanding...
- b) opportunity to acknowledge faults & apologise...
- c) time to admonish him for his fault personally & privately > results??

Possible outcome - *if he listens to you...*

Positive outcome - *you have won your brother over...*

i) Restoration - to Xian fellowship within the church;

ii) Reconciliation - bwt you & your brother Xian...

2. Publicly 16-18:- *if he will not listen* - 2 options..

a) *take 1 or 2 others along to see that every matter may be established by the testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses* - **Deut 19.15...** possibly people of authority/influence or mutual friends - or simply witnesses to the situation...

b) *if he refuses to listen to them tell it to the church*. If all this fails *treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector* - excommunicate him & so preserve peace & purity ...

3. Prayerfully 19-20:- importance of small numbers....

a) Power of God - *if 2 of you on earth agree about anything you ask for it will be done for you by my Father in heaven* – a truly wonderful promise!

a) **Presence of X** - *when 2 or 3 come together in my name there I am with them* - in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit - universally true!

By Norman Porteous

SERMON OUTLINE 2

Romans 13:8-10

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

The following excerpt was originally published in [*Whistling in the Dark*](#) and later in [*Beyond Words*](#).

When Jesus comes along saying that the greatest command of all is to love God and to love our neighbour, he too is asking us to pay attention. If we are to love God, we must first stop, look, and listen for him in what is happening around us and inside us. If we are to love our neighbors, before doing anything else we must see our neighbors. With our imagination as well as our eyes, that is to say like artists, we must see not just their faces, but the life behind and within their faces. Here it is love that is the frame we see them in.

By Frederick Buechner

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

America

Love is the fulfillment of the Law (Rom. 13:10). Fr John R Donahue pulls no punches in his critique of his church - and it also applies to any church. He begins: "Church life in the last six months has been dominated by shameful actions of some of its priests and hierarchy, and is now preoccupied (although belatedly) with protecting its most vulnerable members. The fourth of the great discourses of Jesus in Matthew (Ch. 18), called the Sermon on the Church, addresses similar issues: concern for the vulnerable, confronting sin and forgiveness."

http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2443

Ministry Matters

This is a resource provided by the US Methodist Church. Log in for free weekly sermon!

http://www.ministrymatters.com/bin_list/?this_sunday=1#axzz2WxzlwvWf

Day 1

[*"To Build a Community of Grace,"*](#) the Rev. Richard Agular
Jesus the Rabbi offers teachings as lessons to the disciples and the crowds. Jesus teaches that discipleship in Christ is to follow our Lord and build a community of grace. What does it take to build a community of grace? The Gospels are teaching manuals for building a community of grace. The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18, cites challenging admonitions. Matthew 18:15-20 addresses difficult circumstances that confront the life of a community. This

passage offers followers of Christ to respond when there appears a strange artifact, such as a bottle, which threatens to harm the community.

[http://day1.org/3152-to build a community of grace](http://day1.org/3152-to-build-a-community-of-grace)

CHILDREN

Worshipping with Children,

Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/year-proper-18-23rd-sunday-in-ordinary.html>

Sermons4kids

One plus one equals three - "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20 [NIV]. Basic make them yourself flash cards required.

[http://www.sermons4kids.com/one plus one.html](http://www.sermons4kids.com/one_plus_one.html)

Faith Formation Journeys,

Children's Sermon,

<http://faithformationjourneys.blogspot.co.uk/2011/08/childrens-sermon-matthew-1815-20.html>

On the Chancel steps

<http://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[A Charge To Keep I Have](#)

[Jesus Calls Us, O'er The Tumult](#)

[Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus](#)

[The Voice Of God Is Calling](#)

[Rise Up, O Men Of God](#) (*Could also be sung as "Rise Up, O People Of God" with a very small change to how the words fit the notes. And "brothers" in the last line could be sung as "siblings"*)

[Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You](#) (The Servant Song) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Lord, Make Us Instruments Of Your Peace](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Your Grace Is Enough](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Hosanna](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Love](#)

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