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August 30, 2015 Pentecost 14

 Year B

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9

James 1:17-27

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

SELECTED READING AND THEME:

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

The living of a loved and loving life

CALL TO WORSHIP:

The Epistle of James calls to us:

"Religion that is pure and undefiled

before God, the Father, is this:

to care for orphans and widows in their distress,

and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

Let today be a day for cleansing and purity.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

God, today we pray that,

along with the Psalmist,

we might be lovers of righteousness

and haters of wickedness.

We pray that we might know ourselves

and all the population and creatures of the earth

to be the beloved of God.

May we fully live and completely

rest in your love for us all today.

Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God, we confess to being more comfortable

with being pleasant with each other than being intimate,

more prepared to be polite than truthful,

more willing to like than to love.

We do not truly know how to be the beloved of each

other because we do not know truly and deeply

how we are the beloved of God.

We do not understand or experience

how deeply we are accepted and loved by you God,

so we live smaller, less interesting, more tentative lives.

But we *are* your beloved, we are held in your mind and your heart,

we are your people.

May we experience your forgiveness and your care.

May we relax in the love you have for us.

May we live as your beloved people.

Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Friends, the Scriptures invite us to,

"Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;

for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;

the time of singing has come,

and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.".

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

God, the world is often a place of hardness,

a place where the gentleness of love

is not often experienced.

We thank you that your love for us,

your gentleness with us,

and your grace in us

are always present.

We thank you that we are your beloved,

we are held in your heart and your hands.

We rejoice that your love is there for everyone.

We rejoice that we are loved simply because we exist.

We are loved because we are loved.

Thank you.

Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT:

Martin Luther King, that great leader of the American civil rights movement, was never just concerned with the liberation of African American people. He had a much wider vision. Near the end of his life he was reaching out to labour unions and poor white people all across the country. For King, the true work was always about bringing into being what he continually described as, "the beloved community". A community where race, class and gender stereotypes were done away with and all people are treated equally and at the same time are celebrated as unique, precious individuals. The Beloved community sounds an awful lot like Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom of God. How is your worshipping community growing the beloved community?

OFFERTORY SENTENCE:

The book of James tells us that

"every generous act of giving,

with every perfect gift,

is from above,

coming down from the Father of lights."

In all they do they prosper.

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

For your generous love we thank you dear God.

For your generous openness to all our fears and failings

and to all uncertainties we thank you.

May this money become a part of the great work

of your new world and shape the beloved community.

Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION:

God, we know that there are millions

of people in the world who are a million

miles from a life that can be described as

the beloved community or the Kingdom of God.

Today we pray for all of those who have lost

any shred of hope that such a world

can ever come into being.

We pray that millions more will have the courage

and the compassion, the tenacity and the hope,

to work for this world to come into being.

We pray that you will raise up doers

of the words of God and not just hearers.

We pray, in the words of the Epistle of James,

that we will, “Therefore rid ourselves of all sordidness

and rank growth of wickedness,

and welcome with meekness

the implanted word that has the power

to save our souls.”

May we be a part of your good news,

saving the whole world.

Amen.

COMMISSIONING and BENEDICTION

Friends, hold your heads high.

You are loved by God.

You are central to the growth

and flourishing of God’s Kingdom

You are at the heart of God’s beloved community.

You are called to hold high the hope of the world,

the truth that we are all one people,

one family, one community.

We have one mother and father,

one creator, one great lover

who watches over all.

Go in peace to love and serve God

and God’s people.

Amen.

HYMNS:

Song of Songs 2: 8-13

As man and woman we were made TIS.645 SA.7

Fairest Lord Jesus TIS.203 AHB.131

In loving partnership we come SFGP.102

Jesus, we thus obey TIS.508 AHB.427

O let the Son of God enfold you TIS.655 P&W.477

When love is found and hope comes home TIS.654

Your love, O God, has called us here TIS.664

Psalm 45: 1-2, 6-9

Lord Jesus, joy of loving hearts TIS.499 AHB.420

Lord Jesus our bright Morning Star TIS.199 AHB.(220)

My heart is full of Christ and longs TIS.214 AHB.143

James 1: 17-27

Almighty God, lift up our eyes TIS.615 AHB.549

For the beauty of the earth TIS.137 AHB.77

God gives us a future TIS.687

Holy Spirit, go before us TIS.420

I, the Lord of sea and sky TIS.658 ATEverybody.296

Put all your trust in God TIS.555 AHB.464

Sent forth by God’s blessing TIS.531 SA.76

Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23

As a chalice cast of gold TIS.476

At the name of Jesus TIS.231 AHB.170

God of all power and truth and grace TIS.567 AHB.477

I danced in the morning TIS.242 AHB.183

Just as I am, without one plea TIS.584 AHB.497

O for a heart to praise my God TIS.568 AHB.476

We limit not the truth of God TIS.453 AHB.335

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