



65A PENTECOST 23A LITURGY

A dark night

Abstract

[Draw your reader in with an engaging abstract. It is typically a short summary of the document.]

When you're ready to add your content, just click here and start typing.]

Jim de Jong
[Email address]

65A Pentecost 23A Liturgy

A dark night

Sunday, November 8, 2020 | After Pentecost | Proper 27 | Year A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Joshua 24:1–3a, 14–25

Psalm Psalm 78:1–7

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Wisdom of Solomon 6:12–16 or Amos 5:18–24

Psalm Wisdom of Solomon 6:17–20 or Psalm 70

New Testament 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Gospel Matthew 25:1–13¹

Pre-Service

CH 280/OCP Publications Hurry the Lord is near Sands

Greeting

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
The Love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all

We Gather

Come, worship Jesus, the king of kings.
Prepare your minds (*pause*),
prepare your hearts (*pause*),
prepare your bodies (*pause*),
to worship Jesus, the King of kings,
and to receive his blessing.

Acknowledgements

Lord, we entrust to your care
those we have brought with us in our hearts,
and those that we have forgotten.
We entrust to your guidance
the plans that we have committed to do,
and the things that we have neglected.
We entrust to your mercy

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

our wisdom and our foolishness,
trusting in your grace and faithfulness.
Let us celebrate, with thankfulness, your ever-present love.

Let us Pray

Lord, we entrust to your care
those we have brought with us in our hearts,
and those that we have forgotten.
We entrust to your guidance
the plans that we have committed to do,
and the things that we have neglected.
We entrust to your mercy
our wisdom and our foolishness,
trusting in your grace and faithfulness.
Let us celebrate, with thankfulness, your ever-present love.
Amen.

As we remember this week is NADOC week, we remember this is God's Land.

Many have gone before
who have honoured God
by caring for the Land,
in the ways they have lived
and in the stories, they have shared.

We give thanks
for the Wada Wurrung people,
who have held as sacred
the duty of protecting the Land
and living in harmony with it.

We give thanks
for those that founded this church
And nurtured it and its people
loving those as God loved them
and maintained this sacred place for us.

May God honour and bless them all
– now and to eternity.

This church is a safe place for all people to worship
regardless of race, creed, age,
cultural background or sexual orientation

Hymn/song

AOV/ATOK 313/various Christ be our light Farrell

Welcome

This week is NAIDOC week with the theme
Always was
Always will be

The Lands I walk on
And the Lands that walk within me

Ten young ladies were on their way to a wedding.
Five of them were wise and had prepared for the trip,
They made certain that they had enough oil to fuel their lamps.
Five maidens were foolish.
Their minds were preoccupied with other things.
It was still light when they left home, but now darkness was coming.

Then the bridegroom was delayed.
Their lamps were running out of oil and they had none in reserve.
They asked the five wiser maidens if they could borrow some oil from them,
but they were refused.

The foolish maidens ran out into the village to try to find oil for their lamps.
Most of the village merchants would be open all night awaiting the parade.
While they were gone the bridegroom came and when they returned to the feast,
the doors were shut and they could not get in.

The parable of the wise and foolish maidens is not a fairy tale.
Even today middleclass families in Palestine celebrate weddings
just as Jesus described them 2,000 years ago,
and still we can imagine that there are some who miss out on the feast!

You can still find gaily clad maidens often playing musical instruments,
as they dance along the road.
They are off to keep the bride company till the bridegroom arrives.
But don't ask when the wedding might happen,
It might be tonight, or tomorrow night, or in a fortnight's time;
nobody ever knows for certain (when the groom will come).

One of the great things to do at a middleclass wedding in Palestine
is to catch the bridal party napping.
So the bridegroom comes unexpectedly, and often in the middle of the night."

This week, notice the times you have to wait for things.
Think of ways to use waiting times wisely and usefully

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, friend and teacher,
in the morning and at night,
you are our strength.
In light and in darkness,
you are our hope.
Today and tomorrow,
you are our stability.

When we are wise, and when we are foolish,
you are our guide.

In life and in death,
you are our saviour.
Amen.

