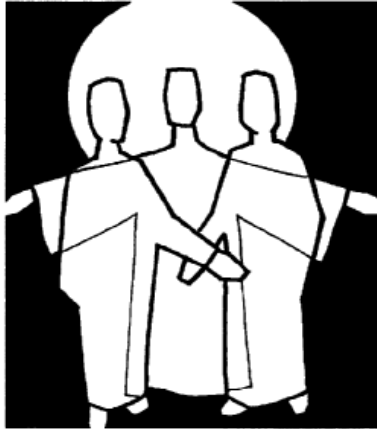


Sermon

September 6, 2026

The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost:

Proper 18



The Holy Eucharist:

**The Liturgy for the Proclamation
of the Word of God
and Celebration of the
Holy Communion**

Gloria Dei Episcopal Church

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The Liturgy of the Word

Blessed are you, holy and living One.
You come to your people and set them free.

Collect for Purity

***Hymn of Praise:* The Hymnal, 1982, # 376**

- 1 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.
- 2 All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
field and forest, vale and mountain,
blooming meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.
- 3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother:
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

Collect of the Day

Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Collect appropriate for Labor Day

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel :

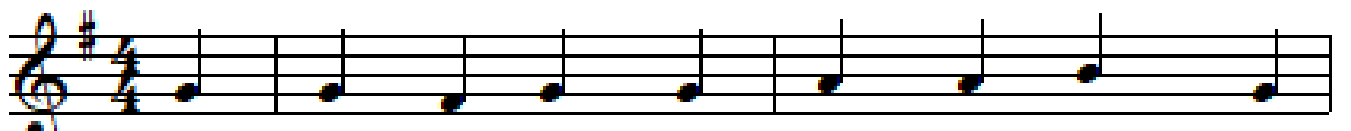
So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

(Over)

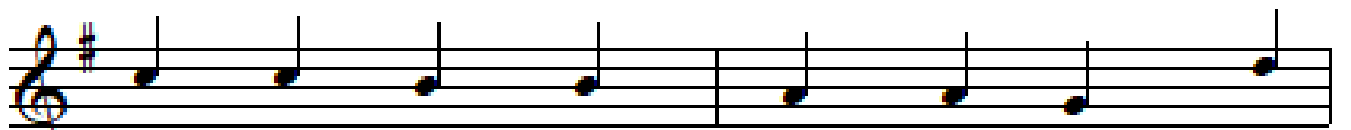
Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: "Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

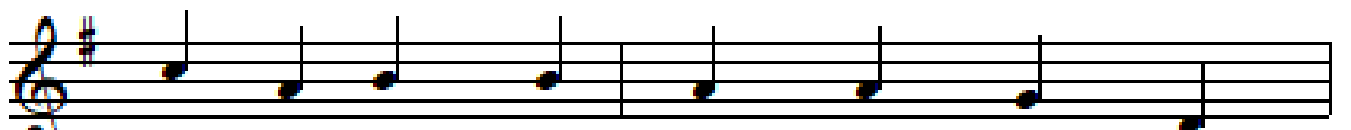
Gradual Psalm 119:33-40 Organ only --contains extra verse



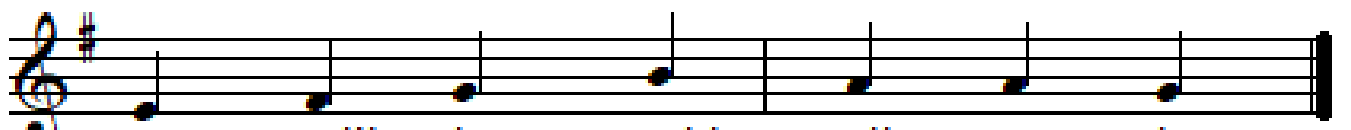
1. E - ter - nal Lord, teach me your way, And
 2. En - gage my feet up - on the path Of
 3. En - dow me, in your ways, with life, And
 4. Ex - pose me not to dread re - proach, For



1. I will fol - low for my part; En-
 2. your com - mand - ments, hear my plea; Ex-
 3. turn my eyes from sin and shame; Es-
 4. all your judg - ments, Lord, are right; E-



1. - ab - le me to know your law, Which
 2. - pel all love of un - just gain, In-
 3. - tab - lish now the pro - mise, Lord, You
 4. - ter - nal Lord, pre - serve my life, For



1. I will keep with all my heart.
 2. - cline my heart to your de - cree.
 3. make to those who fear your Name.
 4. your com - mands are my de - light.

