



Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

(Discretionary Sunday)

16 October 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 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 24-Tract 2):

Old Testament – Genesis 32: 22-31

Psalm 121 (SUNG)

New Testament – 2 Timothy 3: 14-4:5

Gospel – Luke 18: 1-8

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel

Luke 18:1-8

JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said,



"In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not

God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Gospel Engagement Question:

What part of the Gospel reading speaks to you today?

The Sermon

Relentlessness of God

"The name is strange. It startles one at first. It is so bold, so new, so fearless. It does not attract, rather the reverse. But when one reads the poem this strangeness disappears. The meaning is understood. As the hound follows the hare, never ceasing in its running, ever drawing nearer in the chase, with unhurrying and unperturbed pace, so does God follow the fleeing soul by His Divine grace. And though in sin or in human love, away from God it seeks to hide itself, Divine grace follows after, unwearingly follows ever after, till the soul feels its pressure forcing it to turn to Him alone in that never ending pursuit."

These words were written by Jesuit J. F. X O'Connor to describe the poem *The Hound of Heaven* written by Francis Thomson in 1890. Thomson's work is said to have inspired other writers such as G.K. Chesterton and J.R.R. Tolkien. His poem is about the relentlessness of God pursuing someone who, over a lifetime of trying to evade God, is eventually caught up - not in God's wrath or vengeance - but in God's loving embrace of forgiveness and mercy. At 182 verses, it is a long poem, that even today is worth the time to read. *The Hound of Heaven* continues to strike a chord of relevancy today and has been the inspiration for many musical settings, appears in modern secular entertainment, works of Christian fiction, and Christian commentaries like

Perhaps one of the reasons the poem's relevance endures to this day is because Thomson does not depict God as a far away entity who is above us and doesn't care about all the joys and sufferings people experience in life. Nor is God a cruel overlord who lavishes rewards on favorites for preferred behavior while punishing others for mistakes. Instead, The Hound of Heaven is God as the everlasting love that pursues and persists and never gives up reaching for us no matter the circumstances of life. It could be fair to say that for Francis Thompson God never gives up on us.

This theme can be easily recognized in all our readings for today. It is the same concept Jesus was trying to convey to his disciples in today's Gospel when he told the parable of a persistent widow seeking justice and a judge who was anything but just or good. Despite the author of the Gospel having Jesus clearly articulate that the judge in the parable is unjust and had no respect for people or God, many commentaries and sermons interpret this parable with God as the unjust judge and encourage us to keep pestering God with our prayers as God will eventually give in because, like the judge, God will be sick and tired of hearing from us. That is not what Jesus was saying with this parable. Such an interpretation may have more to do with how we imagine God than how Jesus or the author of Luke's Gospel presented God. Perhaps we don't realize the error of associating God with the character in power – the judge – when that is not the God Jesus showed us. God does have power, but it is not the power of political figures like presidents or kings. The power of God is the power of forgiveness, mercy, grace, generosity. God doesn't want to rule the world, God wants to love us and wants us to love God and each other and, as our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry says, "while we are it, love ourselves."

So, if the unjust judge is not God in the parable, which character is most like God? The answer is the widow. That might be hard for some of us to wrap our minds around because the widow is a woman, and even though God has no gender, a female character that portrays the characteristics of God can be challenging for a patriarchal society to accept. In the culture and time when the Gospels were written, women had no legal rights without a male relative, which means the character in Jesus' parable is vulnerable. She has no one to speak for her and must endure day after day of rejection or being ignored by the judge until he finally breaks.

What if, instead of thinking of this parable as breaking God down with our prayers, we thought about the times we have ignored or rejected God? What if the judge is people, or a person, who believes they know better, or are afraid or whatever excuse we can think of to justify ignoring

God? This means our prayers aren't transactions like buying stuff online. God is not Amazon waiting to fulfill our material desires or needs. God is not an algorithm working to anticipate what item might trigger our impulse to buy something based on our past searches or purchases. Our prayers are not part of a holy consumer economy because our relationship with God is not consumeristic. God yearns for something far deeper than wish fulfillment.

