



Anglican Diocese of Wangaratta
Parochial District of Wangaratta West & The Warbys
THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST {OS 22}
1st September, 2024—Ante Communion 11.00 a.m.

The Welcome & Greeting

Blessed be the name of God, God of our ancestors,
God of the generations yet to come.

**Blessed be the Creating God, Redeeming Son
and the Sustaining Spirit.**

Come, let us worship God,
who gifted us with life and Creation to sustain life.

We praise God for the wondrous Creation.

Come, let us follow Lord Jesus Christ,
who inspires us to hope and act for justice and righteousness.

**We give glory to God,
who restores the groaning Creation and the vulnerable.**

Come let us move with the Holy Spirit,
striving to establish justice and produce the first fruits of hope.

**We praise God for the abundant life
that is assured to all Creation.**

Heavenly Triune God and Creator of all,
we gather here, made in the image of the Creator,

Who created in love.

We gather in the name of the redeemer, our Savior Jesus Christ,

Who reconciles all of Creation.

We gather in the presence of the life Giver, your Holy Spirit,

Who inspires new life and instils hope.

Hymn: TiS 135. Tune, All Things Bright and Beautiful

***All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful—
the Lord God made them all.***

- 1. The wildflowers in their beauty,
the mountain ranges tall,
the billabongs and rivers,
and friendly birds that call.**

Chorus

2. The cold wind in the winter,
the bright, life-giving sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden—
he made them every one.

*All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful—
the Lord God made them all.*

3. The coloured walls of gorges,
the gum trees green and tall,
the rocks, and pools, and palm trees,
the sparkling waterfall,

Chorus

4. The many-coloured corals,
the creatures of the sea,
of the bushland, field or desert,
on farms, or roaming free,

Chorus

5. He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty
who has made all things well.

Chorus

Cecil Frances Alexander 1818–95 (vv. 2 *alt.*, 5, and refrain)
Brian Black 1926– (vv. 1 and 3)
Compilers (v. 4)

Introduction to Confession

Human sin disfigures the whole creation,
which groans with eager longing for God's redemption.
We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

cf Romans 8.22,23

Consider the birds of the air;
they do not sow or gather into barns,
yet our heavenly Father feeds them.

Lord, have mercy.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow;
they do not toil nor spin,
yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Christ, have mercy.

How little faith we have.
Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Lord, have mercy.

Declaration of Forgiveness

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Gloria in excelsis

**Glorry to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray

God Most High,
maker of heaven and earth,
you created humankind in your own image
and entrusted the whole world to human care:
give us grace to serve you faithfully,
that we might be trustworthy stewards of your creation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The Song of Solomon [2. 8-13]

The voice of my beloved!

Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

Look, there he stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows,
looking through the lattice.

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Psalm 45. 1-2, 6-9

Side A = plain. Side B = italics **Altogether = bold**

My heart is astir with fine phrases, I make my song for a king:
my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

*You are the fairest of men, grace flows from your lips:
therefore has God blessed you for ever and ever.*

Your throne is the throne of God, it endures for ever:
and the sceptre of your kingdom is a righteous sceptre.

*You have loved righteousness and hated evil:
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness above your fellows.*

**All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes and cassia:
music from ivory palaces makes you glad.**

**Kings' daughters are among your noble women:
the queen is at your right hand in gold of Ophir.**

The Letter of James [1. 17-27]

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation
or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us
birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits
of his creatures.

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen,
slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's
righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank
growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted
word that has the power to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive
themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are
like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at
themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were
like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and

persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: Tune, Sussex (AHB 304).