This is the song of the people of God. *Thanks be to God.*

A reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

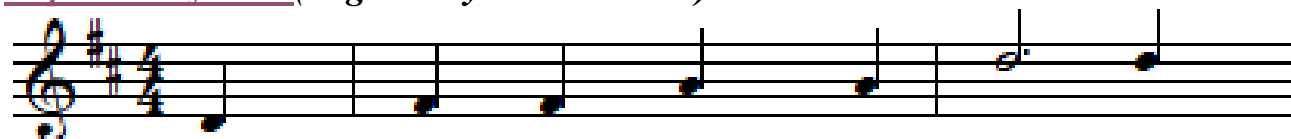
Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself."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

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn (Organ only--Extra verses)



1. God, give us peace that lasts not
2. God, give us love that lasts, which
3. God, give us hope that lasts through
4. And all these things we ask in



1. though the fear of might, but
2. makes of strang - ers guests; which
3. pas - sion and through pain, through
4. know - ledge of your grace which



1. through the force of love and love of life and
2. start - les hurt with hope and for the weak pro-
3. dan - ger, doubt, and death till life is raised a-
4. gave the earth its birth and bore a hu - man



1. right, where cost - ly wars and wea-pons lure, show
2. - tests: what hate or guilt - i - ness em - boss, con-
3. - gain. When dread and pes - si - mi - sm loom, di-
4. face; and with our prayers we give our word to



1. us our Lord a - mong the poor.
2. - front with Je - sus and the cross.
3. - rect us to the emp - ty tomb.
4. serve and fol - low Christ our Lord.

The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ
according to St. Matthew: *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. *(Over)*

If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

The Sermon

Awaken our hearts and minds to your Word, O God. Give us understanding so that, by the power of your Spirit, we may be able to do all that you have commanded for love's sake. Gathered in Christ's name, gathered around the Word, we come to you +.

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the Law in its entirety.” Paul goes on to list some of the commandments delivered on Sinai—they all fall under one heading: Love your neighbor as yourself.

When questioned as to which of the commandments of God are the most important, Jesus responded with similar words—love God with all you are and all you have, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.

The primary New Testament word for love is *agape*, the patient and kind love of I Corinthians 13, the more excellent way that does not seek its own interests, brood over injury, or rejoice over wrongdoing, but bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Without it, Paul says, all the marvelous spiritual gifts that he has enumerated in the previous chapter, are utterly worthless. Indeed, human love, if not undergirded by *agape*, can become idolatrous or abusive and therefore sinful.

We are to be motivated by love even in our conflicts one with another. When Jesus tells us to respond to insult or injury in a positive manner, one-on-one, with escalating efforts at resolution as conflict intensifies, seeking collaboration as needed, he is telling us to value each other and our relationships above zero-sum one-upmanship, cherished animosities, and tactics of avoidance which (air quotes) “forgive” in order to avoid conflict and the hard work of compromise and reconciliation.

And when the final verdict is that someone is to be treated as a Gentile and a tax collector? **(Pause)** Jesus healed a Roman imperial officer's servant, delivered a Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter from demonic torment, and sought a drink of water from a Samaritan woman. And remember that our author, the Apostle Matthew, was collecting taxes for the Roman Empire when Jesus found him and called him to discipleship.

Jesus also told us "if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go. First make things right with your brother or sister, and then come back and offer your gift."

