



Third Sunday After Pentecost

26 June 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](#)

The Lessons

Lessons for the Third Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 8-Tract 2): I Kings 19: 15-16, 19-21; Psalm 16 (SAID); Galatians 5: 1, 13-25, Luke 9: 51-62.

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel

Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for Jesus to be taken up,



he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

The Sermon

Sweet Fruit

No one likes rejection. It doesn't feel good, it can be disappointing, and sometimes can cause anxiety. But rejection is something all of us experience in our lives. It is not getting a job you applied for, or someone not listening to an idea or advise you gave, or a method of payment refused by a vender. There are deeper types of rejection. Like when a family rejects one of their own for having a different belief, religion, sexual orientation, or political affiliation. Or when a leader is rejected for making people uncomfortable. You get the idea, there are all kinds of rejection and they all can make us feel bad. And no one likes feeling bad.

Those bad feelings can manifest in the bitter and rotting fruit of vengeance and wanting to make everyone else feel bad by causing harm and pain. Hurt people, it is said, hurt people. That is how cycles of violence, toxicity, and abandonment continue to harm individuals and systems. But there are other ways to respond to rejection that can break that cycle of harm.

That is what we see in today's Gospel where Jesus was rejected. This is not the only time Jesus experienced rejection in the Gospels. Not everyone Jesus encountered was impressed by him or wanted to follow him. We heard in the Gospel last week how the people of a community were terrified of Jesus after they saw him liberate a man from the demons that had oppressed him. The people were so afraid they asked Jesus to leave.

Today's rejection is different. Before Jesus could do any miracles or tell a single parable, before he even arrived in a village in Samaria, the people who lived there rejected him. The Gospel says it is because he had his face set toward Jerusalem. Some scholars say this is simply a reminder that Samaritans followed a different type of Judaism and they worshiped God in a different place. When they learned Jesus was not of their kind of religion, they rejected him. Maybe that is the reason. Others suggest a more Christological reason as the author of Luke's Gospel is alluding to Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection by saying his destination is Jerusalem and nothing will persuade him from altering his course. Not everyone thought Jesus should go where he would be in danger, they wanted him to follow a different path, one that would lead to a life of success, wealth, and power. Maybe that is the reason.

I believe the reason for the rejection isn't as important as how Jesus responded to it. Because rejection of Jesus is something the author of Luke wove throughout the Gospel, starting with Jesus' birth and how there was no room which is why he was born in an unusual place. Jesus was born into a world that didn't really want him because people preferred the world's brokenness, its love of power, wealth, and violence more than they loved God and each other. With rejection playing a role in Luke's Gospel, it is essential to notice how Jesus responded to it because it can teach us about God and ourselves.

Jesus did not respond to rejection with anger, throwing a fit, blaming those who rejected him, or vowing to seek vengeance. Neither did Jesus respond with anxiety nor did he try to change to conform to what he thought people wanted from him. He didn't apologize for failing to meet their expectations. He responded by accepting the rejection and moving on, even when his disciples had a different suggestion.

Notice in today's Gospel when two of Jesus' disciples, James and John, suggested calling down violent destruction to the people who rejected him, which is most likely a response that speaks to the anger and insult they must have felt, Jesus rebuked them. He not only said no, but he also rebuked their suggestion, which means violent punishment is not what Jesus is about. Jesus came to break the cycle of violence, not perpetuate it.

Jesus is not a bringer of more violence into a world that is all too familiar with it. Jesus brings healing that liberates us from violence.

This is an important lesson for Jesus' followers in the Gospel and for us who follow him today. The world, it seems, doesn't appear to change much over the years as there continues to be acts of violence like public shootings that result in trauma and the loss of life. In the wake of the Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* there have been reported threats of violence to both progressive and conservative churches. These threats come from deep emotional pain and fear and only perpetuate harm instead of creating peace and hope.

Today's Gospel along with our reading from Paul's letter to the Christians in Galatia remind us that although the temptation of violence is a common response to pain, there is another way. The way of Jesus. The way summed up in the 9 fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Let's take a closer look at these fruits.

