

## **Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, Track 1, Sunday, November 12, 2017**

**The Collect:** O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **First Lesson: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 read from the Message Bible**

Joshua called together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He called in the elders, chiefs, judges, and officers. They presented themselves before God. Then Joshua addressed all the people:

“This is what God, the God of Israel, says: A long time ago your ancestors, Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor, lived to the east of the River Euphrates. They worshiped other gods. I took your ancestor Abraham from the far side of The River. I led him all over the land of Canaan and multiplied his descendants.

“So now: Fear God. Worship him in total commitment. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped on the far side of The River (the Euphrates) and in Egypt. You, worship God.

“If you decide that it’s a bad thing to worship God, then choose a god you’d rather serve—and do it today. Choose one of the gods your ancestors worshiped from the country beyond The River, or one of the gods of the Amorites, on whose land you’re now living. As for me and my family, we’ll worship God.”

The people answered, “We’d never forsake God! Never! We’d never leave God to worship other gods.

“God is our God! He brought up our ancestors from Egypt and from slave conditions. He did all those great signs while we watched. He has kept his eye on us all along the roads we’ve

traveled and among the nations we've passed through. Just for us he drove out all the nations, Amorites and all, who lived in the land.

"Count us in: We too are going to worship God. He's our God."

Then Joshua told the people: "You can't do it; you're not able to worship God. He is a holy God. He is a jealous God. He won't put up with your fooling around and sinning. When you leave God and take up the worship of foreign gods, he'll turn right around and come down on you hard. He'll put an end to you—and after all the good he has done for you!"

But the people told Joshua: "No! No! We worship God!"

And so Joshua addressed the people: "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen God for yourselves—to worship him."

And they said, "We are witnesses."

Joshua said, "Now get rid of all the foreign gods you have with you. Say an unqualified Yes to God, the God of Israel."

The people answered Joshua, "We will worship God. What he says, we'll do."

Joshua completed a Covenant for the people that day there at Shechem.

### **The Word of the Lord**

#### **Psalm 78:1-7 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

1 Hear my teaching, O my people; \* incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable; \* I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.

3 That which we have heard and known, and what our forefathers have told us, \* we will not hide from their children.

4 We will recount to generations to come the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, \*

and the wonderful works he has done.

5 He gave his decrees to Jacob and established a law for Israel, \* which he commanded them to teach their children;

6 That the generations to come might know, and the children yet unborn; \* that they in their turn might tell it to their children;

7 So that they might put their trust in God, \* and not forget the deeds of God, but keep his commandments;

### **Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 read from the Modern English Version Bible**

But I would not have you ignorant, brothers, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and arose again, so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we shall be forever with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

### **The Word of the Lord**

### **Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13 read from the New American Standard Bible**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were

ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

## **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Prayer: On November 16th we remember Margaret, Queen of Scotland, read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Shakespeare made familiar the name of Macbeth and Macduff, Duncan, and Malcolm; but it is not always remembered that Malcolm married an English princess, Margaret, about 1070.

With considerable zeal, Margaret sought to change what she considered to be old-fashioned and careless practices among the Scottish clergy. She insisted that the observance of Lent, for example, was to begin on Ash Wednesday, rather than on the following Monday, and that the Mass should be celebrated according to the accepted Roman rite of the Church, and not in barbarous form and language. The Lord's Day was to be a day when, she said, "we apply ourselves only to prayers." She argued vigorously, though not always with success, against the exaggerated sense of unworthiness that made many of the pious Scots unwilling to receive Communion regularly.

Margaret's energies were not limited to reformation of formal Church practices. She encouraged the founding of schools, hospitals, and orphanages, and used her influence with King Malcolm to help her improve the quality of life among the isolated Scottish clans. Together, Margaret and her husband rebuilt the monastery of Iona and founded Dunfermline Abbey, under the direction of Benedictine monks.

In addition to her zeal for Church and people, Margaret was a conscientious wife and the mother of eight children. Malcolm, a strong-willed man, came to trust her judgment even in matters of State. She saw also to the spiritual welfare of her large household, providing servants with opportunity for regular worship and prayer.

Margaret was not as successful as she wished to be in creating greater unity in faith and

works between her own native England and the Scots. She was unable, for example, to bring an end to the bloody warfare among the highland clans, and after her death in 1093, there was a brief return to the earlier isolation of Scotland from England. Nevertheless, her work among the people and her reforms in the Church made her Scotland's most beloved saint. She died on November 16th, 1093 and was buried at Dunfermline Abbey.

**Let us pray:** O God, who called your servant Margaret to an earthly throne that she might advance your heavenly kingdom, and gave her zeal for your church and love for your people: Mercifully grant that we who commemorate her this day may be fruitful in good works, and attain to the glorious crown of your saints; though Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**