Our prayers are a way we can be drawn deeper into the life of God and God's love for the world. Through prayer we enter a different kind of relationship with the world, one where we don't think of the world as resources to use to our benefit. Instead, we recognize the deep connections we have to each other and to the animals and plants and water and our responsibilities to care for each other and the world. This means works of justice, of striving to make the world a better place for all people regardless of age, gender, gender identity, ability, socio economic status, race, and all is an expression of prayer. When we realize prayer is about our relationship with God, then it becomes more than words in a book, it becomes our whole life. Every word we say. Every action. Every thought. Every moment of our lives becomes a prayer to God and one of the many ways God can be present.

This in no way is intended to diminish the beautiful prayers in our *Book of Common Prayer* or church services. They have their place in our relationship with God and God's relationship with us. The point is there is always more to it; there is another layer, another level, another way God is reaching out to us. Always.

In a time when so many people are feeling the desire to withdraw, or are tired, or frustrated with so much in the world; when divisions are increasing and there is so much loss, it can be easy to lose heart, to despair, to give up. This is nothing new. One hundred and thirty-two years ago Francis Thompson experienced those same things as he struggled with estrangement from his family for failing to live into his father's expectations and an opium addiction. He did indeed lose heart and despaired. However, he was not alone and received kindness and help from a woman who was a prostitute. She helped him recognize God with him even in his most desperate moments. What helped Francis Thompson find hope wasn't the ability to pray his way through his despair, it was realizing God never gave up on him, and was with him, especially in the generosity and kindness of others. That is how he was able to surrender to God's love.

Perhaps the greatest comfort any of us can receive in these days – and perhaps it is also a challenge - is that whenever we feel tired, or despair at the bad news that seems relentless, is to remember there is One who is even more relentless than the news. That we are not alone,

God is near, God doesn't give up, not on us, not on the world. When we struggle to have faith, perhaps that is the moment, like in the poem *The Hound of Heaven*, we can surrender to God, let God carry us, even in prayer, and perhaps find ourselves even closer to God and each other and is the expression of faith on earth Jesus seeks.

A sermon by The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 16 October 2022, at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio.

Sermon Engagement Questions:

How do you feel about comparing the widow in the parable to God?
What does this comparison reveal about God?

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, 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, 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, Jan Gault, Lindsey and Regina Golden, Rev. Canon Scott Gunn, Debbie Hunsberger, Bob and Nancy Jackson, Peter Kachenko and family,

Jeff Maiden, Julie Nehls, Betty Oltorf, Donald and Junie Oney, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Michael Vaughn, Emily Woolsey and we pray for all who care for them. **

BIRTHDAY: April Almond (10/17), Carl Ortman (10/19), Liliana Wiener (10/19), Dana Carlson (10/20)

** 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.

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

Thursday, October 20, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Saturday, October 22, 11:00 a.m. - - Celebration of Life of Steve Steward

Sunday, October 23, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, October 23, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, October 26, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's

Sunday, October 30, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, October 30, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, November 6, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, November 6, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, November 6, 3:00 p.m. - - Newly Refurbished Organ

Celebration

Sunday, November 13, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, November 13, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Thursday, November 17, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Sunday, November 20, 9:15 a.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, November 20, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Discretionary Sunday)

Thursday, November 24 10:30 a.m. - - Thanksgiving Day service

Thursday, November 24 1:30 p.m. - - Thanksgiving Meal for parishioners

Sunday, November 27, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, November 30, 7:00 p.m. - - Choir Rehearsal

Events Looking Forward

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 (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

Celebration of Life of Steve Steward Saturday October 22 at 11:00 a.m.

Steve's sudden death has been a shock to all of us, and we can help comfort

each other by praying and being gentle with each other as we grieve together. Mother Deborah met with Steve's family this week to plan Steve's service this Saturday, October 22 at 11:00 am.

There will be a reception hosted by the Marthas with cookies and lemonade on the front porch after the service. The family is grateful to have the reception outside because Steve enjoyed the outdoor services, and this is a nice way to honor that.



The Athens Police have been notified so the parking meters on University Terrace will be covered allowing for more parking on the day of the service. Thank you to everyone who is volunteering to help with Steve's service. This is another way we carry each other and carry Steve to the next life, all of it is our work of God's love and shared life as Christians in beloved community.