Love. Jesus loved even those who rejected him. That doesn't mean he always did what they wanted. But it does mean he listened and accepted their rejection like he did with the two people he invited to follow him in today's Gospel. **Joy.** Joy is not feeling exuberant happiness, it is feeling God's presence no matter what happens. It is what keeps Jesus from acting out in rage. **Peace.** Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to ride out conflict trusting God is present no matter what happens and helps us to be patient even in turbulent times. **Patience** is waiting trusting that God's will eventually will be done. Patience is how we can endure setbacks and respect the dignity of every human being, especially those who we disagree with. **Kindness.** I ask you all to be kind with yourself and each other while we endure the ever-present pandemic. Kindness is making the generous assumption we are all doing the best we can at the moment, which in turn can help us be patient. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are connected, they flow into each other and out of each other like the Spirit itself, giving life and strength. Like **generosity.** Generosity is more than sharing resources. It is trusting each other with what and who we love, which means trusting each other with our hearts and souls as much as what we value like the books we lend each other. We can be generous in part because of **faithfulness.** Faithfulness is more than steadfastness. Faithfulness is what Jesus was talking about when he said the Son of Man has no where to rest, unlike foxes and birds. Faithfulness is a form of perseverance, holding on to what is important, like following God, and letting go of what is not. Faithfulness is how we can all grow when we make changes in personal beliefs. Like how my parents changed from being opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood to being supportive of women's priestly ministry and leadership. This change helped them grow closer to God and each other which is why it is an example of the practice of being faithful and proves that sometimes being faithful to God means changing long held beliefs. **Gentleness** is one of my favorite fruits of the Spirit and I wish it was practiced more often. There is so much in the world that is harsh by nature like extreme heat and cold, and severe storms. There is a lot of harsh rhetoric in the media. Sometimes we face harsh realities with our health or bodies. In a world that can be harsh, gentleness is a refreshing expression of God's renewal of life. Gentleness can be a soothing balm to the anger that never seems to take a break. Gentleness can be the stuff that builds trust and gives hope because it is the opposite of causing harm and destruction. If you know someone who is hurting or angry or afraid, try being gentle with them. If you are hurting or angry or afraid, try being gentle with yourself. This might require some **self-control**, which is another fruit of the Spirit. Self-control is the practice of considering how our words or actions might reflect the love of God before we speak or act.

All of these fruits of the Spirit are what we can practice instead of the temptation to cause harm or blame when we are hurt like after experiencing rejection. These fruits are not out of reach, they are not goals we must work toward. They are already ours; they are gifts we have been given by the Holy Spirit and through the presence of the Holy Spirit can participate in. That is why Paul calls them fruits. Unlike the bitter fruits of rejection, the fruit of the Spirit is full of the divine nourishing sweetness of God's healing, liberating love. When we accept and practice these ways of Jesus, we help break down those bitterly painful cycles of violence and harm and abuse by rebuking fear and vengeance and create a bit of hopeful sweetness of God's Kingdom of healing love for all people.

This work and practice never ends. Which is why we need to remember living by the fruits of the Holy Spirit is not just how we treat others; it is also how we treat ourselves. For when we work together, when we share the work, it feels less like a burden and more of a joyful connection of God in the world with us that can bring hope to those who need it, want it, and will receive it.

The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, the Third Sunday after Pentecost, 19 June 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 also for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and 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, Norm Fox, 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 and we pray for all who care for them. **

Anniversaries: Bob and Sally Spero (6/28), Mac and Bethany Callison (6/30)

Birthday: Jeroch Carlson (7/2)

****** 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.

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/ccj/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:

Sunday, June 26, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, June 29, 12:00 noon - - Prayers on the Porch

Sunday, July 3, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

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

Wednesday, July 13, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's

Sunday, July 17, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

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

During June CrossRoads Café is open Mon-Fr 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon and Sundays after church.

Notes & Announcements

Mother Deborah will be in Columbus Tuesday morning (June 28) for an endodontist appointment. She is still available via text and email.

Prayers on the Porch Wednesday at Noon in June

June 29 is our last Wednesday noon day prayer service. If you cannot join us in person, we invite you to pause wherever you are and pray for whatever is on your heart and mind.

The Rector's Response to Overturning Roe v. Wade June 24, 2022

The most important thing for all of us to remember is that the value of any and every human being comes from being a beloved child of God, made in God's own image. This is so crucial that I am going to repeat it: ***Our value comes from God.***

The work and ministry of the church and followers of Jesus must always come from this taproot of our faith. We don't put food in our Cabinet of Sharing because we are better off than some people and feel sorry for them. We put food in our Cabinet of Sharing because all of us are beloved children of God and every human being needs to eat. When the flawed systems we humans have created fail, then we step into the gap created by that failure and fill it as best we can. Because humans are more valuable than the systems we make. Likewise, the equality we strive for is rooted in the belief that all people have value because all of us are beloved children of God.

I have observed that making laws to protect the rights of any person does not guarantee people will follow those laws. Loopholes can bypass laws and other laws can be made to override the intention of original laws. Law change. That is why we need to be careful not to mistake believing our value comes from laws.

