

Bethesda Episcopal Church

The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

17 September 2023

Prelude:

Andante, from *Manfred*

Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)

All stand as the minsters enter. At the high altar, the Celebrant says

Celebrant
People

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Opening Hymn #410

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing.

The Collect of The Day

Celebrant
People
Celebrant

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
Let us pray.

O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All sit.

The Lesson

Genesis 50.14-21

After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The Lector concludes
The People respond

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

All stand.

The Alleluia



V: The heathen shall fear thy Name, O Lord and all the kings of the earth thy majesty.
R: **Alleluia.**

Remain standing.

The Holy Gospel

Matthew 18.21-35

<i>Celebrant</i>	The Lord be with you.
<i>People</i>	And with thy spirit.
<i>Celebrant</i>	The Holy Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.
<i>People</i>	Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

<i>Celebrant</i>	The Gospel of the Lord.
<i>People</i>	Praise be to thee, O Christ.

The Sermon

All stand.

The Nicene Creed *Said by all*

**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,**

and of all things visible and invisible;
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God;
begotten, not made;
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried:
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life,
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

All kneel.

The Prayers of The People

In our prayers for the Anglican Communion, we remember the Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean. In our diocese, we pray for those parishes in the process of calling new clergy. We also pray at this time for the people of Morocco and Libya, especially for all who have died in recent earthquakes and floods; and for those providing care and relief.

We give thanks to God for the Reverend Jeremiah Williamson, elected 10th Bishop of Albany at last week's Diocesan Convention. We pray for Fr Jeremiah's family, for his parish of Grace and St Stephen's, Colorado Springs, and for our diocese during this period of transition.

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying *Lord, have mercy.*

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For our Bishop-elect, Jeremiah, for Michael, our Assisting Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For Joseph, our President, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For this city of Saratoga Springs, for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For reasonable weather, and for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who travel on land, on water, or in the air, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, for the sick and the suffering and for those who have asked for our prayers, especially Debbie, Pat, Penny, David, Paul and Jerilyn, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

The Celebrant says a concluding prayer, followed by the invitation to Confession.

The people say together

**Almighty God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
maker of all things, judge of all men:
We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness,
which we from time to time most grievously have committed,
by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty,
provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us.
We do earnestly repent,
and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings;
the remembrance of them is grievous unto us,
the burden of them is intolerable.
Have mercy upon us,
have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may ever hereafter**

**serve and please thee in newness of life,
to the honor and glory of thy Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand. At the exchange of the Peace, please remain in your pew.

The Peace

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

Hymn at The Offertory #674

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing

The Eucharistic Prayer

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And with thy spirit.**
Celebrant Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them up unto the Lord.**
Celebrant Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.
People **It is meet and right so to do.**

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Creator of the light and source of life, who hast made us in thine image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying,

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of Hosts:
Hea-ven and earth are full of thy glo - ry. Glo - ry be to
thee, O Lord Most High. Bless - ed is he that com - eth in the



All kneel.

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory. And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **Amen.**

Our Father

And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

**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.**

The Fraction

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

The Prayer of Humble Access

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Agnus Dei from “Missa Parochialis” *George Oldroyd (1887-1956)*

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Communion is distributed at the chancel step.

At The Communion

Motet: Ave Verum *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

Ave verum corpus, natum ex Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine
cuius latus perforatum fluxit aqua et sanguine:
esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.

*Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary,
having truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind,
from whose pierced side water and blood flowed:
Be for us a foretaste [of heaven] in the trial of death!*

Text: 13th c. Eucharistic Hymn

After Communion, all kneel. All say together

The Prayer after Communion

Let us pray. **Almighty and ever living God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.**

The Blessing and Dismissal

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Celebrant
People*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The Closing Hymn #376

From the Hymnal 1982

Postlude:

Grand Choeur

Théodore Salomé (1834-1896)

Today at Bethesda

The **flowers on the High Altar** are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Anne and Bruce Solenski.

Readers. Thank you to those reading and leading prayers at services today:

8am Lynne Priestley
10am Mark Claverie

Refreshments will be served followed the 10am service. Thank you to Kathy and Jay Higle for hosting today. Please join us!

Welcome back to the Choir We are grateful to the musicians who give their time to be with us each Sunday. Thank you for sharing your talent and dedication. We look forward to all the wonderful music that lies ahead!

Special Monthly Envelope Our appeal in September supports the work of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that helps people build, repair and improve homes and neighborhoods, particularly in urban areas, by working with communities to address their housing needs. It also works closely with local agencies to respond quickly to communities affected by natural disasters. Thank you for your generosity.