- 1. Rise and hear! The Lord is speaking,
as the gospel words unfold;
we, in all our age-long seeking,
find no firmer truth to hold.**
- 2. Word of goodness, truth, and beauty,
heard by simple folk and wise,
word of freedom, word of duty,
word of life beyond our eyes.**
- 3. Word of God's forgiveness granted
to the wild or guilty soul,
word of love that works undaunted,
changes, heals, and makes us whole.**
- 4. Speak to us, O Lord, believing,
as we hear, the sower sows;
may our hearts, your word receiving,
be the good ground where it grow.**

Howard Charles Adie Gaunt (1902-1983)

The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Mark
[7. 1-8, 14, 15-21-23]

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders,

but eat with defiled hands?’ He said to them, ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honours me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’

¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, ‘Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.’

²¹ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.’

For the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Creed

We say together in faith:

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.**

**We believe in God the Father, who created all things:
for by his will they were created and have their being.**

**We believe in God the Son who was slain,
for with his blood he purchased us for God
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit and the Bride say ‘Come’.
Even so, come Lord Jesus! Amen.**

Time for reflection

Offertory Hymn: AHB 77 / TiS 137. Tune, Lucerna Laudoniae.

- 1. For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies,
*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.***

2. For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light,
Christ, our God, . . .
3. For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight,
Christ, our God,
4. For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild,
Christ, our God,
5. For each perfect gift divine
to our race so freely given,
graces all of your design,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven,
Christ, our God,
6. For the church that evermore,
lifting holy hands above,
offers up on every shore
the pure sacrifice of love,
Christ, our God,

Folliott Sandford Pierpoint 1835–1917 *alt.*

Offertory Prayer

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour,
and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray to God the almighty, the King of creation.

God said, 'Let there be light.'

Eternal God, we thank you for your light and your truth.

We praise you for your fatherly care in creating a universe which
proclaims your glory. Inspire us to worship you, the creator of all,
and let your light shine upon our world.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the heavens.'

We thank you for the vastness of the universe
and the mysteries of space.

We pray for all scientists and astronomers who extend the boundaries
of our knowledge.

As we contemplate the wonder of the heavens,
confirm us in the truth that every human being is known
and loved by you.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together,
and let dry land appear.'

We thank you for the beauty of the earth,
for the diversity of land and sea,
for the resources of the earth.

Give us the will to cherish this planet
and to use its riches for the good and welfare of all.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let there be lights in the sky
to separate the day and the night.'

We thank you for the warmth of the sun,
the light of the moon, the glory of the stars.
We praise you for the formations of clouds,
the radiance of dawn and sunset.

Save us from wasting or abusing the energy
on which all life depends.

Open our eyes to behold your beauty,
and our lips to praise your name.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the waters bring forth living creatures,
and let birds fly across the sky.'

We thank you for the teeming life of the seas,
and the flight of the birds.

Help us to protect the environment so that all life may flourish.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.'

We rejoice in the variety of animal life.

Grant us grace to treat all animals with respect and care;
to protect endangered species,

to preserve the variety of habitats,
and to honour the delicate balance of nature.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

God said, 'Let us create human beings in our own image.'

We pray for the human family.

We exult in its diversity and giftedness,

yet are often saddened by its sins, divisions and violence.

By the power of your Spirit, restore your image within us,

through Christ who came to remake us by his death and resurrection.

Today we especially for fathers. May your grace and blessing be with
each father, helping them to care, nurture and love as you do.

God of life:

hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty:

open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works;

that, rejoicing in your whole creation,

we may learn to serve you with gladness;

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to
pray,

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Notices

Hymn—TiS 187. Tune, Darwall.

1. **Let all creation dance in energies sublime,
as order turns with chance, unfolding space and time,
for nature's art in glory grows, and newly shows
God's mind and heart.**
2. **God's breath each force unfurls, igniting from a spark
expanding starry swirls, with whirlpools dense and dark.
Though moon and sun seem mindless things,
each orbit sings: 'Your will be done.'**
3. **Our own amazing earth, with sunlight, cloud and storms
and life's abundant growth in lovely shapes and forms,
is made for praise, a fragile whole, and from its soul
heaven's music plays.**
4. **Lift heart and soul and voice: in Christ all praises meet
and nature shall rejoice as all is made complete.
In hope be strong, all life befriend and kindly tend
creation's song.**

Brian Arthur Wren 1936–
based on Psalm 148

Concluding prayer and dismissal

Loving God,
we thank you for hearing our prayers,
feeding us with your word,
and encouraging us in our meeting together.

