

***Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:***  
**A Worship Service for Sunday, June 28, 2020**

**Opening Acclamation: (Psalm 89:15-18)**

Happy are the people who know the festal shout! \*  
they walk, O LORD, in the light of your presence.

They rejoice daily in your Name; \* they are jubilant in your righteousness.  
For you are the glory of their strength, \* and by your favor our might is exalted.  
Truly, the LORD is our ruler; \* the Holy One of Israel is our King.

**A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 10:40-42**

*Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple-- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."*

**Meditation (by The Rev. Shawn Clerkin, St. Stephen's, Fairview)**

Our gospel passage today comes at the end of Jesus' Sermon on Mission in Matthew's gospel. Having called the disciples together and having given them gifts of healing and power over the unclean, Jesus sends them out to face challenges as they share the Good News. Some of those obstacles may well put them in physical harm's way, but Jesus comforts them by assuring that they have God's love to protect them. He also asserts that those who support the disciples in their ministry are also doing the work of ministry, and that God will reward them for that support.

For years, I conducted a monthly Holy Eucharist at the Barnabas Chapel of Brevellier Village in Harborcreek, PA, our diocesan retirement community. Most of the residents who attended were not those that would normally be seen as "being sent" into ministry – some were not ambulatory without assistance, some struggled cognitively and emotionally, and some seemed as if they were a great distance away though sitting right in the front of the chapel. And each time we gathered, we prayed together, "Now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do."

I often would look at them in wonder, and on occasion the phrase "work you have given us to do" would find its way into my message. These wizened and wonderful friends were being asked to continue Christ's work, when most would likely be happy to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But they each knew that somehow, regardless of their gifts and resources, they still had the power to do gospel. They knew that they could show love to God, and to show it for one another. They also knew that they could continue to support my work, work of other ministers, and the work of others. And many of them continued to support that work through contribution, participation, and prayer. I would often smile, recognizing that they

were the ones ministering to me, and that I was receiving them as righteous prophet in my life, and not necessarily the other way around. Their engagement and support, their being a part of the worship, and their living the gospel, even in the twilight of life, are powerful testimony and witness to God's promise of reward. And in spite of whatever challenges they faced, so many of them would confidently acclaim, "God is good!" I don't know if you've been witness to this, but when you are, it is hard to not be infected by that faith.

We are supported in our ministries by a cloud of witnesses, by the communion of the saints, both in heaven and here on earth. We, in turn, support others in many ways that they may do their ministry. It is a reciprocal and essential relationship, between ministers and those who receive ministry. Let us always give thanks for the support we are shown and we ourselves show. Let us know that our prophecy, our righteousness, allow us all to do the work that we are given to do.



**Prayer:**

*Almighty God, you have called us to witness to the Gospel as disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us proclaim your love with prophetic voice, give us grace to welcome the needy and marginalized with righteousness, and protect us as we offer to the weak and outcast such radical hospitality as may challenge the unjust structures of society; this we ask in Christ's name. **Amen.***

Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen.**



**Grace: (BCP p. 260)**

*Heavenly Father whose blessed Son came not to be served, but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy, for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.***

Take a moment and think about how you are empowered to witness God's power in your own ministry and vocation. Pray for all who are dependent upon the ministries your region's congregations support: food pantries, clothing ministries, feeding programs, and social justice work.

Each Sunday at 10 a.m., Bishop Sean and other leaders from WNY and NWPA will lead worship via the Zoom platform. Anyone can join the service via phone by calling **646-876-9923** use code **127336938#**. Those wishing to join by instead of video can use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/127336938> If you are asked for a password, use **lakeerie**.

*Simple Prayer, Simple Praise* is produced for The Episcopal Dioceses of NWPA and WNY by the Rev. Steve Lane and the Rev. Claudia Scheda, and guest contributors as noted. June 2020.