Readings

Matthew 25:1–13

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

⁷ “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

⁹ “ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

¹⁰ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹ “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

¹² “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

¹³ “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. ²

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn/song/video

08 Wait for the Lord

We say Sorry

God of all, forgive us
 when we expect others to bail us out,
 because we have been foolish, complacent or half-hearted.
 Forgive us, and help us to prepare more thoroughly,
 think more deeply, and act more wisely.
 In Jesus’ name, we pray.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

TIS 745/SIS 96/P&W 68/ATN 34//SOF 493/various Seek ye first Lafferty

Response

Here's a true story that comes from the sinking of the Titanic.
 A frightened woman sat in a lifeboat that was about to be lowered
 into the raging North Atlantic.

² [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Mt 25:1–13). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

She suddenly asked for permission to return to her cabin to grab something.
They gave her 3 minutes, or they would leave without her.

She ran across the dangerously slanting deck.
Ignoring her jewellery, her fine cloths, what did she grab?
A bag of 3 oranges.

30 minutes earlier she would not have chosen a crate of oranges
over the smallest diamond.
But the possibility of death had transformed all values.
Instantaneously, priceless things had become worthless.
Worthless things had become priceless.
And in that moment, she preferred three small oranges to a crate of diamonds.

There are events in life, which have the power to transform the way we look at the world.
Jesus' parable about the ten virgins offers one of these types of events,
for the parable is about the Second Coming of Christ.

The question for the morning is this:
Are you prepared?
Are we prepared?

When the bridegroom comes and asks you to give an account of your life,
will you say that you had taken complete advantage
of the opportunities you have been given?

Let's narrow the question.
Have you been faithful in your service to God, yourself and your neighbour?

The year was 1780 in New England
an eerie darkness fell on the area like no one had ever seen
and it frightened people to death, in some cases literally.

At noon it was as dark as early night.
The birds returned to their nests,
The cows came home from the pasture
and chickens came home to roost.

Religious people fell on their knees and begged a final blessing.

In the State Legislature someone moved an adjournment.
they thought that the Day of Judgement had come.

But one legislator stood up and said,
"I am against adjournment.
The Day of Judgement is either here or it is not.
If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment.
If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty.
I wish therefore candles to be brought."

The legislature approved his request.
Are you prepared to be found faithful in your service to God and neighbour.?
If the bridegroom were to come would he find you at your post?

Another question.

Is there anything in your life about which you would be embarrassed or ashamed?

A mother was heading up the stairs with a basket of washing,
When her young daughter picked that moment to ask one of those questions.

"Mummy," she asked,
"If it were the end of the world, "
The mother stopped expectantly, not knowing what was coming next.

"Yes?" the mother said.
With a big breath in the little girl finished her theological inquiry:
"If the end of the world came,
would you have to take your library books back?"
Definitely, a young lady that did not want any unfinished business in her life.

How about you?
Is there some unfinished business in your life that needs to be taken care of?
Is there anything about which you would be embarrassed or ashamed
if the bridegroom were to come today?

Here's another important question concerning the uncertainty of tomorrow:
Do people you love know how much you appreciate them?

Sometimes we wait till it is too late to say,
"I love you," - or "sorry" - or "Thank you."

A businessman experienced a shattering emotional breakdown
Days passed and he sought help, and a friend suggested in passing,
"When was the last time you expressed your appreciation to someone?"

That question annoyed him.
that evening he remembered a high school English teacher.
He had not thought of her in years,
but she had really helped him so he wrote her a simple letter.
3 days later a letter came from her.

In the trembling handwriting the long retired teacher she wrote,
"My eyes are blinded with tears as I write.
You are the first student in all my career
who has ever written me a letter to express thanks."
"I will keep it as long as I live."
Surprised with her response he thought of someone else.
And so he wrote another letter and another.
He didn't even notice when he got well,
he just knew the joy of discovering
The effect of expressing his love and gratitude to others.(2)

If you knew that the bridegroom was coming today,
are there some people you would want to have expressed your thanks or your love?
Who knows what tomorrow may bring?
Why not do it now, today, this week?

One final question concerning the coming of the bridegroom.

Would he find you a stranger or a lifelong acquaintance?

When Queen Mary of Orange was about to die,

her chaplain wanted to read to her from Scripture.

He was concerned whether she was prepared for this journey.

