



## Tenth Sunday After Pentecost

14 August 2022

The Episcopal Church of the  
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio

Seeking to know and serve Christ in loving service to  
the campus, the community, and the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

### Lessons for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 15-Tract 2):

Old Testament - Jeremiah 23: 23-29

Psalm 82 (SAID)

New Testament - Hebrews 11: 29-12:2

Gospel - Luke 12: 49-56

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

### The Collect

**A**lmighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

### The Gospel



### Luke 12:49-56

**J**esus said, "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring

peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided:

father against son  
and son against father,

mother against daughter  
and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

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### **Gospel Engagement Question:**

Although divisions can be seen as negative, and many are, can you think of a time when a division was good or helpful?

## **The Sermon**

# **Fire and Peace**

The historians among us can give a much more informed account of the roughly 200-year time period in Roman history called the *Pax Romana*, Roman Peace. So, I ask your tolerance as I summarize it as many history books have by calling it a time of prosperity for Roman civilization. It was referred to as a "golden age" because roman imperialism increased and spread as Rome gained territory, there was said to be order, economic and political stability. It was time when new technologies appeared and art flourished. Some historians call it a miraculous time because this kind of peace is rare.

Of course, the method for achieving the peace of Rome was through political, economic, and military dominance. In other words, if you weren't already Roman, and didn't assimilate or change to accept the

Roman culture, religion, politics, and so forth, you were punished. Another name for this time period is the *Pax Imperium*, or imperial peace.

For Roman citizens, this might have been a good time. But if you were one of the people who lived in a territory that Rome occupied, that peace might have felt more like oppression. People who were conquered by Rome were taxed ridiculously high, and the Roman military was nearby, to prevent rebellious uprisings through intimidation. There were plenty of uprisings, which usually were short, violent, and when they were over survivors were tortured mentally and physically. The types of technology and art that thrived were intentionally selective. It was only art that glorified Roman culture that was promoted and only technology that could benefit Rome that was celebrated. So, it wasn't a time of creativity that thought outside the Roman box. Of course women weren't allowed to speak in public. Those who criticized Rome were not tolerated. For them, the peace of Imperial Rome may have felt more like terror.

The purpose of this summary that is too brief to capture all nuanced perspectives historians have to offer is to remind us that this is the time period in which Jesus lived. Throughout the Gospels and Paul's letters we get the impression that the peace and prosperity Roman citizens experienced is a far cry from the life of Jesus, his followers, and the Jewish people living under Roman occupation. The Gospel is full of complaints about the taxes imposed by Rome, the influence of the Roman government in the higher levels of leadership in Jewish religion, and the belief that the Messiah was going to be a military leader who would successfully lead a military uprising, defeat Rome, and restore their country to its rightful leadership. That was the peace those living under Roman occupation dreamed, a peace that was not so very different from that of Rome.

This might help us understand why Jesus says all the things he said in today's Gospel about not bringing peace but a fire he wishes was already kindled. It's a confusing statement for those of us who see Jesus as the Prince of Peace, especially when he goes on to say he has come to bring division, a division so deep it will strike into the very heart of what many hold dear: the family. Today many families struggle with division and estrangement due to differing beliefs and opinions on politics, vaccinations, the war in Ukraine, abortion rights, and other current affairs. In a time as strange and difficult as this where it seems so many have forgotten how to love, the words of Jesus can feel unsympathetic to much of the suffering going on today.

That is why we need to remember the context of the time Jesus lived, the time when these words were first written, and what the author of the Gospel is telling us about Jesus. One clue to help us is the part of today's Gospel that can really make us uncomfortable, the part about

family division which is actually much older than the Gospel. It goes back to the prophet Micah of the Old Testament, specifically Micah 7.6 that lists the very same divisions as part of the prophecy that the only way through the time of crisis Micah was living in was complete trust in God. In other words, Jesus was using an older prophecy to illustrate he hadn't come to give his people what they wanted, he was going to do something different, something that would cause discomfort, disappointment, and division.

