

Sunday, March 22, 2020
The Fourth Sunday in Lent



Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
111 High Street, Taunton, MA 02780
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Hymn: "On Eagles Wings"

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in His shadow for life, say to the Lord:
"My refuge, my rock in whom I trust!"

**Refrain: And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.**

The snare of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear:
under His wings your refuge, His faithfulness your shield.

**Refrain: And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.**

You need not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day;
though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not come.

**Refrain: And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.**

For to His angels He's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

**Refrain: And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.**

Michael Joncas

*The Vineyard
Episcopal Church of St. Thomas
Taunton, Massachusetts*

The Fourth Sunday in Lent
Lectionary A
March 22, 2020

Welcome to St. Thomas Church! All baptized Christians, including children are welcome to receive Communion. If you wish a blessing for yourself or your child, just cross your arms at the rail. For the use of our children, there are coloring Bible sheets, books and Beanie Babies at the entrance to the church. The Beanie Babies and books need to be returned. Come to the coffee hour in the Parish Hall following the 10:00 a.m. service.

Brief History

Thomas Coram, a wealthy sea captain and philanthropist, arrived from England in the 1690's and established a successful shipyard on the Taunton River. He returned to London in 1703 and left behind 59 acres of land in trust and a substantial collection of books to help found a Church of England in Taunton.

Twenty five years later, Thomas Coram's intent was carried out: in 1728 a congregation of lay persons gathered and a small Church was built on the outskirts of town near the Three Mile River on what is now Tremont Street. Although the land in trust was no longer available. Coram's library of books became the basis for the young parish's ministry. The Church was named St. Thomas.

During the Revolution, St. Thomas Church like most Episcopal Churches, fell upon hard times and was closed for a number of years, as were many others in the area. The building itself stood unused and blew down in The Gale of 1815. In 1820 the parish was incorporated. In 1828 the Vestry voted to seek a minister who was called and then a new building was erected in the center of Taunton on High Street.

The Church grew rapidly leading to the enlargement of the building in the 1840's and this too was soon outgrown. The third and present structure designed by Richard Upjohn was consecrated in 1859. A chapel was added in 1869. A fire gutted the Church sanctuary in 1898, but it was rebuilt with the addition of a large three manual Jardine organ in 1899.

The historically significant 1759 McKinstry House (presently the rectory) adjacent to the Church was purchased in 1907 for use as a Sunday School.

In 1910, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Cabot Baylies donated a Sunday School building. This parish house has proven to be of immeasurable value throughout the years to the Church and to the entire community.

In 1960, ground was broken for an addition to the parish house, which completed the complex of buildings as we know it today.

We are saddened to hear of the death of Allen Perry, a member of our parish community who has died this past week, but was not a casualty of COVID-19. Allen's illness began before the virus became a concern in our society, and his passing is completely unrelated. However, the current pandemic prevents the family from having the funeral service they would like to have at this time. We lift up Allen's wife, Nell, their sons John and Carl, their daughter-in-law Julie, their grandson Charlie, his wife Ashley, and Allen's great-grand daughter, Kendra.

Let us Pray

O God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother, Allen. We thank you for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Celebrant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;
People His mercy endures for ever.

The Decalogue may be said, the people kneeling.

Hear the commandments of God to his people: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage. You shall have no other gods but me.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not make for yourself any idol.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

Honor your father and your mother.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not commit murder.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not commit adultery.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not steal.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not be a false witness.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Amen. Lord have mercy.

The Celebrant reads the following sentences.

Jesus said, “The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” **Mark 12:29-31**

The Celebrant then says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Celebrant and People

**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.**

Welcome to St. Thomas!

If you are a guest or visitor we hope that you will feel warmly greeted and enthusiastically welcomed. If you need any kind of assistance please ask one of the Greeters at the door to help you. We provide coloring materials at the back of the church as well as stuffed animals for children.

Please help us to provide you with more information by filling out one of the cards found in your pew or at the back of the church. You can give the card to a Greeter, the clergy, or drop it in the offering plate. If you fill out a Pew Card, then we can send you a Welcome Packet in the mail and contact you by email the following week. If you have a need or would like to speak with the clergy, please make your request known to either a Greeter or the clergy. Restrooms are located through the back door of the church and in the parish hall. Hymn numbers in the leaflet refer to the blue Hymnal 1982; BCP numbers in the leaflet refer to the pages in the Book of Common Prayer. We encourage you to join us in the liturgy as participation will make your visit much more enjoyable.