(Mt 5:23) The Invitation to Holy Communion in Rite I is directed at "you who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, *and are in love and charity with your neighbors* and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways" (BCP p. 330, emphasis mine). The Peace, to some extent, carries the same message, as a gesture incorporating our relationships one with another, our unity as the Body of Christ, into of our offering of "our selves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

We were created to reflect the image of the God whose very nature is love, and to discern the image of God in those around us. Our relationships, with their widely varying degrees of intimacy, are God's precious gift to us and to others. The Baptismal Covenant, the basis for our discipleship and for our corporate existence as the Church of Christ, stipulates that we are to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors ourselves, and to strive for justice and peace among all people, with respect for the human dignity of all God's children, from the greatest to the least.

The 18th chapter of Matthew's Gospel begins with an inquiry from the disciples about relative status in the kingdom—who is greatest? Jesus responds by holding up a child as an example, then describes the fate of anyone who causes one of these “little ones”—not just children, but all of the least, the last, and the lost, to sin—the consequences involve millstones and the depths of the sea. After the rather harsh sayings about cutting off hands and plucking out eyes to avoid sin and eternal fire, comes the parable of the lost sheep. That is the setting for today's passage, creating an atmosphere of concern for the vulnerable, and a profound desire that none be lost.

The stated mission of the Episcopal Church is “to *restore* all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.” (BCP p 855) When we find ourselves at odds with one another, the loving response is to get to the bottom of the problem, forsaking animosity and relating to the other as a child God, whom God loves as much as God loves you, whose sins Jesus took to the cross along with mine; enlisting the advice and counsel of others as needed, and holding fast to the desired outcome declared in today’s Gospel—to regain a beloved brother or sister.

You will find more information on what C. S. Lewis called “The Four Loves” in the back of your booklets.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

Prayers of the People

Let us pray with confidence to the Lord, saying,
“Lord hear our prayer.”)

O Lord, guard and direct your Church
in the way of unity, service, and praise.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Give to all nations an awareness
of the unity of the human family.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Cleanse our hearts of prejudice and selfishness,
and inspire us to hunger and thirst for what is right.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Teach us to use your creation for your greater praise,
that all may share the good things you provide.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Strengthen all who give their energy or skill for the healing of
those who are sick in body or in mind.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Set free all who are bound by fear and despair.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant a peaceful end and eternal rest to all who are dying,
and your comfort to those who mourn.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Ask for other concerns on our hearts and minds.

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ in his earthly life shared our toil and hallowed our labor: Be present with your people where they work; make those who carry on the industries and commerce of this land responsive to your will; and give to us all a pride in what we do, and a just return for our labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Confession of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Officiant and People together

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Absolution

The Peace

The Liturgy for the Celebration of Holy Communion

The Offertory

The Celebrant begins the Offertory with a sentence of Scripture. Offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts, are presented and placed on the Altar.

Offertory Hymn: The Hymnal, 1982, # 546

1 Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
and press with vigor on;
a heavenly race demands thy zeal,
and an immortal crown.

2 A cloud of witnesses around
hold thee in full survey;
forget the steps already trod,
and onward urge your way.

3 'Tis God's all-animating voice
that calls thee from on high;
'tis his own hand presents the prize
to thine aspiring eye.

4 Then wake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
and press with vigor on;
a heavenly race demands thy zeal,
and an immortal crown.

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer F

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you and we bless you,
holy and gracious God, source of life abundant.

From before time you made ready the creation.

Your Spirit moved over the deep
and brought all things into being:

sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters;
and every living thing.

You made us in your image,
and taught us to walk in your ways.

But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away;
and yet, as a mother cares for her children,
you would not forget us.

Time and again you called us
to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels
in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity,
lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing



The Celebrant continues

Glory and honor and praise to you,
holy and living God.

To deliver us from the power of sin and death
and to reveal the riches of your grace,
you looked with favor upon Mary,
your willing servant,
that she might conceive and bear a son,
Jesus the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us.
He broke bread with outcasts and sinners,
healed the sick,
and proclaimed good news to the poor.
He yearned to draw all the world to himself
yet we were heedless of his call to walk in love.

Then, the time came
for him to complete upon the cross
the sacrifice of his life, and to be glorified by you.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing the wine to be consecrated.

On the night before he died for us,
Jesus was at table with his friends.
He took bread, gave thanks to you,
broke it, and gave it to them, and said:

“Take, eat:
This is my Body, which is given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.”