**Take us and use us
to love and serve you and all people,
in the power of your Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Go in peace,
to treasure and to tend
the world God made and loves.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Eucharist, Second Order Text from A Prayer Book for Australia (Sydney: Broughton Books, 1995)

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James 1:17–27

We rather value versatility and unpredictability in people. To say that someone is predictable is to imply that they are boring and hidebound. I suspect that this actually reflects the comparative security and dependability of a lot of our lives in the West. Most of us know where our next meal is coming from, when our next holiday will be, even quite accurately when our next baby will be born. We can afford the luxury of finding predictability boring. But that is still not the case for most of the world. Unpredictable weather can spell death, and an unplanned pregnancy starvation. No wonder that many cultures value God's immutability so highly. Even we, who think we like variety, may actually be unexpectedly hurt by friends or partners who leave us for someone new and more exciting. We say that they have acted out of character, when before we might have thought we found their whimsicality appealing. Or we travel in search of novelty and then recreate our own home wherever we go. Perhaps we are not entirely truthful with ourselves in thinking that stability is tedious. 'Yesterday, today, for ever, Jesus is the same. All may change, but Jesus never, glory to his name,' runs the chorus that has comforted many for years.

These verses from James are verses in praise of unchangingness. In God there is no change. Things from outside him cannot make God react uncharacteristically. Light does not force strange shadows from him, making him appear what he is not. God does not have to return to the drawing board each morning with his design and alter it to fit unpredicted events, and we cannot force God's hand by shouting at him.

But if this kind of language quickly degenerates into a description of God's master plan which seems to leave no space for genuine human freedom, read the rest of what James says in this chapter. He is not saying that God has a kind of gigantic crystal ball in which he has already seen everything that will ever be. Nor is he saying that we are just pieces on a celestial chessboard, destined to move only according to the rules. What he is actually saying is that nothing—nothing—nothing can make God act in a way that is not characteristic. God is so completely himself, at home with himself, at ease with himself, that he has the genuine freedom to be who he is, always. He is not trying to change to get

affection or a laugh or more power. God is wholly, dynamically content. And if that sounds like a contradiction in terms, just think of the one or two genuinely happy people you know. The late, great, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, for example, radiated a kind of energetic contentment that made everyone he was with feel more content to be themselves, and more determined to be better. Could that be, perhaps, a pale reflection of the nature of God?

Much modern Christian writing has misunderstood what is meant by the immutability of God, and has assumed that it makes God less loving, less personal, less like Jesus. But perhaps, in fact, God's unchangingness is a sign that God does not need to waste time worrying about himself at all, and so is wholly available, wholly present for us, in a way that no human being can ever be; because for us, some part of our own worry or insecurity always impinges, to a greater or lesser degree.

James is here exhorting us to imitate God in knowing what we are like. Unlike God, we may need to change, but even this cannot be done if we do not really know ourselves in the first place. We can, he says, know ourselves in a completely superficial way, so that we might recognize ourselves if glimpsed in a mirror, without having any idea of how we behave, or how others perceive us. Instead of looking into the mirror, we have to look, James suggests, into the steadfast nature of God, and begin to see ourselves truly. Slowly, slowly, as we get to know ourselves through God's eyes, our lives will become consistent with the great and liberating consistency of God. We will not have to vow each morning to behave with love and charity because love and charity will be what we are. At the moment they are still attributes that we can sometimes summon up and sometimes not, depending what kind of mood we are in. We need to work towards that perfect state that we see in the nature of God, where doing and being are never separated.

Jane Williams, (2005). *Lectionary Reflections: Year B* (pp. 102–103). SPCK.