



## Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

17 July 2022

The Episcopal Church of the  
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio

Seeking to know and serve Christ in loving  
service to the campus, the community, and  
the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 10-Tract 1):

Old Testament – Amos 8: 1-12

Psalm 52 (SAID)

New Testament - Colossians 1: 15-28

Gospel - Luke 10: 38-42

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

### The Collect

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

### The Gospel

**Luke 10: 20-37**

**A**s Jesus and his disciples went on their way,  
Jesus entered a certain village, where a



woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

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### **Gospel Reflection Questions:**

- When have you felt overwhelmed?
- Why do you think Martha asked Jesus if he cared instead of asking her sister Mary to help her?

## **The Sermon**

### **Does Jesus Care?**

Does Jesus care? That is the question Martha asked in our Gospel reading today. It isn't the only time a follower of Jesus asked him if he cared. In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Mark's Gospel, Jesus and his disciples set out on a boat across a huge lake and while Jesus was sleeping, a storm emerged. High winds, heavy rain and rough waves lashed the boat, filled it with water and overwhelmed the disciples. In their anxiety and despair, they woke Jesus and asked him if he cared that they were perishing. Instead of facing the storm, they turned to Jesus and asked if he cared that all their work didn't protect them from the storm.

Their question in Mark's Gospel is not that different from Martha's question in Luke's Gospel today. We heard Martha was distracted by many tasks and asked Jesus if he cared that she was overwhelmed with work.

When we encounter the question if Jesus cares in the Gospels, it can be difficult to look at the response Jesus gave because it might make us uncomfortable. Perhaps because we already know how we prefer Jesus to respond. After all, it can be easy to relate to the overwhelmed disciples

and Martha, as there can be times we all might feel we are in over our heads, with too much to do, or too many storms of life to manage on our own. This can lead to lashing out in anger, and sometimes lashing out at Jesus with a question that is more about us than it about Jesus.

In both instances of the disciples in the boat in the storm and Martha, Jesus does not answer their question by saying he cares very much about their feelings. Instead, Jesus chastised them. Jesus chastised his disciples about their fear and lack of faith that they would somehow get through the storm. We often miss this part, or gloss over it because we tend to prefer the part where Jesus stopped the storm with a wave of his almighty hand. In Martha's case Jesus did not wave his hand to miracle away her distress, so we are given more of an opportunity to notice how Jesus chastised her for much the same reason he chastised the disciples: she was distracted and lost focus.

A lot of people struggle with this short passage in Luke's Gospel. It's easy to look at it as an attempt to pit sister against sister, and to elevate one over the other as Jesus' favorite, in part because we may have been conditioned to look at this passage through the eyes of age-old status quo standards of men maintaining certain roles and value in society and women maintaining certain roles that are of lesser value. This harmful stereotype can be very hard to overcome. Our culture is full of stories of women fighting each other for positions of leadership or the affections of a man. It is tempting to pick sides because that is what we have been conditioned to do. To root for Martha because she is the living embodiment of our work ethic. She gets things done. She embodies the value of busyness society has come to idolize and mistake for success and status. Or we might root for Mary as a proof text that women can get an education instead of being forced to a life of labor without enlightenment or advancement. We might also ask ourselves why it seems easy to dismiss Mary's embodiment of the cessation of work, to rest, and calmly focus on Jesus with so much work to do, even when Jesus calls this the better part that cannot be taken from her.

It can be difficult to imagine women working together or simply being lifted up in a story about what it means to both love God and our neighbor in real life. Yet there are quite a few scholars who suggest that is what the author of Luke was attempting in this passage.

For the record, Jesus never said he liked one woman better than the other. The better part wasn't a submissive position or keeping quiet. The better part was focusing on Jesus. There was nothing wrong with Martha's work. Martha's problem was that her many tasks were distracting her from focusing on Jesus, who was in her house, who was present with her. This lack of focus on Jesus, his response suggests, is why she was anxious.

When we look at this passage without competition, without picking sides, without shaming the women both of whom were clearly followers of Jesus, or without trying to use them to justify our own agendas, we might glimpse the good news the Gospel has for us.

Like Jesus' disciples and Martha, it can be difficult to recognize the Gospel through the distractions of our many tasks, opinions, worries, fears, sorrows, expectations of ourselves and others, pain of unhealed emotional wounds, guilt, our desires for success, changes we cannot control, or longing for a return to what we imagine used to be, and all the stuff that is our individual and collective lives.