Our clergy are always happy to meet with you to talk about St. Thomas and your own spiritual journey. Whether this is your first Sunday or you have been a member for years, you may contact the Parish Office at 508-824-9595 or at StThomasEpiscopalChurch@comcast.net.

We are glad you are here and hope you will feel warmly welcomed!

Prayer is a very important part of our life at St. Thomas

Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) deliver communion and prayers to the ill and home-bound each month. To sign up for this important ministry, please call 508-824-9595.

In the **Parish Cycle of Prayer**, we pray for five households each week. This is a way for us to reach out in prayer to all our members on a systematic and regular basis. This week we pray for the Reid Family, the Richards Family, the Richardson Family, the Roby Family the Roderick Family and the Perry Family. Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you.

Scriptural Readings and Prayers: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45

Prayers for the **Homebound and Ill** members of our parish include..... Joe Andrade, Wayne Perkins, Cathy, Annie, Rose Bardusch, Cassie P. & Mary Brothers.

Prayers for those who serve in the **Armed Forces and Overseas**... Daniel Snowdall, Megan Drewniak, Adam Dyke, William Marsh IV, Donald Souza, Noel Souza, Ryan Vohnoutka, Christopher French, Alex Bolton, Scott Larson, Dominic Vitale & Jordan Leech.

In the **Diocesan Cycle of Prayer**, this week we pray for All Saints Parish, Brookline; Church of our Saviour, Brookline; Church of Our Saviour, Brookline; St. Paul's Church, Brookline; Episcopal Chaplaincy at Boston University, Brookline; The Church Home Society.

Helpful Suggestions: Holy Communion is part of our services. All baptized Christians, regardless of age or denomination, are invited to the altar to receive communion. You may kneel or stand at the Altar Rail. The bread is received in the open palm, right hand over left. The wine, if desired, may be taken from the common cup by drinking (placing your hand gently at the base of the chalice to guide it) or by dipping the bread. If you do not wish to receive Communion, but would like a blessing, come forward to the Altar Rail and cross your arms over your chest.

The Celebrant stands and says

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

The following is said, all standing

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

People and Celebrant

**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**

Celebrant and People

**Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

Look down in mercy, Lord, on your people who kneel before you; and grant that those whom you have nourished by your Word and Sacraments may bring forth fruit worthy of repentance; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ.
People **Thanks be to God.**

The People may add their own thanksgivings

We will exalt you, O God our King;
And praise your Name for ever and ever.

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

Peace

All stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock:
if any hear my voice, and open the door,
I will come to them,
and will sup with them
and they with me.

--Revelation 3:20

In union, dear Lord, with the faithful at every altar of thy Church where the blessed body and blood are being offered to the Father, I desire to offer thee praise and thanksgiving. I believe that Thou art truly present in the Holy Sacrament. And since I cannot now receive thee sacramentally, I beseech thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself unto thee, and embrace thee with all the affections of my soul. Let me never be separated from thee. Let me live and die in thy love. Amen.

--St. Augustine of Hippo

Three-Fold Amen

The Celebrant then continues

As our Savior Christ
has taught us,
we now pray,

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; *
 I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures *
 and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul *
 and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I shall fear no evil; *
 for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; *
 you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my
 life, *
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Second Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

John 9:1-41

All stand and turn to face the Gospel

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is

Prayers of the People

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;
For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

For the just and proper use of your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;
For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;
For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, for Alan our Diocesan Bishop and Gayle our Bishop Suffragan and for all bishops and other Ministers.
For all who serve God in his Church.

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. For Allen Perry, his wife, Nell, their sons John and Carl, their daughter-in-law Julie, their grandson Charlie, his wife Ashley, and Allen's great-grand daughter, Kendra.

Almighty God, Father of mercies and giver of comfort: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn; that, casting all their care on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Silence

The People may add their own petitions

Hear us, Lord;
For your mercy is great.

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

Silence

Nicene Creed

All stand.

**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.**

a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out. Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon: Christina Latour