

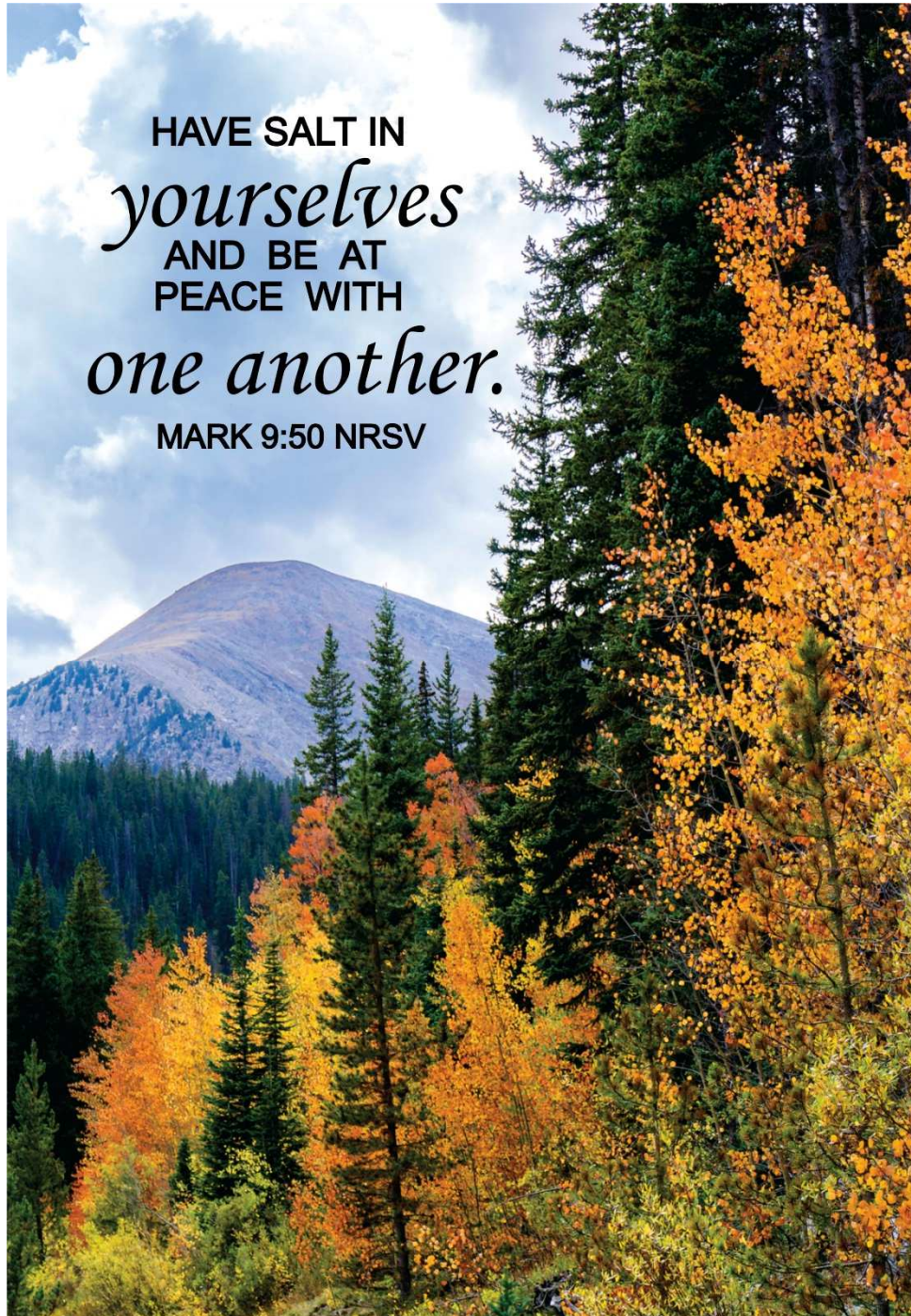
St. Columba's Episcopal Church

1251 Las Posas Road, Camarillo, California 93010

(805) 482-8831 www.stcolumbaca.com

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson, Rector

Brett Hanley, music director



The 19th Sunday after Pentecost / Proper 21
September 29, 2024, 9:30 a.m.

