

The Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost / August 9th 2026

The First Illumination

In this first reading, the Prophet Elijah is fleeing for his life from an angry Queen Jezebel. He feels all alone and deeply afraid. No one else is on his side. He despairs. But then he hears the wish of the Holy One – through an angel, a messenger – inviting him to go stand on a mountain to meet God. Soon a great wind shakes his world. Then an earthquake and finally a fire shatter the scene. But God is not in any of those. It is only in the silence that follows the cataclysms that God's voice is finally heard. God reassures Elijah, promising that he will go on to appoint Israel's kings and prophets.

A reading from the Book of First Kings: (19:9-18)

At Horeb, the mount of God, Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He answered, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” Then the Lord said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Psalm Illumination

This beautiful Psalm portion echoes the reassurance that we hear God giving to Elijah amid his lonely fear in the first reading: God has forgiven our iniquity and blotted out our sins, the Psalmist assures us in beautiful poetry: Heaven and earth meet in truth and righteousness; righteousness and peace share a tender kiss. God grants prosperity and a fruitful harvest, and all shall be well.

We will read a portion of Psalm 85 responsively by whole verse

⁸ I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

⁹ ***Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.***

¹⁰ Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹ ***Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.***

¹² The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³ ***Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.***

The Epistle Illumination

In this week's selection from Paul's letter to the Romans, he continues addressing Rome's reunited Christian community: Its Gentile converts and its Jewish Christians who have recently returned from exile. Paul urges them all to live in harmony and love one another. Salvation is for all through Jesus, Paul writes, emphasizing that there is no distinction between those of Jewish and Gentile Greek heritage: God is God of all, and is generous to all who recognize Jesus as Lord and call upon God's name. Don't judge our neighbors, Paul says, but proclaim the good news of the Gospel so that all may be saved.

The Epistle is a reading from the letter to the Romans. (10:5-15)

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say?

“The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Gospel Illumination

The striking image of Jesus walking on the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee makes this one of the most familiar Gospel stories. Jesus had sent the apostles ahead to cross the sea without him so he could take some time to pray alone. His grief at the beheading of his cousin John by Herod had been interrupted by the huge crowd that had to be fed with a few baskets of loaves and fishes, and now he sought solitude again. Meanwhile, the apostles, alone on the boat, are terrified by the wind and waves. Suddenly Jesus appears, calmly walking across the stormy sea! Peter, first to believe that it really is Jesus, steps out onto the water to meet him. But Peter's faith isn't strong enough to keep him from sinking until Jesus extends a hand to save him. Then the wind eases, they get into the boat, and the awed disciples now for the first time worship Jesus as the Son of God.

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (14:22-33)

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”