

Celebrate

Sunday, August 16, 2026

12th Sunday after Pentecost

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

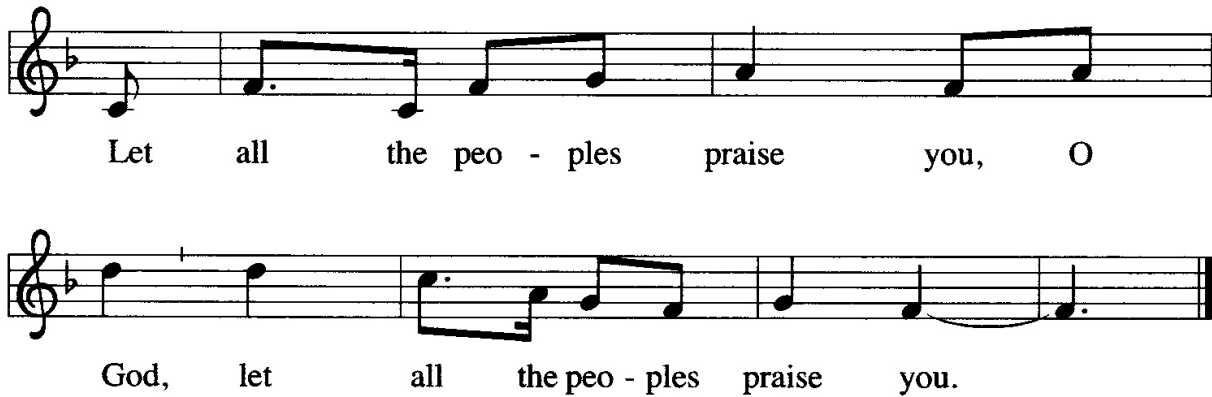
Thus says the LORD:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come
and my deliverance be revealed.

⁶And the foreigners who join
themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name
of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath and do not
profane it
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷these I will bring to my holy mountain
and make them joyful in my house
of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their
sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of
prayer
for all peoples.

⁸Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.



May God be merciful to | us and bless us;
may the light of God's face | shine upon us.

**²Let your way be known | upon earth,
your saving health a- | mong all nations.**

**³Let the peoples praise | you, O God;
let all the | peoples praise you.**

**⁴Let the nations be glad and | sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the na- | tions on earth. R**

**⁵Let the peoples praise | you, O God;
let all the | peoples praise you.**

**⁶The earth has brought | forth its increase;
God, our own | God, has blessed us.**

**⁷May God | give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth | stand in awe. R**

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

[Paul writes:] I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a}God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you

were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy. ³²For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Gospel

Matthew 15:[10-20] 21-28

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

[¹⁰[Jesus] called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." ¹⁵But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are

what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."]

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

For believers around the world who stream to your holy mountain, that all be united in faith and harmony in the body of Christ. Let your church on earth be a witness to the beloved community of your heavenly kingdom. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

For your wondrous creation, that it thrives and flourishes as you intend. Raise up wise stewards to defend the natural world against carelessness and destruction. Safeguard endangered species and their habitats (*especially*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

For the nations of the world and all in authority, that they heed the cry of the outcast and ensure care for the most vulnerable. Give wisdom to leaders of countries, congregations, and communities, that they lead and serve justly. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

For all who are lonely, grieving, or struggling with chronic pain, that they find comfort, community, and hope. Send relief to all who struggle with illness of any kind (*especially*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

For this congregation, for visitors and those new to this faith community, that all may recognize the presence of Christ in each new face. Draw this community together in love and strengthen it in unwavering faith. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

For the saints before us whose work is done, that their faithful example continues to direct your church. May their witness remind us that your gifts and calling are irrevocable, whether in life or death. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 87. **Tuesday** Romans 11:13-29. **Wednesday** Matthew 8:1-13. **Thursday** (commemoration of Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, died 1153) Psalm 138. **Friday** Ezekiel 31:15-18. **Saturday** Ezekiel 36:33-38. **Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20.

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