THE WORD OF GOD

Prelude – “Sweet Hour of Prayer” (W. Bradbury) – Brett Hanley, organ

Welcome – The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson

Welcoming Prayer

C: Holy Spirit living within us, guide our hearts and minds as we welcome today all those who worship with us at St. Columba’s. Give us discerning hearts so that everyone who crosses our threshold feels welcomed in the warmth of your love. Amen.

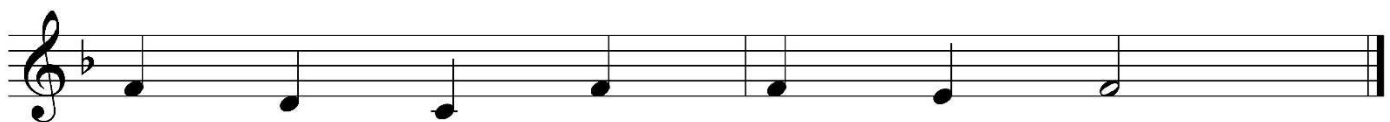
Opening Hymn – # 414 – “God, My King, Thy Might Confessing” – Verses 1-3



1. God, my King, thy might confessing, ever will I
2. Honor great our God befitting; who his majesty
3. They shall talk of all thy glory, on thy might and



bless thy Name; day by day thy throne addressing,
thy can reach? Age to age his works transmitting,
greatness dwell, speak of thy dread acts the story,



still will I thy praise proclaim.
age to age his pow'r shall teach.
and thy deeds of wonder tell.

Words: Richard Mant, 1776-1848; para. of Psalm 145:1-2

Music: STUTTGART (87. 87), from *Psalmodia Sacra, oder Andächtige und Schöne Gesänge*, 1715;
adapt. and harm. William Henry Havergal, 1793-1870.

Opening Acclamation and Collect for Purity

P: Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

C: Glory to God forever and ever.

P: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise – “Glory to God” (Powell)

1. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and
peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly
King, al - mighty God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we
give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus
Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you
take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy
on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -
ceive our prayer. 6. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One,
you a - lone are the Lord, 7. you a - lone are the Most

High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the
glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Collect of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray.

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.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson – Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22

The king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me— that is my petition— and the lives of my people— that is my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king.” Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?” Esther said, “A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated. Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

L: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 124

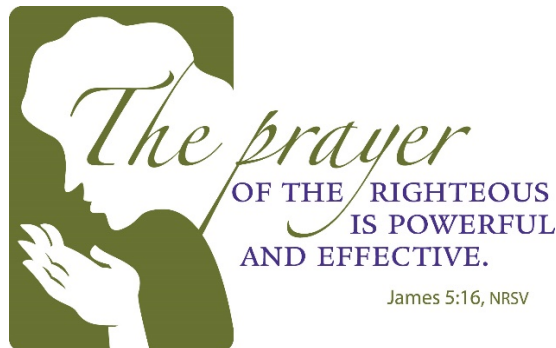
- 1 If the Lord had not been on our side, *
let Israel now say;
- 2 If the Lord had not been on our side, *
when enemies rose up against us;
- 3 Then would they have swallowed us up alive *
in their fierce anger toward us;
- 4 Then would the waters have overwhelmed us *
and the torrent gone over us;
- 5 Then would the raging waters *
have gone right over us.
- 6 Blessed be the Lord! *
he has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.
- 7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler; *
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.
- 8 Our help is in the Name of the Lord, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

Second Lesson – James 5:13–20

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

L: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us.