A Musical Parable: The title song from the musical *Camelot* declares the fantasy kingdom of Camelot is good – the perfect place for a happy ever after – because King Arthur made it the law stating when seasons can begin and end. Winter doesn't start until December. Spring begins in March. Summer goes

into September. These laws make for charming song lyrics meant to convince a reluctant Guinevere she'll be happy in such a place because no matter what happens, it will always be a good day. But the story does not go that way. Sometimes it snows in November. Some things cannot be governed by human beings, even kings. This does not mean Camelot is bad. It just means Camelot – like every human institution - has flaws. But it can always be made better.

In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to reverse Roe vs. Wade there has been a lot of emotional reactions. There are some celebrating because they believe it is good that rights have been given to the powerless. There are some who are furious because they believe this is bad and backward movement for women. There are men and women who are afraid rights will be taken away. There is a lot of fear that has nothing to do with abortions. There is a lot of angry blaming going on. Some people are blaming religion for this moment in American history. There have even been reported threats of violence against places of worship – both conservative and liberal. It's a mess that threatens to take lives, not give them.

Instead of adding to the mess, I invite you to take a different approach with me.

There is a woman I never met but I was present in a moment that deeply impacted her life. I think of her often and hesitate to share her story because I don't know who she is, and I don't know how things turned out for her. I don't know her name or what she looks like. I don't know her age or her economic status. I don't know her skin color or her political affiliation. All I know is she is a young woman who four years ago was a student at OU.

On one of those gorgeous October days in Athens, I was sitting in the ER at O'Bleness with Michael who was experiencing extreme abdominal pain. There were other people there. Because those hospital blue curtains are so thin, it was impossible not to hear what was happening around us. To our right was a young child who was suffering from a chronic illness, it was obviously not their first time in the ER. Their family was there, siblings doing homework, and dad and mom discussing how they would handle dinner. To our left was a young woman who had brought herself to the ER because she thought she was having a panic attack. She was alone.

As I am wont to do, I prayed while I sat in the ER. All I could do was wait, listen, and pray. I prayed for Michael who was about to pass a kidney stone. I prayed for the family living with chronic illness. I prayed for the medical staff. And I prayed for the young woman who was alone.

My stomach sunk when I watched the hospital chaplain and social worker walk past us. I knew where they were going. And I knew what their presence meant. The young woman on the other side of the curtain was going to get a difficult diagnosis, so difficult the hospital provided people to be with her. Which only accentuated her aloneness.

I had overheard the questions the doctor and nurses asked the young woman when she came in. They asked about medications, they asked about hydration and food she had eaten. They asked when her last period was. Her reply was her periods were not regular and it is normal for her to go multiple months without menstruating. She also said she hadn't had sex, so she had ruled out pregnancy.

That is why the diagnosis the doctor had for her was so difficult. She was pregnant.

I can still hear her sobs as she struggled to comprehend the terrible truth that she had had a sexual encounter she couldn't remember. And this made her even more alone than she was before.

It is really easy to go down the path of blame. But blaming only serves to distance us from an uncomfortable situation. It dehumanizes and therefore devalues the young woman and us.

Instead, if we step back and see this woman as a beloved child of God, compassion can enter the moment. She alone had to make a decision that would impact her life. I don't know what decision she made. I hope somewhere she had a loving support team of family friends and a church, but I don't know. I don't know her ending. All I was given was the privilege of being silently, invisibly present in that one moment in her valuable life. Maybe so I could share it with you. Not to exploit her, but that somehow, she is less alone and maybe so we can all recognize God is not absent.

I am trusting you with this precious, intimate moment in the life of a beloved child of God, a human being made in God's own image so you can live into your own belovedness and **love her**. She is real. Her realness and her value transcend all our laws and judgmentalism. She doesn't need pity and she doesn't need a patronizing "bless her heart." The truth is, we need her. Life is not linear, it changes. That is why the fantasy promised in *Camelot* is just that: a fantasy. Life has moments that look like progress moving forward and moments that look like going backward and any moment can be both of those things. We cannot see all that is at one time. We can only be present to the moments we are privileged to share with each other and God who is in every moment with us.

I don't know how you are feeling in this moment. If you need to talk to someone, I hope you remember I am available. Whatever feelings you have, I hope you remember no person's value comes from a law. You and all people are valuable because you and every person is made in the image of God. No matter what happens next, we can step up and care for each other, and we will continue to strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being because that is the choice love makes.

Many Blessings,

Mother Deborah

**In this 'field of dreams' for bees,
not many bees but lots of other critters.**



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

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



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

CrossRoads Café -- Join us weekday mornings 9:30 am - 12 noon and Sundays 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.

To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior

[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

Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at
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. **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.

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Office Hours:

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

Masks are required.