Jesus was not going to bring the same kind of peace as that of the Roman Empire. We need to also remember in John's Gospel Jesus said he came to bring a peace the world cannot give. It is a different kind of peace. The peace of Jesus is not the peace that exists because of terror. The peace of Jesus is not the fire of military dominance. The peace of Jesus is the fire that cleanses, that burns away whatever harms or prevents relationship with God.

When I lived in Southern Wisconsin, one of my favorite hiking trails went through a state park with prairies and at certain times of the year, I wasn't able to hike there because the forestry department was setting a controlled fire on parts of the trail. They put up signs explaining the controlled fire was intended not to harm but to help the local prairie ecosystem. It turns out there are certain prairie plants that need the heat of fire to grow. It was also a way to rid the prairie of invasive species that can choke out native plants and can drive away native birds, animals, and insects which can be detrimental to the entire ecosystem. Over the weeks and months that followed a controlled burn in the prairie area where I hiked, I curiously observed how many plants survived the fire just fine, and were stronger, as surviving the fire triggered them to bloom. A year later that same part of the trail looked completely different as wildflowers bloomed, birds sang, and bees and butterflies, all signs of healthy ecosystems, flourished. It was beautiful and walking there definitely gave me a sense of peace and wonder.





This is the kind of fire Jesus was talking about in today's Gospel. It is the kind of fire that gives life, not destroys it, or forces it to assimilate. It's the fire Jesus kindled on the cross. Remember the cross was one of many symbols of Roman imperialism, it was a form of capital punishment for those who threatened the *Pax Romana*, Roman Peace, while at the same time warning everyone else if they wanted to stay alive, if they didn't want to suffer, they needed to stay in line. In dying on the cross Jesus shows love for humanity, for us, by suffering and dying with humanity, and does not reign over us as an overlord. Of course, that is not the end, through Jesus' resurrection new life, life more powerful than anything of Rome, can spread and bloom like the prairie after a fire.

But whether a fire is destructive or renewing, it still can feel like a crisis. And the way through a crisis, the prophets remind us, Jesus reminds us, is to trust God. Not politicians promising peace and prosperity if we fall in line. Not celebrities who promise happiness if you do your own thing without caring for how your choices or actions will impact others. Nothing we can buy can give us the peace that Jesus gives, the peace that heals, that forgives, that liberates and frees us from the oppression of sin.

That is why Jesus emphasized the importance of interpreting the time he was living in. Roman peace was not what it promised for all people who lived under it, and Jesus did not bring the same peace.

The ability to interpret the time we are living in is also important. As

the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, The Most Rev. Michael Curry said in his [sermon to General Convention](#) last month we live in strange and difficult times. He took the time in his sermon to name many current events that make this time strange and difficult including the enduring covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and admitting the role of the Episcopal Church in the schools for indigenous children where thousands of young children were taken from their families, unnecessarily suffered cruel conditions and punishments for behaviors like simply speaking their native language, or rejecting the same kind of methods of assimilation used by the Rome during the *Pax Romana*, and died and whose remains are now being returned to their surviving families. This has not been an easy time for the faithful of the church as many of the church's own sins have been revealed, and it can be painful to witness these transgressions.

How are we to get through this time, and what role can the church play? In his wisdom, the Presiding Bishop reminds us to return to our roots: to Jesus, to the prophets, who remind us to trust God. Trusting God means something different than the stuff of dominance, violence and forcing our way. Trusting God means confessing our sins, which means sometimes we need to confess the sins of those who came before us, in order to recognize what happened and to name it as wrong, so hopefully it will not be repeated. Like with our indigenous siblings, many of whom have a beautiful faith and have been able to embrace Jesus and their native culture, despite the harm caused them by the church. They can be for us a voice of peace, the kind of renewing peace Jesus brings, the peace that reminds us of our connection to each other, to the earth, and to God.