C: **Thanks be to God.**



Gradual Hymn – # 536 – “Open Your Ears, O Faithful People”



1. O - pen your ears, O faith - ful peo - ple,
 2. They who have ears to hear the mes - sage,
 3. Is - ra - el comes to greet the Sa - vior,
 4. O - pen your ears, O faith - ful peo - ple,



o - pen your ears and hear God's word. O - pen your hearts, O
 they who have ears, then let them hear. They who would learn the
 Ju - dah is glad to see his day. From east and west the
 o - pen your ears and hear God's word. O - pen your hearts, O



roy - al priest - hood, God has come to you.
 way of wis - dom, let them hear God's word.
 peo - ples tra - vel, he will show the way.
 roy - al priest - hood, God has come to you.

Fine



God has spo - ken to his peo - ple, Hal - le - lu - jah!



And his words are words of wis - dom, Hal - le - lu -



jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! God has spo - ken to his peo - ple,



Hal - le - lu - jah! And his words are



words of wis - dom, Hal - le - lu - jah!

D.C.

Words: Willard F. Jabusch, 1930-2018, alt.

Music: TORAH SONG (YISRAEL V'ORAITA), 98. 95 with Refrain,

Hassidic melody; arr. Richard Proulx, 1937-2010.

Gospel – Mark 9:38-50

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark

C: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me.

Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell., And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Homily – The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**



Prayers of the People

The Leader and People pray responsively.

LEM: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

C: That we all may be one.

LEM: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

C: That your Name may be glorified by all people.

LEM: We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons; for our Bishops **Justin** (Archbishop of Canterbury), **Michael** (Presiding Bishop), and **John**; for our Clergy, Staff, and Vestry; and for all ministers and people;

C: That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

LEM: We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world; for those who serve our country and the world;

C: That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

LEM: Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

C: That our works may find favor in your sight.

LEM: Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble; we pray especially for John, Ann, Jordan, Shelby, Wendie, Robb, Heather, Bruce, Keli, Jack, Chris, Gail, Cameron, Jenée, Maggie, Eileen, Declan, John, Emily, Bobbie, Alison, Chance, John, Steve, Linda, Mary, Richard, Lisa, and Ivan.

C: That they may be delivered from their distress.

LEM: Give to the departed eternal rest, especially Stephen Rosebrook.

C: Let light perpetual shine upon them.

LEM: We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

C: May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

LEM: Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence may be kept.

[The people may add their own petitions.]

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

P: Send your Spirit into all the earth, O God, that every human being may know your love, grow in faith, and serve your creation in grateful humility, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

(Our Prayers are from the Book of Common Prayer, Form III, and by David Adam, Traces of Glory: Prayers for the Church Year.)

Confession and Absolution

LEM: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

**ALL: Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.**

P: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

C: Amen.

The Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

C: And also with you.