All Saints Necrology

All Saints Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, November 6, 2022. If you would like the name of a deceased loved one added to the All Saints' Roll to be read during the service, please notify our Parish Administrator, Barbara Martin, no later than

Tuesday, November 1 for inclusion in this year's Necrology. The Church Office telephone number is 740-593-6877, or you can submit names by email at barbara@chogs.org.

All Saints Sunday November 6, 2022 -- All the Company of Heaven --

In a few weeks we will be celebrating one of the major feasts of the Church and one of the pivotal days in the Church Year: All Saints Day. It is a day we remember all those who have gone before us in faith, everyone in the family of God.

To help us honor the day, Mother Deborah invites you bring a picture of a

family member who has died. This can be a blood relative or someone who inspired your faith, or someone a member of the parish who has died. The pictures will be displayed on the wooden table in front of the altar and is intended to be a visual representation of the Company of Heaven, all those loved ones who have gone before us.

Bring your pictures of loved ones Sunday, November 6 for All Saints Sunday. If you won't be with us in person, but still want to share a picture of a loved one, either drop it off at the church before Sunday, November 6 or email it to Mother Deborah at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com and she'll have it printed and put it on the table for you

Discretionary Sunday

You can donate to the Rector's Discretionary fund anytime by sending a check to Church of the Good Shepherd, 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701 and writing "Rector's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line. You can also donate online anytime.

The Rector's Discretionary Fund is used by Mother Deborah to help with various needs in the community. She thanks you for your generosity and support.



Coats & Winter Gear

It's getting quite chilly lately so the Good Shepherd Thrift Shop is now accepting cold weather gear. We need coats, jackets, heavy sweater, sweat shirts, hats, scarves, gloves, mittens - anything to keep someone warm. We will do a cold-weather-gear give away again this year.

Please place your items in the Sunday School Room so they can be sorted and organized.

And please, out of respect for our clientele, donate items that are gently used and clean.

We Are Hiring

CrossRoads Café Staff

Please help us get the word out: we are hiring new staff for our coffee shop ministry. If you or someone you know is interested in working mornings. Pay starts at \$12 an hour. No experience necessary, we provide paid training. The [Full job description](#) is available on our website. Please contact the Rev. Deborah Woolsey at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com for more information or to apply. (She will return your email when she gets back from vacation.)

Video/Media Communications

Assistant for making and posting church videos ([Full job description](#)). Please contact the Rev. Deborah Woolsey at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com for more information or to apply. (She will return your email when she gets back from vacation.)

Volunteers Needed to Serve as Ushers

If you are interested in or feel called to serve as an usher, please contact Mother Deborah.

The ministry of ushers is:

- Warmly greeting people coming into church service by giving them bulletin and mask (if they don't have one already).
- Passing the collection plate at the offertory hymn. - Be available to answer any questions visitors might have (ex. where restrooms are located).
- Help collect discarded bulletins after the service and put them in recycling
- . - Assist Treasurer with counting and reporting on the money collected that day. How often a person serves depends on how many people volunteer.

Scheduling can be flexible. Please prayerfully consider if you are being called to this ministry of welcome and hospitality.

Altar Flower Procedure

Email Lynn Graham (grahammowery@aol.com) or phone her (740-593-5098) to give her your dedication. Lynn will order flowers through Hyacinth Bean Florist and give your name and address for billing. The cost is approximately \$90.00 for the arrangement and delivery. Lynn will print your dedication so that it appears in the e-news and bulletin.

If you wish special flowers or a more elaborate arrangement you can call Polly Creech (740-594-9302), our florist, and make those arrangements with her. Keep in mind that this MAY increase the cost.

OPEN DATES FOR FLOWERS FOR 2022

October 23, 30

November 13

December 4, 11, 18

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

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

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](#).

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.

Below is a photo Michael took on their vacation trip. Michael felt the birds had better luck than he fishing-wise. The "Pentecost" image in the above header is taken and adapted from this photo.



Lest we not forget the lowly field's contribution to fall colors.



Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

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

[Campus Interest](#)

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

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

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 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.

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.

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.

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

[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](#).

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.

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

740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

LIKE us on Facebook
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[45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks are required.

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

Church of the Good Shepherd | 64 University Terrace, Athens, OH 45701

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