

## **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Oct. 3**

The Collect and Psalms will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer. The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from The Amplified Bible.

**The Collect:** O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Track 1 Old Testament: Exodus 17:1-7**

17 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel moved on from the Wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water so we may [have something to] drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you tempt the Lord and try His patience?" 3 But the people were thirsty for water; and the people murmured against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." 5 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; there you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may [have something to] drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place [where this miracle occurred] Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the [patience of the] Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Track 1 Psalm: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16**

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.

12 He worked marvels in the sight of their forefathers, \*

in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He split open the sea and let them pass through; \*

he made the waters stand up like walls.

14 He led them with a cloud by day, \*

and all the night through with a glow of fire.

15 He split the hard rocks in the wilderness \*

and gave them drink as from the great deep.

16 He brought streams out of the cliff, \*

and the waters gushed out like rivers.

## **Track 2 Old Testament: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32**

18 The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, 2 “What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel,

‘The fathers eat sour grapes [they sin],

But the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

3 As I live,” says the Lord God, “you are certainly not going to use this proverb [as an excuse] in Israel anymore. 4 Behold (pay close attention), all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.

25 Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right? 26 When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits sin and dies because of it, it is for his sin which he has committed that he dies. 27 Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life. 28 Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions which he had committed, he shall certainly live; he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right!' O house of Israel, are My ways not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each one in accordance with his conduct," says the Lord God. "Repent (change your way of thinking) and turn away from all your transgressions, so that sin may not become a stumbling block to you. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed [against Me], and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore, repent and live!"  
**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

## **Track 2 Psalm: Psalm 25:1-8**

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;  
my God, I put my trust in you; \*  
let me not be humiliated,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

2 Let none who look to you be put to shame; \*  
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

3 Show me your ways, O Lord, \*  
and teach me your paths.

4 Lead me in your truth and teach me, \*  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
in you have I trusted all the day long.

5 Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, \*

for they are from everlasting.

6 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; \*

remember me according to your love

and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

7 Gracious and upright is the Lord; \*

therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

8 He guides the humble in doing right \*

and teaches his way to the lowly.

### **Epistle: Philippians 2:1-13**

2 Therefore if there is any encouragement and comfort in Christ [as there certainly is in abundance], if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship [that we share] in the Spirit, if [there is] any [great depth of] affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, having the same love [toward one another], knit together in spirit, intent on one purpose [and living a life that reflects your faith and spreads the gospel—the good news regarding salvation through faith in Christ]. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit [through factional motives, or strife], but with [an attitude of] humility [being neither arrogant nor self-righteous], regard others as more important than yourselves. 4 Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this same attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus [look to Him as your example in selfless humility], 6 who, although He existed in the form and unchanging essence of God [as One with Him, possessing the fullness of all the divine attributes—the entire nature of deity], did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped or asserted [as if He did not already possess it, or was afraid of losing it]; 7 but emptied Himself [without renouncing or diminishing His deity, but only temporarily giving up the outward expression of divine equality and His rightful dignity] by assuming the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men [He became completely human but was without sin, being fully God and fully man]. 8 After He was found in [terms of His] outward appearance as a man [for a divinely-appointed time], He humbled Himself [still further] by becoming obedient [to the Father] to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also [because He obeyed and so completely humbled Himself], God has

highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow [in submission], of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess and openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord (sovereign God), to the glory of God the Father.

12 So then, my dear ones, just as you have always obeyed [my instructions with enthusiasm], not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation [that is, cultivate it, bring it to full effect, actively pursue spiritual maturity] with awe-inspired fear and trembling [using serious caution and critical self-evaluation to avoid anything that might offend God or discredit the name of Christ]. 13 For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure.

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32**

23 When He entered the temple area, the chief priests and elders of the people came to Him as He was teaching and said, “By what [kind of] authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority [to exercise this power]?” 24 Jesus replied to them, “I will also ask you a question, and if you tell Me the answer, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John—from where did it come? From heaven [that is, ordained by God] or from men?” And they began debating among themselves [considering the implications of their answer], saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Then why did you not believe John?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From men,’ we are afraid of the [response of the] crowd; for they all regard John as a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what [kind of] authority I do these things.”

28 “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and changed his mind and went. 30 Then the man came to the

second son and said the same thing; and he replied, 'I will, sir'; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of the father?" The chief priests and elders replied, "The first one." Jesus said to them, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you [walking] in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even change your mind afterward and believe him [accepting what he proclaimed to you].

## **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Pray: On October 7 we celebrate the life of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Lutheran Pastor in North America. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg is regarded as the patriarch of Lutheranism in North America.

Muhlenberg, born near Hannover, Germany, in 1711, received his education in Gottingen and Halle before immigrating to the American colonies in 1742. Lutherans came to the colonies from a variety of regional and ethnic backgrounds and tended to build churches wherever they settled, sometimes with Lutherans of different origins settling in closer proximity to each other. There was little organization among these disparate groups until the arrival of Muhlenberg.

Upon his arrival, Muhlenberg visited Lutherans in coastal Carolina and Georgia before making his way to Philadelphia. With enormous energy and unflagging patience, Muhlenberg began to call together the Lutherans, first the Germans, then the Swedes, until the formation of the first Lutheran synod in America in 1748, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. At the inaugural synod, Muhlenberg offered a common liturgy for use among Lutherans. The liturgy was adopted and became the essential element in unifying the Lutherans in America for several generations. Muhlenberg's axiom, "one book, one church," has been a benchmark for liturgical revision among North American Lutherans to the present day.

Muhlenberg also recognized the pastoral challenges of organizing a new church in the New World. In the old countries, the church was closely allied with the state. Taxes to support the churches were collected by the state, and Christian education was part of the curriculum in every school. In the New World, the churches were to be voluntary, self-supporting associations, and education in matters of Christian faith was to be the concern of church and home.

Muhlenberg's family played prominent roles in the birth of the new nation. One of his sons served as a brigadier general in the Revolution, while another was a member of the Continental Congress and later the first speaker of the House of Representatives. His great-grandson, William Augustus Muhlenberg, was a priest who shaped The Episcopal Church in the mid-nineteenth century.

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg died on October 7, 1787.

**Let us pray:** Loving God, shepherd of your people, we thank you for the ministry of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, who left his native land to minister where called; make us mindful of our own vocation to serve where you call us; in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**