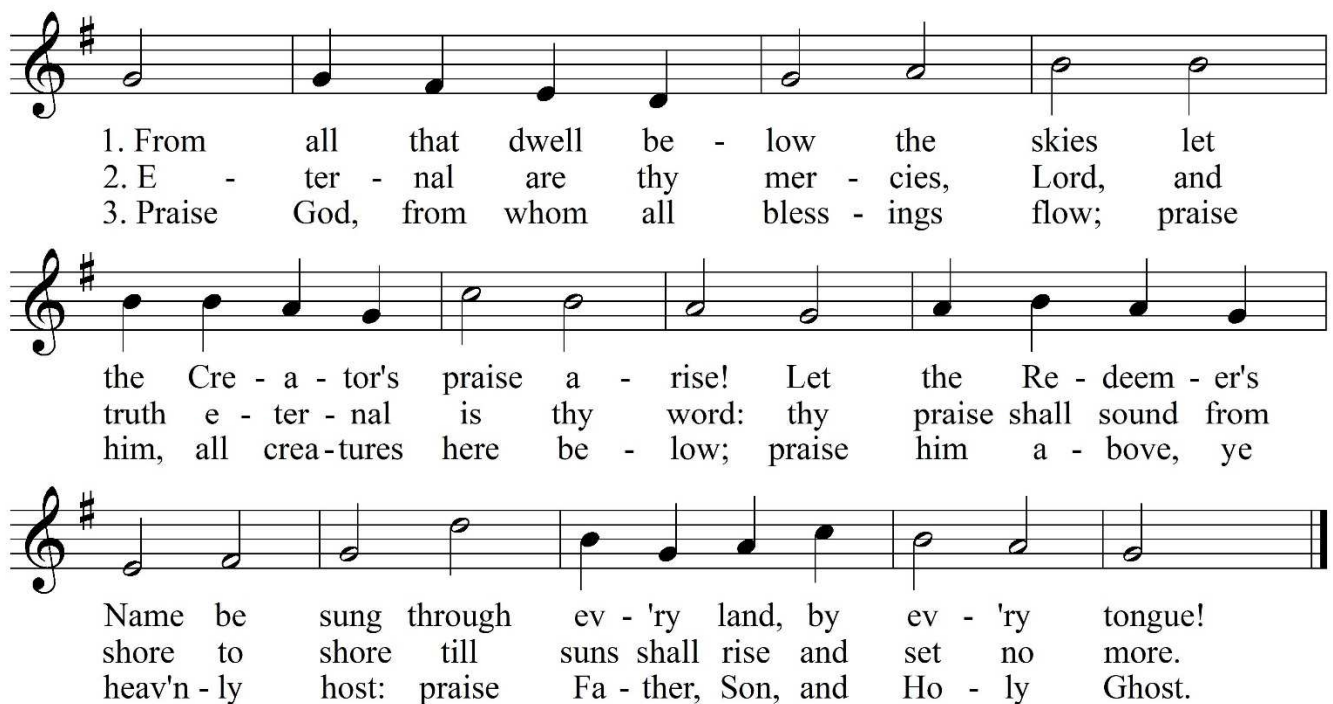
Announcements

Birthdays and Anniversaries

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your *servants* as *they* begin another year. Grant that *they* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *their* trust in your goodness all the days of *their* lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Offertory – “It’s Me, It’s Me, O Lord” (spiritual) – Brett Hanley, organ

Presentation Hymn – # 380 – “From All that Dwell Below the Skies”



1. From all that dwell be - low the skies let
2. E - ter - nal are thy mer - cies, Lord, and
3. Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise
the Cre - a - tor's praise a - rise! Let the Re - deem - er's
truth e - ter - nal is thy word: thy praise shall sound from
him, all crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
Name be sung through ev - 'ry land, by ev - 'ry tongue!
shore to shore till suns shall rise and set no more.
heav'n - ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Words: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, para. of Psalm 117. St. 3, Thomas Ken, 1637-1711.

Music: OLD 100TH (LM), melody from *Pseaumes octante trois de Davis*, alt;
harm. after Louis Bourgeois, 1510?-1561?

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Eucharistic Prayer (Prayer A from *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 361)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

P: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

[Here a proper preface is sung or said.]

P: Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Setting: Robert Powell, 1932-

The people stand or kneel.

P: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

P: On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

P: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

P: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

C: Our Father,

who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy Name,

thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

Fraction Anthem

Cantor or Choir

My flesh is food in - deed, and my blood is drink in -

1. *All* 2. *Cantor or Choir*

deed, says the Lord. My Lord. Those who eat my

All

flesh and drink my blood dwell in me and I in them. My

flesh is food in-deed, and my blood is drink in-deed, says the Lord.

Setting: Ray W. Urwin.

The Invitation

P: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

All are invited to come forward to the two stations for Communion at the direction of the ushers. Receive the wine by drinking from the chalice as it is offered to you, or by retaining the wafer, and a Lay Eucharistic Minister will dip it in the wine and place it back in your hand. If you are not receiving, you may cross your arms over your chest and receive a blessing. If you are unable to physically come to the rail, please indicate to an usher that you would like to receive Communion at your seat.

