



Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

25 September 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 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 21-Tract 2):
Old Testament – Amos 6: 1a, 4-7
Psalm 146 (SUNG)
New Testament – I Timothy 6: 6-19
Gospel – Luke 16: 19-31

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

O GOD, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises,
may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 16:19-31

JESUS SAID, "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who



longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus

in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house-- for I have five brothers-- that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Gospel Engagement Questions:

What stands out to you in this parable?

Why do you think it caught your attention?

The Sermon

The Power to Bridge the Gap

There is a sad and lovely line from the 1977 movie *O, God!* that gets to the heart of the parable Jesus told in today's Gospel. For those who need a refresher or those who have yet to see it, *O, God!* is a movie about a man named Jerry Landers played by singer, songwriter, activist, and actor John Denver who God, played by comedian and actor George Burns, recruits to give a message of hope to the world. The screenplay was written by Larry Gelbart who adapted it from the 1971 novel by the same title and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. Despite the obvious references to the time period with the cars, wardrobe, and pop culture references, the movie has a timeless quality to it and its message is as relevant today as it was 45 years ago. This message was summed up by the character of God in the movie when God said, "I know how hard it is in these times to have faith. But

maybe if you could have the faith to start with, maybe the times would change. You could change them. Think about it. Try. And try not to hurt each other. There's been enough of that. It really gets in the way. I'm a God of very few words and Jerry's already given you mine. However hopeless, helpless, mixed up and scary it all gets, it can work. If you find it hard to believe in me, maybe it would help you to know that I believe in you."

Those are some good lines. But the one that reminded me of the parable in today's Gospel came a little earlier in the movie when God took the witness stand in a trial trying to prove Jerry Landers was incompetent because he was talking and listening to God. This was something hard for people to believe, so God showed up and shared some wisdom about why people might be struggling to hear what God was saying through Jerry Landers. God wondered if they were expecting something more miraculous. "I'm not sure how this whole miracle business started," God said, "the idea that anything connected with me has to be a miracle. Personally, I'm sorry that it did. Makes the distance between us even greater."

Makes the distance between us even greater. That is the line that reminded me of the parable Jesus told in today's Gospel. There are many things happening in the parable and Biblical scholars assure us this parable was intended for a specific group: the pharisees who were "lovers of money". And there are some decent sermons preached on the warning this parable gives to individuals and institutions alike on how to use resources to bridge the distance between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have nots. There is nothing wrong with that message. It's a good one, and I suspect it is one most of us are already well aware of. We try to use what resources we have to help support people or organizations that help those who need it.

Perhaps there is more to this parable that can make it be for all of us, not just the lovers of money. Maybe this isn't a parable that is only about money and how to share it. Maybe this parable is about those chasms, those distances, what divides us and invites us to bridge those gaps, heal the divides, and can lessen the distances between each other and between us and God.

In the parable Jesus gave several details about what divided the character Lazarus (who is not the same person as the man Jesus raised from the dead in John's Gospel) from the character without a name simply called the rich man. The rich man seemed to be so distracted by consuming he didn't notice or pay attention to what was on the other side of his door or the walls around his house. Perhaps what made the distance greater was what the rich man loved: not just his money but

what his money got him: status, prestige, and abundance. There was and still is the belief that things like wealth and good health are signs a person is favored by God above others. This belief can make it difficult for those who subscribe to it to respect the dignity of people who have fewer resources and whose health is not so good. The very idea that God prefers someone over another contributes to the distance between people and people and God.

In Jesus' parable, things like wealth, status, privilege, and abundance were ambiguous. They were not the reason for the rich man's fate after his death, neither were they signs God thought the rich man was better than others. Most scholars agree the reversal of Lazarus and the rich man in the parable is symbolic of the eschatological reversal that will happen when God's Kingdom is finally fully realized here on earth. But what didn't change in the parable was the distance between the two characters. It was still there after both had died, and Jesus' parable infers the distance that might have been bridged or healed before their death was now permanent.

Which might make us wonder, what is powerful enough to bridge the gap? What could be strong enough to heal that which divides humanity and God? It isn't money. It isn't youth or beauty. It isn't technology. It isn't the right leader. It isn't age or wisdom. The thing that could have bridged the gap between Lazarus and the rich man is what was missing from the parable. Love. Not the kind of love people have for money or food or whatever they like to consume. It isn't romantic love. The love that is missing from the parable is the Love of God expressed in the practice of compassion.

I recently read that compassion has gotten sentimentalized so that it now means to feel pity or feel sorry for someone or something. However, this definition of compassion isn't helpful, because that is the kind of thinking that increases the distance between us by dehumanizing suffering by focusing on things like the unjust practices of institutions and corporations. Now, they still need to be called out for their poor actions, but not at the cost of the opportunity to bridge the distance when we can go deeper than pity and actually share the suffering of another person, which is the Biblical and theological definition of compassion.

It seems to me the rich man didn't only not pay attention to what going on outside his door, he failed to notice Lazarus' suffering. Perhaps the rich man, even with his wealth and status, couldn't fix the many corruptions and problems that put Lazarus in a state of extreme poverty and poor health, but there was certainly something he could have done for the one person outside his door. And if he had not only paid attention but let himself recognize and respect Lazarus as a person, then perhaps he would have felt a connection with him and done what he could to help

restore Lazarus to health. Such a compassionate response might have made them friends, despite their different stations in life. Through compassion, they might have grown closer to each other and closer to God. Which is a choice we all have.