Here is an example of how distractions can impact daily life. There was a behavioral study done on seminarians - people who are in a type of graduate program to earn a master's degree in divinity. It is often assumed the majority of people in such a program are on the path to ordination to the priesthood or diaconate. The study situation was this: the seminarians were intentionally put behind schedule and had to walk from one end of campus to the other to get to their next class. In that class they were supposed to take an important test. As they hurried to get to their destination, they came across one of their classmates lying on the ground in some sort of distress. In the study, most seminarians passed by their distressed classmate. Their reason was simple: they were distracted by being late and prioritized the test in the next class.

We have to be careful not to judge those anxious seminarians too harshly. Any academic environment can be stressful in more ways than one, as those of you who have been part of Ohio University, or any institution of higher learning, surely can relate to. The point is how easy it is to be distracted and to choose something – like ignoring a person in distress – that under other circumstances we might choose differently.

That's how easy it can be to lose focus, not of what is important, but of what grounds us as who and what we are. As beloved children of God, as those who receive God's love, and strive to love God with our whole being and love our neighbors as ourselves, what grounds us, what serves as our inner compass, what gives us our value and informs how we ascribe value to each other, is not busyness, it is not politics, it is not fame or success, it is not appearance, it is not skin color, race, gender, ability, cleverness, level of education, or life experience. What gives us our direction, our purpose, our reason for the work we do, the reason for the choices we make, is Jesus. This is not the same thing as making Jesus into what we want him to be, like asking Jesus if he cares about our anxieties.

Of course Jesus cares. Just because Jesus doesn't seem to care about our drama doesn't mean he doesn't care. Jesus cares a lot. Jesus cares about loving God and our neighbor in a world full of distractions.

This is a good lesson for us as individuals and as a church. The church as an institution can and is easily distracted by its many tasks. We can easily mistake a parish that has lots of people in the pews and lots of programs and more resources than they can spend in a year as the better ones. But even in a religious looking building where religious looking people are busy with religious type programs they can become so distracted by their building and programs, they miss the moments when Jesus is among them and lose focus. Likewise, other parishes might become so distracted lamenting the losses and changes caused by the pandemic, or the changes in society, that they can miss the presence of the Holy Spirit who is still present and calling to us. We must be careful not to mistake changes in activity or less activity for faithlessness.

In a culture that primarily values and emphasizes productivity, that dehumanizes people by rewarding those it labels “winners” and shames those it labels “losers” and is always trying to push us to pick sides, it takes courage to chose Jesus. Choosing Jesus might even sound counter-intuitive, but this choice can inform our personal and community choices. Like wearing a mask in a pandemic to protect the vulnerable among us from an air born virus so they can participate as freely as possible in public places. Like continuing to find ways to feed people in our community, even those who are not students, as costs soar. Like offering people a place to pray and grieve to help their healing process. To refrain from making that harsh comment on social media because it while it might have made you feel good for a fleeting second it could hurt someone else, driving them further away and more deeply entrenched which doesn't help anyone. To forgive yourself and others. To give yourself time to study and reflect on the scriptures. These are just a few ways we let Jesus, or the Holy Spirit influence our work, our actions, our choices, and how we live our lives both outside and inside the church as beloved children of God.

While such choices require courage, choosing Jesus can also bring hope and joy into our lives and be a source of peace even in troubled times. Such witness not only shows Jesus does care about the world and our relationship with God, it is the good news of the Gospel, the better thing no one, not an enemy, a friend, family, leaders, institutions, illnesses, diseases, the Covid-19 virus and its variants, or anything of heaven or earth can ever take away from us. In Jesus we find the joy and hope that binds us together with God and each other in love and the courage required to keep working for a better day for all people.

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**Sermon Reflection Questions:**

- What are some things that are distracting you from focusing on Jesus right now?

- There is a spiritual practice called a breath prayer that a person can pray throughout the day. The purpose of the breath prayer is to help them focus on Jesus and not get distracted. One breath prayer is to pray silently "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy" as you breathe in and pray silently "on me a sinner." As you breathe out. Another breath prayer is from Julian of Norwich. You silently say the words "All shall be well (breathe in), all shall be well, (breathe out) all manner of thing (breathe in) shall be well." (breathe out). Why not try adding a prayer like this to your daily life and see if it helps keep you focused on Jesus?