Post-Communion Prayer

C: Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

Closing Hymn – # 344 – “Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing”



1. Lord, dis - miss__ us__ with thy bless - ing; fill our hearts with
2. Thanks we give__ and a - dor - a - tion for thy Gos - pel's
3. So that when thy love shall call__ us, Sa - vior, from the__



joy and peace; let us each, thy__ love pos - sess - ing,
joy - ful sound: may the fruits of__ thy sal - va - tion
world a - way, fear of death shall not ap - pall__ us,



tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace: O__ re - fresh us,
in our hearts and__ lives a - bound: ev - er__ faith - ful,
glad thy sum - mons to o - bey. May we__ ev - er,



O__ re - fresh us, trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
ev - er__ faith - ful to__ thy truth may we be found;
may we__ ev - er reign with thee in__ end - less day.

Words: Att. John Fawcett, 1739/40-1817.

Music: *Sicilian Mariners*, Sicilian melody (87. 87. 87.); first published
The European Magazine and London Review, 1792, alt.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude – “Do, Lord, Remember Me” (spiritual) – Brett Hanley, organ

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*Thank you for your continued support of **St. Columba’s Episcopal Church** (www.stcolumbaca.com). Your financial donations help us to continue our ministries. Thanks for all you do in helping St. Columba’s to be a beacon of God’s hope and love to our community.*

Rector—Our rector is the **Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson**. If you need to reach him during the week, his email address is michael.anderson@stcolumbaca.com.

Coffee Hour—All are welcome to enjoy Coffee Hour in our parish hall and on the patio after worship.

Morning Prayer—Fr. Michael Anderson invites you to join him in the Chapel to start your day with Morning Prayer at **9:00 a.m.**, on **Mondays and Wednesdays**. All are welcome.

Stewardship Reflections—Our annual Stewardship pledge campaign is “Walk in Love,” and includes weekly reflections printed on the last page of the bulletin. We invite you to study these reflections each week as you “walk in love.”

Celtic Christmas Faire—Our annual fundraiser, the Celtic Christmas Faire, will be November 2-3. Beginning in October, we will be collecting book and puzzle donations to sell at the Faire, and these items can be dropped off in the parish hall. Questions, see Carol Rocco.

Adult Forum—St. Columba’s Health Ministry will be presenting three Forums at 11:30 a.m. on upcoming Sundays:

- **TODAY, September 29:** Come learn how to preserve dignity and provide peace of mind for you and your family if you were to be unable to make medical decisions for yourself. Materials will be provided.
- **October 6:** What is the difference in a POLST and Advance Health Care directive. While everyone 18 and over should have an Advance Health Care directive, not everyone should have a POLST. Come and learn the difference.
- **October 13:** Home Health, Palliative Care, or Hospice? We’ll discuss the differences and rules associated with each program. This is good knowledge for you or the one you may care for.

Coming in October

Blessing of the Animals—Next Sunday, **October 6**, at **9:30 a.m.** will be our annual Blessing of the Animals worship, outside on the patio. Bring your pets, even photos of them; stuffed animals too!

Fundraiser—Come celebrate **Oktoberfest** at St. Columba's on **Saturday, October 12**, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. We'll enjoy traditional German food, drink, music, and fun and usher in the fall season together. Tickets are \$20/adults and \$10/kids and can be purchased after church. Please get your tickets soon to help us know how many to plan for.

Three Congregations Taizé—If you’re interested in a contemplative, meditative type of worship, the Three Congregations (Camarillo United Methodist, Mount Cross Lutheran, and St. Columba’s Episcopal Churches) are offering in-person Taizé-style prayer, held in the intimate setting of the Mount Cross sanctuary (102 Camino Esplendido, 93010) on the 2nd Friday of each month, at 7:00 p.m.—**Friday, October 11** next month. If you are interested in participating as a musician, lector, or intercessor, please contact the Mount Cross office (office@mountcross.com or 805-482-3847).

VACCINATIONS FOR RESPIRATORY VIRUSES CUT HOSPITALIZATIONS BY 50%
Vaccines for respiratory viruses are proven to cut hospitalizations by up to 50%, which is particularly important for vulnerable populations like the elderly, those with pre-existing health conditions, and individuals with weakened immune systems. 21,000 people died and 369,000 individuals were hospitalized for the flu during the 2022-2023 influenza season. Please consider getting vaccinated.