Parish Notices

Building Award. The Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation recognizes local organizations that have completed projects which reflect a commitment to promoting and preserving the city's history and architectural character. This year, Bethesda Church is being recognized for our recent roof restoration project and the efforts made by the parish to support, preserve and enhance our beautiful city. The award was presented at the Foundation's Annual Meeting on Wednesday 13th September.

Financial Overview, Year-to-Date July, 2023. Year to date July, our Operational* Financial performance is better than budget, but we do have a \$6,388 deficit.

In Expense, our spending is less than budget by \$22,307, driven primarily by lower

Maintenance costs than planned, and some timing items that will close to budget as the year progresses. In Income, our regular Pledge and Plate giving is close to budget, but less than our expenses.

It is typical that we run a deficit as we go through the year, and the current \$6,388 deficit is likely to grow through October, based on prior year trends. We are very dependent on generous 4th Quarter giving to close the year without a deficit and to provide cash for the following year's expenses.

**The Operational view excludes items supported by designated funds (eg. Choir and Education programs) and special giving.*

Parking. The lot adjacent to the church offers free parking for the first two hours. You will require a credit card to enter and exit the lot which is accessible via Congress Street.

Upcoming Events at Bethesda

Bible Study continues **today** at 9.20am. All welcome. No registration required.

Please register with the office for the following autumn events. For further information, contact the office, or speak to Fr Wallace.

New Skete An afternoon to visit to the Religious Communities at New Skete in Cambridge, NY has been arranged for Wednesday 27 September. Our tour begins at 1.15pm and includes a talk, tour of the chapel and grounds, and a visit to the kennel where the community breeds and trains German Shepherds. For those interested, there is an option of meeting beforehand at Christ the King Center in Greenwich (just before noon) for lunch; the cost is \$15.

A Parish BBQ is planned for **Sunday 1 October** and will be held at the MacVane farm in Ballston Spa. We will begin with an outdoor Eucharist at 11am for those who wish to attend. Lunch will be served from 12 noon. A variety of meats and salads will be provided, courtesy of our generous friends at *Fred the Butcher*. Cold drinks and desserts will also be available. When you register with the office, please let us know if you are able to provide transportation for others or to bring a dessert. The office will provide directions to the venue via email prior to the event to everyone who has registered. Please be advised that there will only be one service at the church (8am) on the day of the BBQ. If you already registered for the original BBQ date, you need only contact the office if you are unable to attend.

Weekend Retreat at Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, NY from 13th–15th October. This year's retreat is now full.

Bethesda Book Club meets Thursday 7 December at 5pm to discuss a novel by Irish author, Joseph O'Connor, *My Father's House*, based on the true story of a priest who helped thousands of Jews and Allied prisoners escape from Italy during World War II. The book may be ordered online or from your local independent bookshop. All welcome.

Meet Our Bishop-Elect: Fr Jeremiah Williamson

The Episcopal Diocese of Albany elected the Rev. Jeremiah Williamson as its 10th bishop on Sept. 9. Williamson was elected on the fourth ballot with a 65-22 vote in the lay order and 56-54 among clergy. Pending the required churchwide consents, he will be consecrated and installed on Feb. 24, 2024.

The bishop-elect was chosen from a slate of four nominees during a special electing convention held at the Cathedral of All Saints in Albany. Fr. Jeremiah Williamson is the Rector of Grace and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, a large parish in downtown Colorado Springs. Before arriving in Colorado Springs in February of 2016, he served urban Episcopal Churches in Youngstown and Toledo, Ohio. Fr. Jeremiah discovered the Anglican tradition while completing his undergraduate studies in music at Greenville University. He went on to receive his Master of Divinity from Drew Theological School. After finishing his M. Div., he completed a diploma in Anglican Studies at the General Theological Seminary in New York City.

He and his wife, Jennifer, a United Methodist pastor, have two sons, Oscar and Isaiah.

- *From the Episcopal News Service*

A Letter to the Diocese from Fr Williamson, Bishop-Elect

I write to you on the Feast of John Henry Hobart, the third Bishop of New York. Bishop Hobart served the Church in the early 19th century, in the days before the creation of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany. And so he was, in that sense, one of our earliest Bishops. During his episcopacy, the number of churches in New York more than tripled; the Episcopal Church experienced tremendous growth. Some of our own churches were founded during his episcopate.

Bishop Hobart was a busy bishop. Not only did he shepherd the people of New York, he was also asked to oversee the diocese of Connecticut because, as Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018 tells us, "its high- and low-church party roils had prevented the election of a bishop." Being the Church has never been tidy or easy.

