



KENILWORTH UNION
CHURCH

Kenilworth Union Church
Prayer reminds us we are invited by God
October 20, 2020
12:15 p.m.

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“Just saying the name can be a prayer,” one said to me, “because if I don’t know what that person needs, I can be certain that God does.”

Kathleen Norris

Opening Response

David Adam

Lord, as you have called us, make us worthy of the calling

Let us see you in others: let others see you in us.

Make us more sensitive to others and their needs,

Make us more ready to help and to show our care.

Lord in heaven,

Hear us and help us.

Psalm Reading

Psalm 96:1–9, 10–13

O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.

Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, "The LORD is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.

He will judge the peoples with equity."

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:15–22

Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Commentary

Lance Pape

When we think about Jesus highlighting the physicality of that denarius—the coin stamped out by human hands for human purposes, and the image of Caesar imprinted on it—it’s hard to ignore the connection to those words from the beginning of Genesis about what God said the first time God stamped out a human being: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26).

Confronted with the question of human loyalty and the coin bearing the image of the earthly emperor, it’s easy to picture Jesus flipping that coin in his hand a few times, and then tossing it casually aside. In my imagination I see his eyes rising to meet those of his opponents, confronting each of them with an unspoken question hanging in the air: “And you, my friend: Whose image do you bear?”

One thing, at least, seems clear: Jesus is not solving the dilemma by carving out separate domains of human loyalty. For every character in the story, and for each of us who still bother to read and ponder it, one absolute commitment subsumes and relativizes all other commitments.

Whatever we render unto Caesar, or to the retirement fund, or to the offering basket at church, we can never afford to forget this: we belong entirely to God. We may divide our budget, but we must never divide our allegiance. The coin of our realm bears the image of dead presidents, but each of us bears another. Our Emperor said: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.” We must never forget to render unto God the things that are God’s.

Prayers of the People

Oh God, we gather to praise you and thank you. We are so grateful for your creations, large and small: for all the stars in the universe, for the earth, and for the gifts of our individual lives. We thank you for all the good things that come to us with this day, and we ask you to give us patience when things are not going as we might wish.

We offer to you now the joys, sorrows and concerns of our most private thoughts:

_____ (90 seconds of silence).

We thank you God, for our church, and for the work of our members in loving you and serving others. We pray for your presence in the details of worship, church school and preschool, in adult education programs and outreach. We pray for those who are entrusted with the direction and leadership in our church, for our ministers and for our trustees.

We pray for the following families in our Joyful Noise community, for the children and their parents: The Gatziolis Family, The James Gillen Family, The Valerie Gillen Family, The Goff Family, The Graham Family, The Grimes Family, The Guo Family, The Hannawa Family, The Hemmings Family, and The Hoff Family.

And as we do every week, we pray by name for those of our church membership. Today we pray for the following of our members, for their faith, health and protection: Jim & Judy Raub, Norma Rayment, Roland & Jacquie Rayment, Lazar & Katherine Raynal, Ted & Carole Read, Gary & Barbara Redmond, Eric & Kristin Reese, Robert & Janie Reifenberg, Rich & Virginia Reising, Mike & Susan Resko, Mario & Debbie Retondo, Michael & Meg Revord, Thomas & Emily Reynolds, Mark & Sarah Ricciardi, Tina Rice, Bartlett & Doris Richards, Ingrid Richards, Thomas & Tracey Richter, Susan Riggs, Rachael Riggs-Gowe & Chris Gowe.

We pray in earnest hope, for the struggles in our world right now. We pray for your spirit where there is violence—in our natural world—through fire, wind, storm or ocean. We pray where there are wars—wars of words or wars with deadly weapons. We pray for your divine calm where there is unrest, equity where there is injustice, peace and comfort where there is loneliness, illness, and death and we pray for order where there is chaos. And Dear God, we pray for an end to the Covid-19 Pandemic—for the souls who have been lost, for the afflicted, the grieving and the anxious.

We pray to you during the uncertainty and discord occurring in our country at present, especially as the election approaches. Oh God as we recall human history, and how far we can distance ourselves from your good purposes, please give us cool heads, resolute leaders and clarity of purpose and please God multiply in us a deep and inner knowledge that we are all your beloved creations.

We name before you, Oh God, those known to us who are troubled, suffering, or in need of the balm that only you can provide:

We thank you for the gift of faith, the blessings of relationship. For loyalty, trust and forgiveness—for all these things Oh God, we are deeply grateful. We pray to you in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

**Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be 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,
forever. Amen.**

Prayer for the Day

Gracious God, please accept all these prayers offered in Jesus' name,
And give us now the strength to wait patiently for your answer,
And to live faithfully in response to your call.
Through Christ our Lord.

Blessing

The Lord look upon you and refresh you,
The Lord in mercy, restore you,
The Lord in love strengthen you;

And the blessing...

Amen