While it isn't a parable, the history of the Jingle Dress from the Mille Lac Band of the Ojibwe Tribe from Northern Wisconsin, Minnesota and the Great Lakes region in the US and Ontario, Canada gives us a vision of what it looks like to choose compassion. The Jingle Dress, which became prevalent in the 1900's and 1920's, is a colorful dress worn by women for ceremonial dances. For most Indigenous cultures, dancing is a form of prayer and connection with the Great Spirit, and not a form a partying or entertainment. The dresses are covered in small metal cones that make a jingle sound when they touch during the dance. The dance of the Jingle Dress is a dance of healing, hope, and community born out of compassion that bridges the distance between people and between God.



The history goes that a medicine man was distraught because his young granddaughter was ill and efforts to heal her failed. In a dream, the medicine man saw the Jingle Dress. It was presented to him by his spirit guide – a being who connects a person to their ancestors and the Great Spirit - who told him to make the dress for the child and if she danced in it, she would be healed. The Jingle Dress was made, and the tribe came together to watch the little girl dance. But she had become too ill to

dance. So, the history goes, the tribe carried her while they danced; and as they danced, the child became well enough to join them, dancing on her own so that they were all dancing together. Today, the Jingle Dress is a both a ritual of healing and pride. You can see Indigenous women wearing Jingle Dresses and dancing on YouTube, as this ritual is still practiced.

I love how this origin story of a dress and a dance is also a tale of compassion and how the love that was not afraid to enter into the suffering of another led to healing, and brought a tribe, a people closer together and closer to the Great Spirit. No wonder it is a source of pride, it shows how the words from the movie *O, God!* are true: “However hopeless, helpless, mixed up and scary it all gets, it can work.”

While Jesus’ parable shows us what the absence of compassion looks like, through his life, his suffering on the cross, his death and resurrection, he shows us God became incarnate to carry us, like the Mille Lac Band carried a child, to heal that distance between us, the distance between each other and between us and God. God is not afraid to enter into our suffering, which means we don’t have to be afraid to notice the suffering around us and carry those who need to be carried a bit, and it also means letting ourselves be carried at times. That is why we still wear face masks in the church and some of us continue to wear them in public. We are aware there are still people who are vulnerable to the ill effects of the Covid-19 virus and its variants and wearing masks is a way of carrying each other.

Perhaps that is also what inspired our vestry to use funds to help children in our local community, especially children of color. By partnering with Children’s Social Services, we were able to help a child attend a State competition when his parents couldn’t afford to get him to it. Where he placed in the competition doesn’t matter as much as he had the opportunity to try, and who knows where that might take him. We also were able to provide care for children whose mother is undergoing a long medical treatment process for cancer so that she could rest and receive the medical care she needs while the children still got the care they need. They might lack the jingle of a dress, but these actions are part of the same dance of compassion, of carrying each other. They don’t fix the problems of injustice that contribute to poverty and inequality, but they are a way of recognizing the suffering of those on the other side of our door and a step to bridging the distance between us.

Such a distance isn’t overcome quickly, but step by step, moment by moment, each act of compassion is love knitting us closer together, and God’s Kingdom coming closer to earth. It is also living proof that through the compassionate love of God, “however hopeless, helpless, mixed up and scary it all gets, it can – and does - work.”

Sermon Engagement Questions:

Can you think of other examples of when someone has bridged the gap or lessened the distance between people or between people and God?

What can you do to help heal some of the divisions in your life?

The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost,
25 September 2022

To more on YouTube regarding the [healing powers of Jingle Dresses](#).

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, 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, 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. **

BIRTHDAY: Eleanor Halbauer (9/23), Isabella Martin (9/23), Joe Walker (10/1)

FOR THE DECEASED: Jane Ergood, Romaine Zeihen

** 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/ccc/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

Wednesday, September 28, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's

Wednesday, September 28, 7:00 p.m. -- Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, October 2, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, October 5, 7:00 p.m. -- Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, October 9, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, October 5, 7:00 p.m. -- Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, October 16, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Discretionary Sunday)

Wednesday, October 12, 7:00 p.m. -- Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, October 12, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's
Thursday, October 20, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting
Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 p.m. -- Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, October 23, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist
Wednesday, October 26, 7:00 p.m. -- Choir Rehearsal
Wednesday, October 26, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's
Sunday, October 30, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Events Looking Forward

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 (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

Mother Deborah and Michael are on Vacation

Starting Monday, September 26, Mother Deborah and Michael will be out of town on vacation. Please pray for their safe travel. They will return on Oct. 11.

Mother Deborah will not be checking her email while she is away.

Please direct any pastoral emergencies to the Senior Warden, Alex Buckley.

CrossRoads Café is closed until we find new staff.

If you know someone looking for a job and can work mornings, have them email chogs@chogs.org or contact Mother Deborah.

Blessings to Eleanor!

We will miss all the joy and dedication Eleanor brought to CrossRoads Café as its manager and we wish her well as she begins her new job at Athens Jobs and Family Services this week.

Below are a couple of pictures Michael took of our presentation of gifts of appreciation to Eleanor.





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.

Hiring New 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, contact Mother Deborah at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

Pay starts at \$12 an hour. No experience necessary, we provide paid training.

The Job description is available on our website chogs.org ([printable pdf file](#)) and or request one from Mother Deborah.



CROP WALK

Crop Walk will take place on Sunday, Oct. 2 at 1:45 pm at the Athens Community Center. Interested walkers should contact David Burton (740-593- 5634 or email: drabeja02@yahoo.com).

If you are not a walker, that's OK. Donations are joyfully welcomed. In the past Good Shepherd has been quite generous in helping feed the hungry through this program. Athens receives 25% of the total raised. This year that amount will be divided equally between the Athens County Food Bank and the Community Food Initiative. Stay tuned for more information as we get closer to October 2.

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](#).

[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.

Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

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[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

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 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.

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

[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.

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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