Doing the work of finding the remains of the children who died in those schools and using resources to return them to their families is the holy and life-giving stuff of God's love, repentance, restoration, and breaches the distance between us. It is the antithesis of division, which ironically might cause other divisions, especially among those who disagree. But that doesn't mean it should not be done. Some things, like human dignity, healing, and love are worth more than the status quo, especially if the status quo requires denying harm that has been caused in the name of Jesus.

Perhaps in these strange and difficult times, it can be renewing to remember Jesus came not to dominate, terrify, or force his way on people, but to be with us, suffering with us, bringing not the fire of destruction, but that of renewal, dying so that resurrection life can be ours, so that when we fall into sin, when we harm each other or trust in the stuff of dominance, we can turn away from that, and turn toward God, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, and then like the life that spreads after a controlled fire in the prairie, focus on Jesus and strive to love all our



neighbors as God loves us. This work takes a heart large enough to love through different and difficult opinions, a soul sensitive to the tensions that exist, and the courage to love our way through those tensions and differences. Such a heart and soul and courage might not be easy to achieve but are most definitely worth the effort because they are part of the peace so different from that of the world, they are the healing, liberating peace Jesus brings to us all.

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### **Sermon Engagement Question:**

The sermon gives an example of controlled fires in a prairie to help improve the ecosystem. Can you think of another example when suffering led to healing or improved relationships with God or others?

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The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost,  
14 August 2022

[To Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's opening sermon to General Convention 80 - YouTube](#)

[To more images of Lapham Peak & other Wisconsin Prairies](#)

### **Please include in your prayers**

**In our world,** we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the Middle East. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, we pray for the community of Uvalde, Texas, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

**In our diocese,** In our diocese, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

**In our parish,** we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community. We pray for our friends at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Merida, Mexico.

**Those Whom our Prayers are Requested:** Bud and Carol, Chris L., Gloria R., Jean R., Miriam, Scott, Sharon, T.C., Baby William James, Dana Carlson, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Richard DeNune, Roy DePue, Nona Forbes, Jan Gault, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Rev. Canon Scott Gunn, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, Peter Kachenko and family, Julie Nehls, Donald and Junie Oney, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Michael Vaughn, Emily Woolsey and we pray for all who care for them. \*\*

**Anniversary:** Ilona and Taylor Bond (8/14)

**Birthday:** Brian Coleman (8/15), Suellen Denton (8/17), Hailey Luelloff (8/18), Quinn Wiener (8/19)

\*\* Full names are normally not published online but since the prayer list is not printed for the in-house 10:30 service, we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or [grahammowery@aol.com](mailto:grahammowery@aol.com).

## At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

<https://cincinnati.cathedral.com/ccj/join-online/>

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

## Coming up on the Calendar

### Coming Up:

**Thursday, August 18, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting**

**Sunday, August 21, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist**



**Monday, August 22, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. - - First Day of Classes at OU Blessings, coffee and donut giveaway.**

**Wednesday, August 24, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's**

**Sunday, August 28, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Outdoor Service)**

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### **Coffee Hour Schedule**