Saturday was a day of great joy and happiness for me and my family. Because, unlike the Episcopalians in early 19th century Connecticut, you did successfully elect your 10th Bishop. For many of you it was a day of celebration, an exciting moment in diocesan history. The generous reaction of the Convention was moving and inspiring; it brought tears to my eyes. But undoubtedly, because this is the nature of contested elections, for some it was a day of disappointment, discouragement, or trepidation.

I know that the past few years in the Episcopal Diocese of Albany have been difficult. There has been contention and pain and heart-break. Relationships have been strained, in some cases even broken. Emotions are raw. And people are weary. And while hope certainly pulses through the diocese, so too does fear and anxiety.

We are living in a tender time, in an emotional time. And that time is not made easier by the uncertainty that many of you must feel. Because while you know some things about your new Bishop-elect, you do not yet know me

My biggest worry, as your Bishop-elect, is that churches, lay ministers, congregations might never give me a chance. It pains me to think that some in the diocese might believe that we cannot follow Jesus together because we hold some different views. I can assure that if your faith is built on the sure foundation of Jesus, if your mission is love, if your work is to spread the Gospel, if you were washed in the waters of baptism and are sustained by the Body and Blood of Christ, what we have in common is far greater than our distinctions.

We, as Christians, are called to be ministers of reconciliation. I know that reconciliation work is difficult. But being a Christian is never easy. God calls us to do good hard things. But also gives us grace equal to our calling. I am not coming to Albany as any kind of savior or hero. I come as a fellow servant of our Savior. I don't have all the answers. I have no intention of imposing my will or forcing my views on others; we will discern the will of God together. I come to you with an open heart, intent on building a big tent for all the people of the Diocese of Albany. Sometimes you might think I am too liberal. Sometimes you might think I am too conservative. I have heard both. Like you, I will try my best to hear the Holy Spirit and to be faithful to the Gospel.

I will always do my best to be fair with you. I will do my best to hear you and honor you and respect you. I am a gentle person. I have pastored people all over the political/theological/liturgical/social spectrum. And I have done so faithfully and with great kindness. Some members of my parish are incredibly conservative; I love them and they love me – even though on some things we don't align. Some members of my parish are incredibly progressive; I love them and they love me – even though on some things we don't align. The truth is: I am not terribly interested in partisan talking points or identities. I care about the Gospel. And my primary identity was forged at the font when I, like you, was marked as Christ's own forever. That is what matters to me.

If you love God and love the Church, we will work together beautifully. I promise. True community should offer us a diversity of opinion and belief. I want us to learn to love and trust each other so much that we can wrestle with the Scriptures, debate theologies, and discuss hard topics and divisive issues.

We live in a fractious time in a divided nation. But we are called to love one another, to be ministers of reconciliation, to be one as Jesus and the Father are one. This is our work and our witness. How will this world believe that love has the power to heal if we choose not to allow our divisions to heal? How will this world believe that God is in the reconciliation business if the members of the Church refuse to reconcile? St. Paul reminds us, "If all were a single member, where would the body [of Christ] be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body." St. Paul has been preaching this message to the Church for almost 2000 years now. Occasionally the Church has even listened. There have always been issues that threaten to splinter the Church, damage our witness, and injure our relationships. Our job is to resist, to hold onto each other, to love each other with a love that transcends our differences.

I know it is hard. I know the future, with a new Bishop, can seem scary. But I believe, in the coming months and years, we will build a beautiful trust. The same Holy Spirit who has called us together will bind our hearts together.

In these days in which we await the confirmations of the Bishops and Standing Committees of our Church, I ask your prayers. Until the consecration, the Standing Committee of Albany continues to be the Ecclesiastical Authority in the Diocese. They have done difficult, but incredibly important work in this time of transition. I am glad for their leadership as I

over...

say my goodbyes in Colorado and begin to turn my pastoral gaze to this next exciting adventure.

The future that God has in mind for us is beautiful. I know it is. I want to walk into that future with you.

Your brother in Christ,

Jeremiah D. Williamson, Bishop-elect

Please place this form in the collection plate if you would like us to get in touch with you:

Name(s):

Phone:

Email address:

Home address:

Preferred contact method:

Contact Reason(s):

- Visitor or new resident
- Would like more information about the church and/or worship
- Interested in opportunities to serve
- Would like to speak with or have a visit from the priest
- Would like information about pledge envelopes or regular giving to Bethesda
- Other _____



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