She replied, "I have not left the matter till this hour." She was prepared.

An old Scotsman expressed the same sense of assured preparedness as he faced eternity.

As a friend offered some sayings of comfort at the end, he replied,

"I thatched my house, when the weather was still warm."

He was ready. (3)

Another fellow relates a story about seeing a friend who was in the last day of his life.

When he came to his bedside, the man reached out and grasped his hand.

"Oh, John," he whispered, "I'm so sick."

Then his head dropped back and they all thought he was gone.

But after a moment he opened his eyes again.

"John, is that you?" he asked. "Yes, it's me." was the reply

The dying man sighed,

"Oh!!, I'm so disappointed.

I was expecting to see the Lord and all I saw was you."

as the hymn says,

There was a man who knew that his Redeemer lives!

I work every day with cancer patients

many of whom know the reality that an end is coming.

that they need to prepare for the inevitable.

Their courage, their beauty, their wisdom and their love astounds me every day.

I feel honoured to serve them.

We have no idea when the bridegroom is coming.

The new Testament is a document of urgency.

The apostles acted as if there was no tomorrow

because that is what they believed.

It pays to be prepared.

It pays to have that sense of urgency that says that it might be at any moment.

Any basketball or football fan knows

that more points are scored before the siren than at any other time of the match.

So imagine if you would that the bridegroom is coming today.

Have you done the most you can with the opportunities God has given you?

Have you been faithful in your service to God and your fellow man?

Have you gotten rid of anything in your life of which you might be embarrassed or ashamed?

Can you think of persons to whom you ought to express your appreciation and love?

Finally,

how is your relationship with the bridegroom himself?

Is he still a stranger or do you know him as the best friend you have?

Recently the weather forecast column of a local newspaper read
"there is a 90% chance of tomorrow."

I personally hope that our chances of salvation are even better than that.
But who knows?
Let's not be foolish.
Let's be prepared.

Live today with the joy and appreciation of the first day
and prepare as if it were our last.

Amen

1. William Barclay, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 319-320.

2. Dr. Peter Rhea Jones

3. William Barclay, THE LETTERS TO THE PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, AND THESSALONIANS (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), p. 205.

Hymn/song

SCE 480/HS/P&W 537/TIS 746 The heavens shall declare Bullock

Offering

OFFERTORY SENTENCE:

Our offering is like oil that keeps the light of God shining in the world.
Let us offer what we can so the light might never go out.

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

God of light, may these gifts be a beacon of your love in the world.
Amen.

Notices

Prayers for all people

- *Draw a bridge, with the word 'Yesterday' on one side, 'tomorrow' on the other, and 'now' at the centre.*

God of all time and all opportunities,
please be where today and tomorrow merge and become our 'now'.
Help us to prepare for each task,
and show us how to be more like your Son,
that your will may be done –
joy by joy,
tear by tear,
day by day,
year by year.

Loving God,
so often we feel unprepared for the day ahead and all its demands.
I'm distracted when I try to worship

with other things buzzing in my head.
 I'm complacent about the relationships that make my life special
 taking friends and family for granted.
 Help me to be more focused on you,
 that I may take the days in my stride,
 embracing both the holy and the ordinary in my prayers,
 and ready to listen,
 to serve and to provide for those around me.

Prepare our hearts, Lord, that we may be ready:
 to share our resources with those waiting to be fed;
 to share our solidarity with those waiting for peace;
 to share our time with those waiting to be heard;
 to share our hope with those waiting for a reason to go on;
 to share our compassion with creatures waiting for the cruelty to end.
 Loving God, may no one ever have to wait alone, afraid or unloved.
 We ask this in Jesus' name

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come,
 your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial,
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. AMEN.
 (English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988.)

Hymn/song

TIS 647/ATN 25 Comfort comfort Mann

We are sent out

May today prepare you for tomorrow.
 May you be prayerful in your preparation,
 and daring in your doing.
 May you be wise at work, and foolish at play.
 And may each experience be enriched
 by the knowledge that you are loved by God,
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 Amen.

May the Lord bless us
 and keep us
 May His face shine upon us
 and be gracious to us
 May he lift up His countenance upon us

	and give us peace
	Benediction May the Peace - Keith & Kristyn Getty.mp4
	Thank you

