



Celebrate

Sunday, June 29, 2025
3rd Sunday after Pentecost

We have no good apart from God. That makes Jesus' call to follow him an invitation to freedom. This is freedom to revel in the Spirit's fruit: love, joy, peace, and patience. This is freedom to not be imprisoned by anything that would keep us from the fullness of the life God has given us. This is the path of life.

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, ruler of all hearts, you call us to obey you, and you favor us with true freedom. Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that, leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

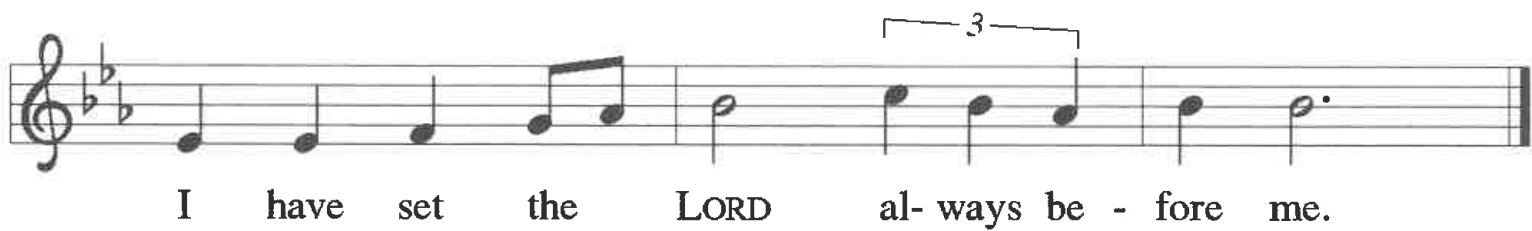
1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21

In the story preceding today's reading, the prophet Elijah flees for his life to the security of God's mountain. There God reveals to Elijah that there are still other faithful people in Israel and commissions him to anoint new leaders, including his own successor, Elisha.

Then the LORD said to [Elijah], "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place."

¹⁹So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and

threw his mantle over him. ²⁰He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" ²¹He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.



Protect me, O God, for I take ref-^luge in you;
I have said to the LORD,
“You are my Lord, my good a-^lbove all other.”
**²All my delight is in the godly that are ^lin the land,
upon those who are noble a-^lmong the people.**
**³But those who run after ^lother gods
shall have their troubles ^lmultiplied.**
**⁴I will not pour out drink offerings ^lto such gods,
never take their names up-^lon my lips. R**
**⁵O LORD, you are my portion ^land my cup;
it is you who up-^lhold my lot.**
**⁶My boundaries enclose a ^lpleasant land;
indeed, I have a ^lrich inheritance.**
**⁷I will bless the LORD who ^lgives me counsel;
my heart teaches me night ^lafter night.**
**⁸I have set the LORD al-^lways before me;
because God is at my right hand, I shall ^lnot be shaken. R**
**⁹My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spir-^lit rejoices;
my body also shall ^lrest in hope.**
**¹⁰For you will not abandon me ^lto the grave,
nor let your holy one ^lsee the pit.**
**¹¹You will show me the ^lpath of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy,
and in your right hand are pleasures for-^levermore. R**

For Paul, the freedom Christ gives is not permission to do whatever we want. It is the invitation to be what we could not be otherwise. The power and guidance of Christ's Holy Spirit produce a different kind of life, one marked by the fruit of this Holy Spirit.

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸But if

you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Gospel

Luke 9:51-62

Jesus is unwavering in his commitment to his mission in Jerusalem and will not be swayed by pettiness. In a series of striking cases in point, he calls his disciples to a similar single-mindedness.

When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will

follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶²Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Drawn into the embrace of the holy Trinity, we lift our prayers for the wholeness of the church, the world, and all creation.

A brief silence.

Guide your church, O God. Anoint us for service and make us messengers of your peace. Emboldened by the witness of (*your apostles Peter and Paul and*) Christians throughout history, send us to proclaim your reign come near. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Protect this world, O God. Watch over fields and fruit trees, foxes and birds, the pleasant land beneath us and the sun and moon above. Keep us mindful of the rich inheritance you have given us in the natural world. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Counsel our leaders, O God. Make them steadfast in seeking justice and unable to be shaken as they pursue peace. Lead them by your Spirit to listen and respond to the people they govern. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday 1 John 2:7-11. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Catherine Winkworth, 1878; John Mason Neale, 1866; hymn translators) Psalm 140. **Wednesday** Matthew 10:16-25. **Thursday** (Thomas, Apostle) John 14:1-7. **Friday** Psalm 66:1-9. **Saturday** Zechariah 14:10-21. **4th Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Jan Hus, martyr, 1415) Isaiah 66:10-14; Psalm 66:1-9; Galatians 6:[1-6] 7-16; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20.

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Uphold all who suffer, O God. Give refuge to those of us who know rejection, and shelter to those of us who have nowhere to lay our heads. Bring any who are sick into your healing presence (*especially*). Give all your fullness of joy. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Set free this assembly, O God. Grow your Spirit's fruits within us and within our congregation's ministries (*local ministries may be named*). Set our faces always on you, that we might live in the freedom to which you have called us. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Embrace all your saints, O God. We thank you for the faithful departed. Let us rejoice that you do not abandon us to the grave but lead us on the path of life. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Gather all our prayers in your mercy, O God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.