Worship Resources for June 30th—Third Sunday after Pentecost

Revised Common Lectionary: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 and Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20; 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21 and Psalm 16; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

Narrative Lectionary: Series on Psalms, Psalm 27:1-6 (Matthew 6:25-34)

Our first selection of the Hebrew scriptures in this season after Pentecost follows the prophets. We began with Elijah last week, and now, the mantle is passed to Elisha in 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14. Twice Elijah told Elisha to remain behind, but Elisha refused to leave him. Elijah used his mantle to strike the river Jordan and to pass through, as the Israelites passed through on dry ground when they came to the promised land. Before Elijah was taken up by the whirlwind, Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit. Elisha mourned when Elijah was taken up, tearing his clothes, but afterward, he picked up Elijah’s mantle, struck the Jordan and crossed back over, taking up Elijah’s role as prophet over Israel.

In Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20, the psalmist calls to God in their distress, but also takes comfort in the work of God. The psalmist meditates on the greatness and holiness of God, recalling God’s mighty act of delivering the people of Israel out of Egypt, leading them by the hand of Moses and Aaron. The psalmist sees God as a warrior, holding back the waters with arrows, and the waters trembled in fear. God is the one who works wonders and redeems the people from destruction.

The second selection of the Hebrew scriptures takes place before our first selection. In 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21, God told Elijah to anoint a new king of Aram along with a new king over Israel, and to anoint Elisha as prophet in his place. When Elijah found Elisha, he threw his mantle over him, but Elisha wanted to go say goodbye to his parents first. Elijah told him to go home, but Elisha returned only to slaughter his oxen, boil them and serve it to the people. Then he followed Elijah.

The psalmist calls out to God for protection in Psalm 16. Though others may choose other gods, the psalmist has chosen the Lord, their God, who instructs them and is present with them. God has kept them from death and has shown them the good way of life.

In Galatians 5, Paul speaks of living by the Spirit instead of the ways of flesh, to bear spiritual fruit. In arguing that they were no longer under the law, but that all were children of God by faith, Paul warns against using this as an excuse for self-indulgence. Rather, by the Spirit, all the faithful will show the work of the Spirit in their lives, of love, kindness, gentleness, and peace. For those led by the Spirit are guided by the Spirit.

In Jesus’ ministry, he and the disciples traveled to different villages. In Luke 9:51-62, they entered a village of Samaritans, but they were not welcomed, because Jesus was already focusing on Jerusalem. However, James and John (known as Sons of Thunder in Mark 3:17) ask Jesus if they ought to call down fire on the village. Jesus rebukes them instead. As they travel on the road, others want to follow Jesus, but something is holding them back. Jesus warns they will have no home, and they cannot look back, if they truly want to follow him.

The Narrative Lectionary continues its series on the Psalms with Psalm 27:1-6. As enemies drawn near, the psalmist sings of their trust in God, that God is their light and salvation. The psalmist is assured of God’s presence and deliverance and sings to the congregation that they will dwell with God forever, for God is faithful.

Jesus tells the disciples not to worry in Matthew 6:25-34. God has provided for all of creation, surely God will provide for all. Worrying does not do anything to help; instead, as Jesus teaches, work for the kingdom of God. When we are working together for the reign of God, when we care for other’s needs, we find our own needs are met. God knows what they are, and when we work together for God’s beloved community, we take care of each other.

Following Jesus comes at a cost. It is a commitment of our whole life, all of who we are. It is not a job that we leave at the end of the day, but a way of being. If we live by the Spirit, we are led by the Spirit, and we produce spiritual fruit. We are known by our love, by our actions, if we follow Jesus. The Way, as it once was known, must become our way of life.

Call to Worship

The Spirit is moving us,

 **To care for the world God has given us, as stewards of God’s gifts.**

The Spirit is moving us,

 **To follow Christ’s call to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

The Spirit is moving us,

 **To boldly proclaim God’s reign of justice and peace.**

The Spirit is moving us now, in this time of worship:

 **May we be filled with the Holy Spirit, for the holy work of God.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Holy One, we confess that we have failed to care for the gifts You have given us. We’ve consumed more than we need and misused the resources entrusted to us for generations. We’ve failed to love our neighbors as ourselves, when love is the greatest gift from You. We’ve hoarded our gifts instead of using them for the good of all. At times, we have denied our gifts, refused to believe we have anything of use. Forgive us, O God, and call us into accountability. Forgive us, O God, and restore our faith and spirit. Forgive us, O God, and lead us into mutual responsibility to care for all You have given us. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

The Giver of all Good Gifts needs you. God made you with intention, to love and care for others. You are a blessing. You are a gift. Share who you are with others, knowing God’s love, forgiveness, and mercy are always yours to have, and to share. Amen.

Prayer

God Who Knows Us by Name, speak to us above the noise of the world. Speak to us through the love and wisdom of others. Speak to us in our grieving so we may recognize Your presence, as you did with Mary in the garden. Speak to us in our struggles and wandering, as you did with Paul. Speak to us so we may lead with boldness into Your ways, as you did to Moses and Miriam, Deborah and Elijah. Speak our names, and send us into Your world with Your love, justice, and mercy. Amen.