

Pentecost XIV

Create in me a
 **clean
heart,**
O God,
and put a new &
**right
spirit**
*within
me.*



Psalm 51:10. NRSV

**September 14, 2025
10 am**

**Church of the Holy Nativity
4238 Pimlico Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21215
www.holynativitybaltimore.org**

A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE CHURCH

**Celebrant: The Reverend Karen Mercer
Musician: Dr. Lior Leigh**

PRELUDE

OPENING HYMN

H671– Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound

*1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see.*

*2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!*

*3 The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.*

*4 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.*

*5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.*

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, #671 from *The Hymnal 1982* — Words: John Newton (1725-1807), alt.; st. 5, from *A Collection of Sacred Ballads*, 1790; compiled by Richard Broaddus and Andrew Broaddus. Music: New Britain, from *Virginia Harmony* 1831; adapt. att. Edwin Othello Excell (1851-1921); harm. Austin Cole Lovelace (b. 1919). Harmonization Copyright © 1974 by Abingdon Press.

OPENING SENTENCES

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

COLLECT FOR PURITY

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. Amen.

GLORIA

LEVAS 243

Glory, Glory, hallelujah, Lord we praise your Holy name,

Glory, Glory hallelujah, Lord we praise your Holy name.

Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, Glory, Glory, hallelujah, Lord we praise your Holy name,

Glory, Glory hallelujah, Lord we praise your Holy name.

You take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;

You are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,

You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

Glory, Glory, hallelujah, Lord we praise your Holy name,

Glory, Glory hallelujah, Lord we praise your Holy name. Amen.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT

Exodus 32:7-14

The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation." But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your

people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Listen for the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

THE RESPONSE

Psalm 1

Miserere mei, Deus

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.

5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.

6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.

7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.

10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.

11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.

THE EPISTLE

1 Timothy 1:12-17

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Listen for The Word of The Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SEQUENCE HYMN

LEVAS 64 – I Love to Tell the Story (1st verse)

*I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else would do.*

*Refrain: I love to tell the story;
Twill be my theme in glory.
To tell the old, old story
Of Jesus and His love.*

I have decided to follow Jesus, #136 from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* — Words: Indian Prince; as sung in Garo, Assam Music: Indian Folk Melody ;arr. Norman Johnson Arr. Copyright ©t 1963

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-10

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes

sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Christ.

SEQUENCE HYMN

LEVAS 64 – I Love to Tell the Story (2nd verse)

*2 I love to tell the story,
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it, like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long.*

Refrain

I Love To Tell the Story, #64 from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* — Words: A. Katherine Hankey (1831-1911). Music: William G. Fisher (1835-1912).

SERMON

The Rev. Karen Mercer

Let us pause momentarily as we reflect on God's word.

THE NICENE CREED

BCP 358

**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 worshipped 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.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Intercessor: Our God wraps us round in love and embraces us with mercy. There is nothing we need hide. Let us bring our needs and the needs of the whole human family to God's loving care, saying: Lord, hear our prayer.

Intercessor: That the leaders of the church will be, like Moses, one with their people and outspoken on their behalf, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

Intercessor: That the church will spend itself in search of the lost of this world, the homeless, the addicted, the uneducated, the ill, the rejected, and that we will welcome them to our household, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

Intercessor: That all who are far from home will live in safety, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

Intercessor: For all who are alienated from us and who stay away from this table, that they may return home, and that we may be watching to greet them, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

Intercessor: For the sick, the aged, the lonely and any who cannot be with us today, that they may know our kindness and God's mercy, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

Intercessor: That peace and forgiveness will mark our lives together as families, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

Intercessor: You may add your own intercession at this time.

Celebrant: God of promises, you have brought us a long way and have kept us safe in our journey to you. Hear us now, and answer our prayers with delight. Teach us to run to you for all we need. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord.

A PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

God of Eternity, we gather today to give thanks for the past. We think back to those who first had a vision of a church in this place, to those who gave of their labor, their treasure, their time to make it happen.

God of Eternity, we also give thanks for our present and our future. As we gather here today we look for hope. The present is unsettling, the future is uncertain. We hope that in the goodness of your love that your guidance will be ever-present.

Fill us with a vision for what we could be. Give us hope for our congregation and our community that lead us into your abundance and not our scarcity.

God of Eternity, in a time of uncertainty we so often fall into fear and worry, show us the opportunities in our chaotic world, remind us of our priorities in relationship to you, push us to see how our choices matter, and then fill us with hope in a new heaven and a new earth.

God of our future, may we walk boldly into what may come, as a people of faith and hope. May we be found faithful in the world in which we live.

Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

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.**

Celebrant: 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. Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Karen Mercer

THE HOLY COMMUNION

What follows is the Holy Communion, the sacred meal of the Christian faith. The Episcopal Church, as do all other denominations rooted in the historic Christian faith, affirms that the sacrament of Baptism is the ancient and normative entry point for receiving the sacrament of Eucharist, yet no one who comes forward to receive the bread and wine at communion is ever turned away from God's table. Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, the Episcopal Church welcomes you, and we invite you to explore with us what baptism may mean for you.

Want to know more? Please see Rev. Mercer following the service.

OFFERTORY HYMN

*Ev'ry time I feel the spirit,
moving in my heart, I will pray.*

*1 Upon the mountain my Lord spoke,
out of his mouth came fire and smoke.
All around me looked so fine,
asked my Lord if all was mine.*

*LEVAS 114 – Every Time I Feel the Spirit
Refrain*

*2 Jordan river chilly and cold,
chills the body but not the soul.
There ain't but one train runs this track,
runs to heaven and runs right back.*

Refrain

Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit, #114 from Lift Every Voice and Sing II — Words: Traditional. Music: Negro Spiritual.

DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost**

H 380

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Eucharistic Prayer B - BCP p. 367

The people remain standing. The Celebrant faces them and says

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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

The Celebrant adds a Proper Preface, then continues,

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

H130

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. For in these last days you sent Jesus to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In Christ, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In Christ, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life. On the night before he died for us, our Savior 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 Jesus 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."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember Christ's death,
We proclaim Christ's resurrection,
We await Christ's coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Savior of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through whom we are acceptable to you, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Joseph and Mary and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Savior, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

Amen.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to [sing],

LORD'S PRAYER

LEVAS 264

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

FRACTION ANTHEM

S164

Jesus, Lamb of God:

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins:

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world:

Give us your peace, give us your peace.

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

COMMUNION HYMN

LEVAS 107 – Jesus! There's Something About That Name

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!

There's just something about that name!

Master, Savior, Jesus!

*Like the fragrance after the rain.
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!
Let all heaven and earth proclaim;
Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,
but there's something about that name!*

There's Something About That Name, #107 from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* — Words: Gloria (b. 1942) and William Gaither (b. 1936). Music: William J. Gaither. Copyright © 1970 William J. Gaither. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

BCP 365

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.

THE BLESSING

Go forth from this place and be kind. Everyone here, in one way or another, carries something heavy. So love mercy, practice forgiveness, and be gentle with yourself. And show God's unconditional love and acceptance to yourself and to everyone you meet. And the blessing of God Almighty: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be among you, those you love, and all those God calls you to love, this day and forevermore. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

LEVAS 66 I Must Tell Jesus

*1 I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone,
In my distress He kindly will help me,
He ever loves and cares for His own.*

*I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
I cannot bear my burdens alone;
I must tell Jesus! I must tell Jesus!
Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.*

*2 I must tell Jesus all of my troubles,
He is a kind, compassionate friend;
If I but ask Him, He will deliver,
Make of my troubles quickly an end.*

Refrain

3 Tempted and tried I need a great Savior,

*One who can help my burdens to bear
I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus;
He all my cares and sorrows will share.*

Refrain

*4 O how the world to evil allures me!
O how my heart is tempted to sin!
I must tell Jesus, and He will help me,
Over the world the vict'ry win.*

Refrain

I Must Tell Jesus, #66 from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* — Words: Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929). Music: Elisha A. Hoffman.

THE DISMISSAL

The Rev. Karen Mercer

As we go forth into the world, refreshed and renewed, we reaffirm our commitment to our mission as a congregation:

We are committed to sharing God's love with all through our worship and ministries.

Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia

POSTLUDE

Our Prayer List

Your prayers are requested for members and friends of The Church of the Holy Nativity: Eileen, Gloria, Mildred, Karen, Tammy, Emanuel, Karen R., Dorris, Gouri, Katrina, Elaine, Justina, Eva, Rebecca, Lisa, Faye, Fr. Bill, Sharon, Vestina, Ruth, James, Diamond, Jamie, King, Rashad, Katrina, Angel, Hope, Arlene, Norman, Dorian, Daniel, Nicole, Michael, Tyrus, Shirley, Silma, Aldwyn, William, Deja, Joy, Gilma, Irene, and Michael.

We continue to ask for prayers for all those impacted by the coronavirus, those impacted by war and gun violence, those in our midst who are struggling with anxiety depression and addiction, those who are unemployed or underemployed, and the unhoused

Announcements

September 14, 2025 Faith Forum	Send Session
September 16, 2025	Advisory Board Meeting
September 21, 2025 Faith Forum	Sent with Courage
September 28, 2025 Faith Forum	Sent with Together
October 12, 2025	First Sunday Meal
October 25, 2025	SAVE THE DATE! Launch of the Evangelism Ministry 3:00-5:00 P.M.
November 8, 2025	SAVE THE DATE! Investing in the Future: Holy Nativity Pauli Murray Episcopal Learning Center Campaign Kickoff

Upcoming Formation Opportunities: Let's Grow Together!

This summer/fall, we're offering two exciting opportunities to explore effective ways to connect with others and deepen our ministry of invitation and welcome.

Invite, Welcome, Connect – September 2025

Join us this July for an interactive experience designed to help us strengthen our culture of hospitality and belonging. Whether you're new to the community or a longtime member, this is a great opportunity to explore how we can invite others into a deeper relationship with God and one another.

Evangelism 101 – October 2025

Curious about how to share your faith in authentic, approachable ways? This foundational course in August will offer practical tools for connecting with others and sharing the story of God's love with confidence and grace.

These events are open to all—come be a part of the movement to *Invite, Welcome, and Connect*.

Reflection: *Even Just One*

Jesus reminds us that God's love is not about numbers or efficiency—it's about relationship. The shepherd risks ninety-nine to search for one. The woman tears apart her house to recover one coin. Both rejoice when what was lost is found.

That is how God loves you. That is how God loves your neighbor. And that is how God calls us to love—seeking out those who are overlooked, speaking words of hope where hate dominates, and celebrating each person restored to community.

Even just one matters to God. Even just one life lifted up changes the world.

A Prayer for the Week

Gracious God,
You search for us when we wander,
and you rejoice when we are found.

Give us eyes to see those who are lost,
hearts willing to be disrupted,
and courage to speak truth with love.

Make us partners in your work of seeking,
finding, and celebrating—
so that even just one may know your joy.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.