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine.
Again, he gave thanks to you,
gave it to them, and said:

“Drink this, all of you:
This is my Blood of the new Covenant,
which is poured out for you and for all
for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this for the remembrance of me.”

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation,
and remembering Christ, crucified and risen,
who was and is and is to come,
we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine,
and ourselves, a living sacrifice.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts
that they may be the Body and Blood of Christ.
Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth
and make us your new creation,
the Body of Christ given for the world you have made.
In the fullness of time bring us,
with [_____ and] all your saints,
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
to feast at the banquet prepared
from the foundation of the world.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
to you be honor, glory, and praise,
for ever and ever. *AMEN.*

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,





The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Alleluia! ***Alleluia!***

God was in Christ
reconciling the world to himself,
***and he has entrusted us
with the message of reconciliation.***

Alleluia! ***Alleluia!***

Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Communion Hymn:



Draw the cir-cle wide. Draw it wid-er still.

Let this be our song, no one stands a-

-lone, stand-ing side by side, draw the cir-cle wide.

1. God the still - point of the cir - cle,
2. Let our hearts touch far hor - i - zons,
3. Let the dreams we dream be lar - ger,

'round whom all cre - a - tion turns;
so en - com - pass great and small;
than we've ev - er dreamed be - fore;

noth - ing lost but held for - ev - er,
let our lov - ing no no bor - ders,
Let the dream of Christ be in us,

in God's gra - cious arms.
faith - ful to God's call.
o - pen ev - ery door.

Post-communion Prayer

Father,
your word and sacrament give us food and life.
May we who have shared in holy things
bear fruit to your honor and glory,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Blessing & Dismissal

The Wisdom of God
the Love of God
and the Grace of God
strengthen you to be Christ's hands and heart in this world,
in the name of the Holy Trinity. *Amen.*

Parting Hymn: The Hymnal, 1982, # 611

(No recording available with these words, but here's Pete Seeger singing the original work song)

- 1 Christ the worker, Christ the worker,
born in Bethlehem,
born to work and die for every one.
- 2 Blessed manchild, blessed manchild,
boy of Nazareth,
grew in wisdom as he grew in skill.
- 3 Skillful craftsman, skillful craftsman,
blessed carpenter,
praising God by labor at his bench.
- 4 Yoke maker, yoke maker,
fashioned by his hands,
easy yokes that made the labor less.
- 5 All who labor, all who labor,
listen to his call,
he will make that heavy burden light.
- 6 Heavy laden, heavy laden,
gladly come to him,
he will ease your load and give you rest.
- 7 Christ the worker, Christ the worker,
Love alive for us,
teach us how to do all work for God.

ADDENDUM TO TODAY'S SERMON

In 1958 CS Lewis gave a series of lectures on “The Four Loves.” They were published as a book, which is still in print—you can even get it on Kindle. He outlined four Greek words for love as expressed in the New Testament.

The first is *eros*—romantic love. Eros was the god of love in the Greek pantheon. To the Romans he was known as Cupid, and we all know about Cupid's arrows.

Philos is translated as friendship, a strong bond formed between people with similar values and interests. We all know about Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. Though many in our time are considering the biblical story of David and Jonathan in terms of *eros*, Lewis mentions, noting that “to the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it.”

Storge is devotion, rooted in the bonds of family and exemplified in the love between parent and child. It could include any physical gesture of affection that is not rooted in *eros*. It appears only once in the New Testament, combined with *philos* to form *philostorge*, at Romans 2:10, where Paul urges the congregation to be “kindly affectioned one to another;” several translations use the word “devoted.”

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Psalms 119:33-40: “Eternal God, teach me your way”

Words: A New Metrical Psalter: New Revised Lectionary Edition
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Music: *The Eighth Tune*; Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

Sequence Hymn: “God give us peace that lasts”

Words: John L. Bell (b. 1949) & Graham Maule (1958-2019)
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GIA Publications, agent
Music: *St. John's; Parish Choir*, 1851. (Public domain)
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Communion Hymn: “Draw the Circle Wide”

Words & Music: Gordon Light (b. 1944)
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