Worship Resources for November 6th, 2016—Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

[All Saints Day resources can be found here](http://rev-o-lution.org/2016/10/21/worship-resources-for-october-30-2016-twenty-fourth-sunday-after-pentecost-also-including-resources-for-all-saints-day/).

Revised Common Lectionary: Haggai 1:15b-2:9 or Job 19:23-27a; Psalm 17:1-9 or Psalm 98 or Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20:27-38

Narrative Lectionary: Jonah and God’s Mercy, John 1:1-17, 3:1-10, 4:1-11 (Luke 18:3)

The prophet Haggai speaks to the governor of Judah and to the high priest in the time of the end of the exile, and laments that most who would recall the temple of old are gone, but there is hope: God will restore the temple, not to its former glory, but even greater. God is still keeping the promise made to the people when God brought them out of Egypt, and God is still leading them.

Job insists that God is his redeemer and that his redeemer lives in 19:23-27a. Though Job has suffered and his friends insist he must have done something wrong, or, as his wife said earlier on, he ought to curse God and die, Job refuses to curse God and refuses to succumb to the advice of his friends. Instead, Job insists that one day he will be vindicated and he will be face to face with God.

Psalm 17:1-9 calls upon God for justice, but also is confident of God’s answer and God’s steadfast love. The psalmist declares their own faithfulness to God, and through that faithfulness, they have confidence of God’s deliverance from the hand of their enemies.

Psalm 98 is a congregational call to worship, praising God for victory, for all the earth has seen God’s triumphant work in Israel. The psalmist calls forth all of creation to join in the proclamation of praise for God who is the judge of the earth, who judges with righteousness and equity.

Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21 is a song praising God for God’s greatness. God is just and kind, who hears the cries of those who speak out to him, and watches over all who love God. The psalmist begins and ends these sections with praising and blessing God.

The writer warns the readers in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17 to beware of being deceived, because in the time of this writing there was much turmoil. The early church was fractured with different movements. Revolution was brewing in Jerusalem, a revolution that would fail against Rome, with the temple being destroyed. The writer warns against following those who would lead them astray by lifting themselves up as if they were God. Instead, the writer encourages the readers to hold fast to the traditions they have been taught, and to stay true to the way of Christ.

Jesus is challenged by a group of Sadducees in Luke 20:27-38. The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in the resurrection, and challenged Jesus by a hypothetical story of a woman whose husband died. Per the law and tradition, to ensure inheritance remained within the family line, if a husband died, the woman had to marry the next brother, and their child would be considered the child of the first husband that died. So whose wife would she be in the resurrection? Jesus says they are asking the wrong question, because marriage is a question of this life now, of this age, but God is concerned with eternity where those who belong to the resurrection are not concerned about this, for marriage and property are concerns only of this age, not of the resurrection.

The Narrative Lectionary follows the story of Jonah this week. Jonah was called by God to prophesize against Nineveh and to declare their destruction. But Jonah runs away. God finds him at sea, sends a giant fish to bring him back, and Jonah says, “Ok, I’ll do it.” But when the people of Nineveh actually listen to Jonah, repent, and turn back to God, God doesn’t destroy them (hint: God doesn’t want destruction. God wants repentance, justice, and restoration!) And Jonah throws a temper tantrum about it, and God reminds Jonah that the lives of all those people (and the animals) are more important than his feelings about it, though God does acknowledge his feelings.

Luke 18:3 is the introduction to the parable Jesus tells of the widow going to the unjust judge (a Revised Common Lectionary passage a few weeks ago). Even though the judge was unjust, he finally gave in because of the widow’s persistence. God is a God of justice, who hears the cries of those who have faced injustice.

God is a God of eternity, not the short-term. Too often, we put our short-term constraints and ways of thinking upon God—whether it be our issues surrounding marriage or property, or following leaders who turn out to be false idols in themselves—or, like Jonah, fear of what other people will think about us rather than doing the hard work of justice God has called us to do. But God is in it for eternity, not the short-term, and if we can get our minds off of the short term, we might find the fullness and abundance of God’s love for all and truly practice justice and kindness, and move forward in humbleness with God.

Call to Worship (from Psalm 145:3,17-21)

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised!

 **God’s greatness is beyond measure.**

God’s ways are just and right;

 **All who call upon God in truth are heard, and God draws near to them.**

God watches over all who love the Lord

 **All who love God will bless God’s holy name forever.**

Come, worship God,

 **The one in whom we put our trust, in whose name we bless;**

 **We worship our God as one.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Sovereign God, we confess that we have put our trust in flawed human beings and propped up idols among our own. We have looked to our own versions of truth in our own corners without being open to listening to others. Furthermore, we have put our own desires above Your ways of justice and mercy, ignoring our neighbors in need, and demanding that our own perceptions be the only lens to see through. Forgive us for our selfishness, our short-sightedness, and our failure to live into our full potential as Your children. Forgive us for not being open to You and assuming that we have the answers, that we are right, and that we don’t have to listen to those we disagree with. Stop us from shouting over others, and move us to see one another as part of the beloved community. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

Whatever storm is in front of us will pass. Whatever challenge is ahead of us, we will get through. God is still leading us through the waters and through the fire. You are not alone. You are loved. You are needed. Trust in God, for while the world is uncertain, God is our rock, our refuge, our strength, and upon God we know we will see this through. Amen.

Prayer

Almighty God, in this time of divisiveness, as we choose new leaders, we pray for Your wisdom and guidance to be with us and with whoever is chosen to lead us. We pray for peace, knowing that violence is not of You or Your way. We pray that we may be one, as You our God are one. We pray that we might remember we are part of the body of Christ, diverse and varied but unified in common purpose, to serve and love You and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We pray for peace; we pray for unity; we pray that we will trust in You above all others, and follow Your ways. In the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, we pray. Amen.