

**COLLECT:** *(Remain Standing)*

O God of truth and peace, you raised up your servant Richard Hooker in a day of bitter controversy to defend with sound reasoning and great charity the catholic and reformed religion: Grant that we may maintain that middle way, not as a compromise for the sake of peace, but as a comprehension for the sake of truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Sirach 43:1-22** *(Please be seated)*

Reader: A reading from the Book of **Ecclesiasticus**.

The pride of the higher realms is the clear vault of the sky, as glorious to behold as the sight of the heavens.

The sun, when it appears, proclaims as it rises what a marvellous instrument it is, the work of the Most High.

At noon it parches the land,  
and who can withstand its burning heat?

A man tending a furnace works in burning heat, but three times as hot is the sun scorching the mountains; it breathes out fiery vapours,  
and its bright rays blind the eyes.

Great is the Lord who made it;  
at his orders it hurries on its course.

It is the moon that marks the changing seasons,  
governing the times, their everlasting sign.  
From the moon comes the sign for festal days,  
a light that wanes when it completes its course.

The new moon, as its name suggests, renews itself;  
how marvellous it is in this change,  
a beacon to the hosts on high, shining in the vault of the heavens!

The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven,  
a glittering array in the heights of the Lord.  
On the orders of the Holy One they stand in their appointed places; they never relax in their watches.  
Look at the rainbow, and praise him who made it;  
it is exceedingly beautiful in its brightness.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

It encircles the sky with its glorious arc;  
the hands of the Most High have stretched it out.

By his command he sends the driving snow  
and speeds the lightnings of his judgement.

Therefore the storehouses are opened,  
and the clouds fly out like birds.

In his majesty he gives the clouds their strength,  
and the hailstones are broken in pieces.

The voice of his thunder rebukes the earth;  
when he appears, the mountains shake.

At his will the south wind blows;  
so do the storm from the north and the whirlwind.

He scatters the snow like birds flying down,  
and its descent is like locusts alighting.

The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness,  
and the mind is amazed as it falls.

He pours frost over the earth like salt,  
and icicles form like pointed thorns.

The cold north wind blows,  
and ice freezes on the water;  
it settles on every pool of water,  
and the water puts it on like a breastplate.

He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness, and withers the tender grass like fire.

A mist quickly heals all things;  
the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat.

# Psalm 61

Reader: Let us pray together the words of **Psalm 61**.

1 Hear my cry, O God, \*  
and listen to my prayer.

2 I call upon you from the ends of the earth  
with heaviness in my heart; \*  
set me upon the rock that is higher than I.

3 For you have been my refuge, \*  
a strong tower against the enemy.

4 I will dwell in your house for ever; \*  
I will take refuge under the cover of your wings.

5 For you, O God, have heard my vows; \*  
you have granted me the heritage of those who  
fear your Name.

6 Add length of days to the king's life; \*  
let his years extend over many generations.

7 Let him sit enthroned before God for ever; \*  
bid love and faithfulness watch over him.

8 So will I always sing the praise of your Name, \*  
and day by day I will fulfill my vows.

## **Revelation 14:14-15:8** *(Please be seated)*

Reader: A reading from the Book of **Revelation**.

Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand! Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud, 'Use your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.' So the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, 'Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.' So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and he threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for a distance of about two hundred miles.

Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

'Great and amazing are your deeds,  
Lord God the Almighty!  
Just and true are your ways,  
King of the nations!  
Lord, who will not fear  
and glorify your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come  
and worship before you,  
for your judgements have been revealed.'

After this I looked, and the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure bright linen, with golden sashes across their chests. Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever; and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were ended.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

**Luke 13:1-9** *(Please stand as you are able)*

**Priest:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to **Luke**.

**People:** **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down." '

**Priest:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Christ**