

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – 3 SEPTEMBER 2023:  
FOR THOSE WHO LABOR

Readings: Ecclesiastes 3:9-13; Psalm 107:1-9; 1 Corinthians 3:10-14; Matthew 6:19-24

Hymn 9, verses 4 – 6: Awake, Awake to Love and Work!

THE WORD OF GOD

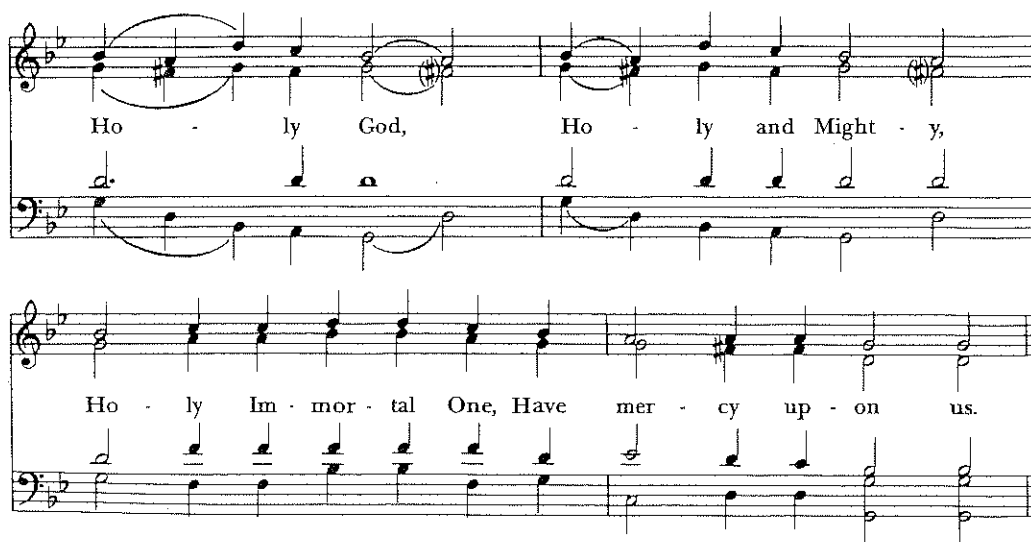
Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord, open our lips. **And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.**

Praise the Lord. **The Lord's Name be praised.**

*The cantor sings the Trisagion, and all repeat:*



The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*The people are seated.*

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

The writer of this book of wisdom literature reminds us that work should give our lives meaning and fulfillment in addition to material gain.

What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Psalm 107 is sung to the tune of Hymn #457, St. James. All remain seated.*

Give thanks to God, our gracious Lord, whose mercy ever stands;  
Proclaim that God has brought us safe from our oppressors' hands.

Some wandered in the desert wastes and found no place to stay;  
As thirst and hunger troubled them, their spirits ebbed away.

When they cried out in their distress, God listened to their prayer  
And toward a city turned their feet so they could settle there.

Let them give thanks for God's great love, compassion, wondrous deeds;  
When those who thirst and hunger come, God satisfies their needs.

Give glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit equally;  
As from the first it was, is now, and evermore shall be.

### A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Paul, author of First Corinthians, uses an analogy to building construction that the stronger the foundation, the more enduring will be the result; Jesus Christ being the most enduring foundation of all.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done. If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder will receive a reward.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

*all stand:*

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord. Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his Name.  
Spread the good news o'er all the earth: Jesus has died and has risen.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to Matthew. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon -- The Rev. Michael L. Bradley, rector

## Our Affirmation of Faith - What do we believe?

### We believe in God:

Whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives, whose love was made human in Jesus of Nazareth, whose love was crucified by the evil that can entrap us.

Therefore, though we sometimes are fearful and doubting, we trust in God, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves:

To the service of others, to seek justice, and to live in peace,

To care for the earth, to share the commonwealth of God's goodness,

To live in the freedom of forgiveness, the power of the spirit of Love,

And in the company of the faithful, to be the Church. For the glory of God. Amen.

### Prayers of the People

Remembering all of us who work and have worked, and remembering those around us who work, let us offer our prayers, responding; *Lord, bless the work of our hands.*

For all those who labor and work with minds and hands; that all may be fulfilled in what they do; let us pray: **R.**

For fair and just wages; for equitable benefits; for safe and secure working conditions; that all who labor may be safe;  
let us pray: **R.**

For those who have lost their jobs, who are unemployed or underemployed, or who face employment limitations; that they may be cared for and led to fulfilling work; let us pray. **R.**

For those who face discrimination, harassment, or abuse in the work place; that they may have advocates who support their quest for justice; let us pray. **R.**

For all employers, that they may have the means and support to provide a just, safe and secure work environment;  
let us pray: **R.**

For those who struggle to balance the demands of work and family; for those whose jobs require travel and relocation; for those who provide childcare so that parents may work; let us pray. **R.**

For the global family of all workers; for economies that provide needed goods and services, for prosperity that brings shared wealth, for means of production that safeguards the environment and sustains the planet; let us pray. **R.**

We pray also for the forgiveness of our sins. *Silence is kept, then all pray together:*

Have mercy upon us; **Most merciful God, in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown things done and left undone, and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Loving God, through your Son you gave us an example of how to love one another and how to embody this love in labor to serve the poor and the oppressed. Give us the strength to continue working to bring forth your kingdom here on earth— a kingdom of justice and peace, where all know compassion, grace and mercy. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

(adapted from an Interfaith Worker Justice resource, and posted on the University of Arizona website.)

## HOLY COMMUNION

*All persons are invited to share in the Eucharist and to receive the gifts of Christ's Presence in bread and wine. The bread is received in the palm of the right hand supported by the left; the wine by sipping from the cup or by dipping the bread. If you desire a blessing instead of receiving Communion, let the priest know when you come forward. Communion can also be brought to you where you are seated, if that is more convenient; please speak with a greeter.*

### **Offertory Hymn 586, Jesus, Thou Divine Companion, By Thou Lowly Human Birth**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give you thanks to you . . . . .  
who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of our Name:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord; God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest. Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna in the highest.**

*The celebrant continues with the Prayer of Consecration, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen.*

The gifts of God for the People of God. Take them and remember that Christ died for you.

Feed on him in your hearts by faith, and be filled with thanks.

*After all have received, please stand and pray together:*

**Everliving God; We thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of his Body, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. Now send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

The blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
by upon and remain with you, this day and forever. **Amen.**

Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Hymn 482, Lord Of All Hopefulness, Lord of All Joy**

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Our Mission: We share the light of Christ  
by loving and serving our neighbors in the world.

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