



Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

4 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 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 18-Tract 2):
Old Testament – Deuteronomy 30: 15-20
Psalm 1 (SAID)
New Testament – Philemon 1-21
Gospel – Luke 14: 25-33

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>

The Collect

GRANT US, O LORD, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Gospel



Luke 14:25-33

NOW LARGE CROWDS were traveling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit

down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

Gospel Engagement Question:

When Jesus talks about giving up all our possessions in order to be his disciple, what do you think he is talking about?

The Sermon

How to Choose

Here in America, it could be said one of the things we value most is the ability to choose. It is a commonly held assumption that choice is an act of individual freedom and expression. But social scientists who study choice and our human capacity to make healthy choices point out this assumption is false. Many times, what we think is a choice is really picking from different types of the same thing, like different kinds of noodles, soda, shirts, etc. in both brick-and-mortar stores and online, which is not the same thing as choosing. Choice is not consumerism, it is a practice, a discipline.

Social scientists describe choosing as a communal act, something that not only impacts the individual who made the choice, but the people and community around them, and possibly the world. When we make a choice, we will have to live with the consequences of the choice, good or bad. Our choices and their consequences can impact others. At its best, choice is about possibilities, making life better for all; at its worst, we don't always know how to choose.

The theme of making choices runs through all our readings this morning. Starting with our first reading from Deuteronomy, that comes at a pivotal moment in the lives of the Israelites when they came to the end of their long 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Moses had led them to the Promised Land and was about to transition out of leadership. Moses had done what he said he was going to do. Now the people were going into a

new phase of life, no longer nomads, they had to learn how to live in one place as part of a larger community. For this transition they needed a different kind of leader and they needed to be reminded God freed them from slavery under Egypt so they could use the freedom God gave them to choose to follow God. This would not be easy in a new culture. It would be tempting to forget God so they might fit in and do whatever everyone else does. Today's first reading is only part of a long speech Moses gave his followers that warned this choice would not go well for them. As God's people, they are asked to choose as God wants them to choose, to follow the 10 Commandments about loving God and loving their neighbor so the people they were going to be living with might learn about and come to know God. That is the choice, Moses said, that is life.

Moses did not mean life in the biological sense of eating, breathing, and reproducing. Moses meant life in the theological sense, being part of God's creation and reflecting God's image to the world.

This is the same choice Paul was putting before his friend and partner in ministry Philemon in the letter he wrote that was our second reading this morning. Paul was asking Philemon to choose life by liberating Onesimus from the debt that held him in slavery, so that both Philemon and Onesimus could grow closer to God and each other.

This brings us to the Gospel lesson today where Jesus was also talking about making choices, although in a more dramatic way. Today's Gospel opens with Jesus saying no one can be a disciple without hating their family. This can be shocking, especially for those of us who love our families and might also make us point back to the 10 Commandments that include honoring parents and wonder about Jesus possibly contradicting a commandment. Then Jesus went on to tell two parables about choices: no one chooses to build a large building without enough resources. No one chooses to go to war without some strategy. In both cases, choices are made first by taking some information into account and spending time considering the consequences.

These examples can help us better understand what Jesus meant when he spoke about hating family. The word translated "hate" in its original Greek does not mean estrangement like it does in our modern culture. The same word could also be translated: "not choose".

It is possible Jesus was talking about how those who follow him are to make choices. Following Jesus means letting Jesus influence how we make choices. Making choices like Jesus wants us to mean factoring love into our choices like the builder factors in resources and the king factors in strategy.

A quick example: after I was ordained a priest my life changed. Those

changes were the result of the choice I made to answer God's call to the priesthood. One of the biggest changes was how I observed holidays with my family. Before I was ordained, my family got together the evening on Christmas Day to open presents and have dinner. However, after two church services on Christmas Eve, one on Christmas morning and visiting shut ins who requested Holy Communion on Christmas Day, there was no way I had the energy to drive two hours to my parents' house. Nor did I have the space to host my family at my small apartment.

At first this change was uncomfortable, like any time you mess with tradition. It was also an opportunity for my family and I to choose to adapt to the change, which meant making different choices about how we would celebrate Christmas as a family. One option was my parents could continue to celebrate the family Christmas on the same day, but without me. Another option was to bring the family together on a different day for presents and a meal. To help make this decision my family turned to some traditional religious information. They know Christmas is a season that lasts twelve days starting on December 25. They also know some Christians celebrate with presents and meals on the twelfth day of Christmas instead on Christmas Day. My parents realized this meant they didn't have to celebrate Christmas on December 25; they were free to celebrate it on any of the twelve days and still be faithful to tradition. Something else that factored into the decision was how my family loves each other. It is more important to be together instead of having the dinner and presents on a specific day.

That is how my family made the choice to change when they celebrated the family Christmas. It was a break with tradition, but at the same time it was continuing the tradition of gathering as a family to enjoy the holiday. The decision-making process my family used reflects the love of God in Christ.