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**The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, 17 July  
2022**

### **Please include in your prayers**

**In our world,** we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, we pray for the community of Uvalde, Texas, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

**In our diocese,** In our diocese, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

**In our parish,** we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community. We pray for our friends at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Merida, Mexico.

**Those Whom our Prayers are Requested:** Bud and Carol, Chris L., Gloria R., Miriam, Sharon, T.C. , Dana Carlson, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Richard DeNune, Roy DePue, Nona Forbes, Jan Gault, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, Peter Kachenko and family, Julie Nehls, Donald and Junie Oney, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Marsha Reilly, Virginia Richards, Michael Vaughn, Emily Woolsey and we pray

for all who care for them. \*\*

**Anniversary:** Suellen and Preston Denton (7/17)

**Altar Flowers:** The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Louise Burton. (see above)

\*\* Full names are normally not published online but since the prayer list is not printed for the in-house 10:30 service, we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or [grahammowery@aol.com](mailto:grahammowery@aol.com).

## At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccc/join-online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

## Calendar

### Coming Up:

**Thursday, July 21, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting**

**Sunday, July 24, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Wednesday, July 27, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's**

**Sunday, July 31, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Sunday, August 7, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Sunday, August 14, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

**Thursday, August 18, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting**

**Sunday, August 21, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**

CrossRoads Café is open after the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service.

## Notes & Announcements

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### Opportunity for Connection

Just for the readers of the Sunday emails, we are adding reflection questions after the Gospel and the sermon. You do not have to answer these questions. They are intended to give you more to think about throughout the week, if you want.

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### Discretionary Day

July 17 is Discretionary Sunday, all financial gifts given today that are not designated as pledge or for another ministry to go to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. This fund is available for Mother Deborah so she can help people in our community. Sometimes she helps provide a hotel room for someone who has been evicted, other times she might purchase a Bible for someone who reaches out to her. For checks, please send to the Church of the Good Shepherd, 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701 and write "Rector's Discretionary Fund" on the memo line. Or visit our website [www.chogs.org](http://www.chogs.org) and click the "Donate" icon. Thank you for your generosity!

[Supporting Humanitarian Response to the Crisis in Ukraine](#)

**Episcopal Relief &  
Development**  
(Click above link for more.)



The two places illustrated in these two photos could hardly more different in size and location. First are buds within a cluster of daisies, second is of a nebula light years away curtesy of the NASA Webb telescope. Most commonly we think of 'nursery' as a room for special use of young children or for starting infants on their life destiny, or in horticulture we think of 'nursery' as where young plants are cultivated and until they are planted for their own place of destiny, or in astronomy the place within a nebula where gas and dust are contracting to form new stars is described as the 'nursery'. It amazes me how 'nursery' specifics may vary so widely, but the beauty and underlying 'nursing' drive is universal. (Ted Foster)





## Contacts, Information

### Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines](#)  
and [Back Issues](#)

[Diocese S Ohio](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

### Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines for returning to in-person worship](#)

**In light of local conditions we request all persons wear masks inside the church building regardless of vaccination status.**

**Office Hours:** 10:00 a.m.– 2:00 p.m.,  
Monday through Thursday.  
Masks are required.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but

**Episcopal  
News Service**

**Episcopal Café**

during office/CrossRoads hours the  
**thrift shop** and **chapel** are  
available for individuals.  
Masks are required.

**CrossRoads Café** -- Join us Sunday  
after the 10:30 service.

## Contact Information

**For pastoral needs**, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at [revdebwoolsey@gmail.com](mailto:revdebwoolsey@gmail.com).

**To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters**, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at [macbuck@yahoo.com](mailto:macbuck@yahoo.com).

**For maintenance matters**, please leave a note at the office or contact Dana Carlson, Junior Warden, at 740-664-2022 or by e-mail at [carlsondana@hotmail.com](mailto:carlsondana@hotmail.com). **For emergencies**, please call The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895.

**NON-emergency messages** can be left on the church's answering machine (740-593-6877). The parish office administrator is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or [barbara@chogs.org](mailto:barbara@chogs.org).

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64 University Terrace, Athens OH 45701  
740-593-6877  
[chogs@chogs.org](mailto:chogs@chogs.org)  
[www.chogs.org](http://www.chogs.org)

### [DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

This takes you to the Parish Home page where you can donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation -- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

Check out the Church's [YouTube Channel](#).

LIKE us on Facebook  
[Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd 45701](#)

### **Office Hours:**

10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Monday - Thursday

Masks are required.