August 21      Dana Carlson

August 28      David Burton

**CrossRoads Café is open Sundays after the 10:30 Service.**

### **Events Looking Forward**

**Sept. 4 (Sunday) Funeral service for Virginia Smith 3pm**

**Sept. 11 (Sunday) Outdoor Service 10:30 am with special remembrance for 9/11**

**Oct. 7-10 (Friday – Monday) College Student Retreat in the Hocking Hills**

**Nov. 6 (Sunday) Newly Refurbished Organ Celebration 3pm (first in a series)**

**Nov. 19 (Saturday) Diocese of Southern Ohio Convention Hybrid zoom and in person in Cincinnati**

**Nov. 24 (Thursday) Thanksgiving Day service 10:30 am**

**Nov. 24 (Thursday) Thanksgiving Meal for parishioners 1:30 pm**

**Dec. 24 (Saturday) Christmas Eve 7pm**

**Dec. 25 (Sunday) Christmas Day 10:30 am**

### **Notes & Announcements**

# Blessing the First Day of OU Classes Monday, August 22

You are invited to join Mother Deborah on the front steps of the church from 9 am – 11 am as she gives a blessing to the OU community on the first day of classes with free coffee and donuts. This is an enjoyable way to be present to our neighbors as they begin a new academic year. In the past we have met new students



of all ages, several who stop and share their stories with us, some ask for directions, and most just say thank you while they take a coffee or donut to go. Whether you can stay for part of the time or all of the time, you are welcome to be part of blessing our neighbors on this important day.

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## The Good Shepherd Thrift Shop Needs Household Goods (& coats later)



With the student move-in time upon us, the Thrift Shop could use household items. **Dishes, glasses, flatware, cooking utensils, pots and pans, linens, towels, small appliances, etc.**

Right now we have an overabundance of clothing. We will need coats and cold weather items when the weather gets cold so we can do the coat give-away again. So save up your

donations of these things till then.

**Please place your donations in the Church School room.** They will be sorted, priced, and shelved from there.

Thanks,

## For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

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### Diocese of Southern Ohio 80th General Convention

**Saturday, November 19.** Delegates and clergy may attend in person or via zoom. For more see the [DSO E-Connections newsletter](#). Keep up with the latest [Convention information HERE](#).

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[Follow this link](#) if you want HELP WITH EASTERN KENTUCKY FLOOD RELIEF directly via the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington.

[Follow this link](#) to support Humanitarian Response to the Crisis in Ukraine via ERD.

Alternatively if you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.

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Chris Knisely sent in this great photo of the extended deer family we frequently see around the Church. Guessing, it seems this gathering today consists of all three generations, 'mama' is on the extreme right, the two deer sprouting horns are her last year's teen-age boys are still hanging around (probably until breeding season this October) and the two fawns are from this Spring.





One thing Ted Foster likes to do is walk the "Williamstown" bridge across the wide Ohio. This year river cruises are back since before the COVID hiatus. This is the American Heritage spending the day Saturday at port in Marietta making local gift shops and restaurants happy.





## Contacts, Information

### Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines  
and Back Issues](#)

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

### Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines for  
returning to in-person worship](#)

In light of local conditions we request all persons wear masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

**Office Hours:** 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Masks are required.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but during office/CrossRoads hours the

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

thrift shop and chapel are available for individuals. Masks are required.

**CrossRoads Café** -- Join us Sunday after the 10:30 service.

## Contact Information

**For pastoral needs**, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at [revdebwoolsey@gmail.com](mailto:revdebwoolsey@gmail.com).

**To find out more about Good Shepherd** and other matters, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at [macbuck@yahoo.com](mailto:macbuck@yahoo.com).

**For maintenance matters**, please leave a note at the office or contact Dana Carlson, Junior Warden, at 740-664-2022 or by e-mail at [carlsondana@hotmail.com](mailto:carlsondana@hotmail.com).

**For emergencies**, please call The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895.

**NON-emergency messages** can be left on the church's answering machine (740-593-6877).

**The parish office administrator** is Barbara Martin (740-593-6877) or [barbara@chogs.org](mailto:barbara@chogs.org).

**The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd**, 64 University Terrace, Athens OH 45701

## [DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the Parish page where you can find instructions or donate on-line via PayPal, If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation -- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

Check out the Church's [YouTube Channel](#).

LIKE us on Facebook [Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd 45701](#)

**Office Hours:**  
Masks are required.

740-593-6877

chogs@chogs.org

[www.chogs.org](http://www.chogs.org)

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Monday - Thursday

740-593-6877

chogs@chogs.org

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Blessings !