Prayer Request Procedures—Prayer is integral to our community, and we would love to pray for you. To add or remove someone from the prayer list, please email the church office at office.manager@stcolumbaca.com or call 805-482-8831.

Food Ministries Help—We are grateful to serve over 60 families three times per month. As we continue to do so, we need the following items: **cereal, oatmeal, pasta sauce, pasta, canned soup, mac & cheese, canned tuna, canned chicken, fresh bread, toilet paper, paper towels, and Kleenex.** If you would like to donate any of these items, you can bring them on Sunday or drop them off at the parish hall during the week. Alternatively, you can donate to our Food ministry fund, by indicating “Food Ministry” in the memo of your check. Your support is so appreciated by our food clients who truly need our help!

Ministers serving today:

Presider: The Reverend Dr. Michael P. Anderson

Altar Guild: Sarah Wigert and Mary Steppes-Cole

Ushers: Gail & Maurice Hill

Lector: Maria Fernandez

Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Marianne Hyde and Maria Fernandez

Sound Technicians: Tim Helton, Nancy Miller, Vinita Bhushan, Richard Stone, Carlos Barraza, Bill Hillbrant

IN OUR PRAYERS

We pray for

those with immediate needs:

John Barcroft, Ann Daniel, Jordan Hyde, Shelby Prather, Wendie Roberts, Robb, Heather, Bruce Anderson, Keli, Jack Shutt, Chris Russell, Gail Morrissette, Cameron Harrison, Jenée John, Maggie Lunsky, Eileen Ely, Declan, John Fredrick, Emily Bianco, Bobbie Shufani, Alison Hillbrant, Chance Kubinak, John Noonan, Linda Lowe, Mary Vasi, Richard Lappine, Lisa, Ivan

and those who need our continuing prayers:

Ann Radzienda, Alan Amendt

For the repose of the soul of: Stephen Rosebrook and for his family and friends

We pray for all those serving at home and abroad:

- **Jesse Meyer, Liam O'Brien, Matthew Bamberger, Matt Zelinskas, Nathan Halpin, Jonah Hershman, and Chris Heney.**

The flowers on the High Altar are given by Judith Laurentowski to the glory of God and in memory of dear family and friends.



To make changes to the prayer list for St. Columba's, please contact the church office (office.manager@stcolumbaca.com) or 805-482-8831.



Walk in Love

Crossing Boundaries



The Chosen is a show that depicts Jesus and the disciples during his ministry. It is a unique and intimate exploration of what it might have been like to be with Jesus during the tumultuous three years of his official ministry.

What struck me most while watching is how much time they spend walking. They are always going from one place to another, and always on foot. There is a liberating quality to the idea that Jesus did not lock himself up in a building, but rather freely spread himself out to the world, in the open air.

During COVID my sister told me her family took walks in the woods on Sunday mornings and got much more out of those walks in than she did sitting in a pew at church. Being on the move, exploring whatever mystery lay around the bend on the trail, made these walks special for them – made them holy, holier than traditional church.

This inspired me to form a wilderness church service, where we gather and walk together, stopping to pray, sing, share in a homily, and have communion. So much happens as we walk together, and each service becomes a small pilgrimage. Imagine if each church service were a pilgrimage!

Walking together ensures that each service is intensely relational; there is something that opens up between two people when they walk together. Boundaries fade and guards come down as we marvel over nature together, and in turn, encounter God and one another.

As we move into a new reality of church, part of the future must be to make space for services like this, where people reconnect to the Body of Christ made manifest in creation by walking in love together. Jesus was on the move. We can be too! | tens.org

Questions for Reflection:

What boundaries have you crossed on your walk of love? How have you discerned which direction to follow?



The Rev. Pete Nunnally is interim rector at St. David's, Wilmington, DE and his book on the spiritual wisdom of fishing is forthcoming next year.