It is the same process Jesus was talking about in today's Gospel. Putting Jesus first didn't mean storming off when the family Christmas celebration no longer worked out the way it had in the past, it meant loving my family because I love Jesus (as does my family) and together persevering through some discomfort because we choose to love each other.

Jesus' words in today's Gospel are not that different from those of social scientists who talk about the art of choosing. We all have choices to make and how we make our choices can say a lot about who we are, what we value, and even form our lives. Like what Moses said to the Israelites in our first reading, when we factor in loving God and loving our neighbors when we make our choices, we are embodying God's love in the world. This might mean we will have less choices overall, because not all choices are about loving God and caring for each other, and that can be a

good thing.

Fewer choices do not mean fewer opportunities to make ourselves or the world better. In fact, sometimes fewer choices can be more life giving than a plethora of choices. Here is a brief example:

When Sheena Iyengar was a little girl, she dreamed of becoming a pilot. Her parents were immigrants from India who chose to come to the United States because they had big dreams. Growing up in New York City, Sheena was constantly told she could be whatever she wanted when she grew up. However, before she started elementary school, she was diagnosed with a rare disease that would cause her to lose her sight. There was no fixing it, no medicine, no miracle surgery. There was only acceptance. Which took a while. By the time she was in second grade, Sheena had lost most of her ability to see. When her teacher asked the class what they wanted to be when they grew up, Sheena eagerly said she wanted to be a pilot. The class laughed, and the teacher calmly dismissed her. That's when Sheena realized her dream would never come true. Without eyesight, she could not be a pilot.

While she could have despaired at this reality, Sheena instead found hope, strength, and resilience by focusing on what she could still choose to be when she grew up. Most teachers assumed she would go on permanent disability. However, a music teacher gave her a clarinet and taught her to play. Today she says there was no way she'd become a musician because she lacked talent. But what her music teacher did was help others recognize Sheena had more choices than disability. And Sheena realized she needed to make informed choices because whatever she chose, she would have to work harder than others to get past the gatekeepers and discrimination she would experience as a blind Indian American woman.

After graduating from several prestigious universities, today she is Dr. Sheena Iyengar, a professor at Columbia University, working in both Business Management and Psychology. Her life experiences influenced her to study how people make choices, and her first book *The Art of Choosing* has helped people in business, government, and in personal lives make choices that will make the world a better place. Dr. Iyengar recognizes that any life is a balance of adapting to things we do not choose – like losing her sight, or for others aging, job loss, or living in the time of a pandemic - by focusing on the choices we can make instead of obsessing over what is lost.

Long before there was a book on the topic, God made humans in God's image, giving us free will, and the freedom to choose. These days those words can get tangled up in politics and personal preferences, but the reason God gave us free will is because choices really do have possibility

for creating healthy relationships, communities, and people. Sometimes we forget the reason we have choices, and don't always choose well. Sometimes we can get overwhelmed by too many choices, and some people can become so overwhelmed they can't or won't choose. But even so, we have the choice to forgive ourselves and others and choose again. We might not always know how to choose, but when we remember the practice of making choices can also be a practice of love, one that deepens our relationship with God and our neighbors, it can help us view our choices differently and help us choose the life God dreamed for the world and for us.

Sermon Engagement Questions:

How do you make choices in your life? Have you thought of incorporating your faith in how you make choices? Why or why not?

The Rev. Deborah Woolsey, the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost,
4 September 2022

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: Harolyn Brient 9/9

** 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/ccd/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

Sunday, September 11, 10:30 a.m. - - Outdoor Service with special remembrance for 9/11

Wednesday, September 14, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl at Julie's

Thursday, September 15, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Sunday, September 18, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Sunday, September 25, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

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

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

Labor Day

Both the church office and CrossRoads Café will be closed for the holiday, Monday September 5.

Prayer and Reflection for Labor Day, Monday, September 5, 2022

There are lots of ways people observe Labor Day: cookouts, travel, shopping the sales. Since Labor Day is Monday this week, it gives us the opportunity to remember how the Church observes the day: with a prayer on page 261 in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we

seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the right aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Notice how this prayer does not lift up work for its own sake. Instead, the prayer reminds us we are connected and dependent on each other through our work, not matter the type of work we do.

The prayer implies our jobs do not define us; they are not *who* we are. Instead, the prayer points us to how our work and our jobs are how we participate in community. This is why we need to recognize people who have no job out of concern for their well being and ours, instead of ignoring or dismissing them or judging them unfairly.

In all that we all have been through the last two years, the reminder that our choices affect the common good really stood out to me as I read the prayer again.

What part of the prayer struck you?

However you plan to observe the holiday, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on how your job, your work, even if it is volunteer work or if you are retired, is connected to others around. I encourage you to say your own prayer of gratitude for your work, and that of others. May we all strive to do what we can for the common good, because that is how we all can thrive.

Many Blessings,

Mother Deborah

This afternoon we celebrated the Life for
Virginia Joyann “Jody” Smith.

The Homily was delivered by The Rev. David McCoy.

To read the homily please follow [this link.](#)



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

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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

[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

www.chogs.org

Blessings !

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

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