

**Sunday 17 August 2025,  
Trinity 9**

**Collect:**

Gracious Father,  
revive your Church in our day,  
and make her holy, strong and faithful,  
for your glory's sake  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Jeremiah 23:23-29; Psalm 82; Hebrews 11:29-12:2; Luke 12:49-56*

Jeremiah begins with the question, is God near us or far away? It sounds positive, for much of the Bible concerns God's close working in creation. However, here it leads into a denunciation of false prophets, those who expound their own dreams as if they were God's words. So now the opening reminder of God's nearness is a word of warning to those purporting to speak in God's name – God is aware of their actions, they will be condemned for their falseness. God then points Jeremiah towards one way of testing the veracity of a prophet's testimony. Those whose behaviour accords to God's ways are the ones speaking God's words. Those who are true don't lead others away from allegiance to God. Psalm 82 comes from a time when it was believed that other heavenly beings shared the rule of creation with Israel's Yahweh. It places God in the centre of a council of other gods, pronouncing judgment on them for their selfishness and partiality towards the wicked. True justice shows no favour to rich or poor, strong or weak. This requirement to act with true justice is then placed on humans as well. The failings of these biased gods will lead to their demise, only God will remain, and even though injustice continues today, this is not the way the world should be, and God will act to bring in a holy and hopeful order.

The passage from Hebrews begins by highlighting a number of the exemplars of faith from Israel's past. Some are named while others are alluded to, and the references to women who 'received their dead by resurrection', etc., brings us to the Maccabean period. This draws us into the time of Jesus, and the focus turns to him as the true example of faith that all should emulate. Faith is described in terms of a long race where perseverance, training and courage win the day. This is not an individual commitment but corporate. Together we should ensure that everyone obtains the grace of God, that internal bitterness isn't allowed to destroy the community and that all are supported to turn away from sin and grow in faith. The Gospel reading combines words spoken to the disciples with those addressed to crowds. Speaking to his immediate followers, Jesus is very aware that his decision to strike out for Jerusalem and fatal confrontation with the authorities will be both incendiary and divisive. Many Christians today still experience the truth of these words, yet they persevere in the faith. When Jesus addresses the crowds he chastises them for failing to recognise the importance of his ministry. They have been throwing themselves behind violent armed revolt against their Roman overlords when he is offering them something greater, the chance to become part of God's ongoing building of a holy kingdom of justice and peace.

Holy Father,  
who gathered us here around the table of your Son  
to share this meal with the whole household of God:  
in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace,  
gather people of every race and language  
to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Isaiah 58:9b-14; Psalm 103:1-8; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17*

*Trinity 10*