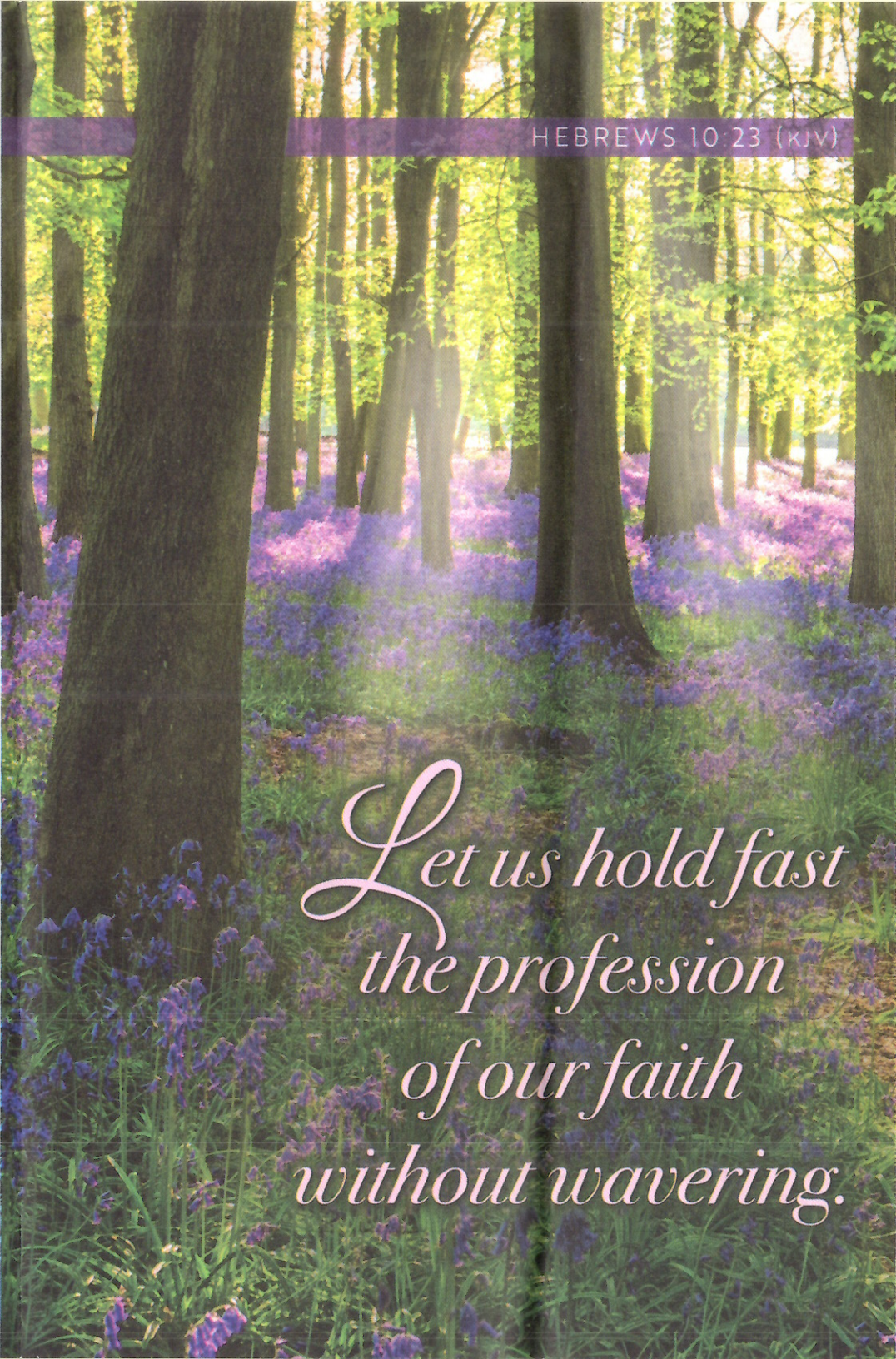


A photograph of a forest floor covered in a dense carpet of small purple flowers, likely bluebells. Tall, dark tree trunks stand in the background, and sunlight filters through the green leaves, creating a warm, dappled light effect on the ground.

HEBREWS 10:23 (KJV)

*Let us hold fast
the profession
of our faith
without wavering.*

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Priest-in-Charge: The Rev. H. Mawande Mzongwana
(Serving the Tuskegee Community since 1912)

701 West Montgomery Road
Tuskegee, Alabama 36088

Phone: 334-727-3210

www.standrewstuskegee.com

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST
(Proper 10)

July 12, 2026

MORNING PRAYER – RITE 11
Self-Guided Prayer

HYMNAL

PRAYER BOOK

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THE WORD OF GOD

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THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Collect of the Day

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Psalm: 65:1-8, 9-14

Second Reading: Romans 8:1-11

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THE GOSPEL: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

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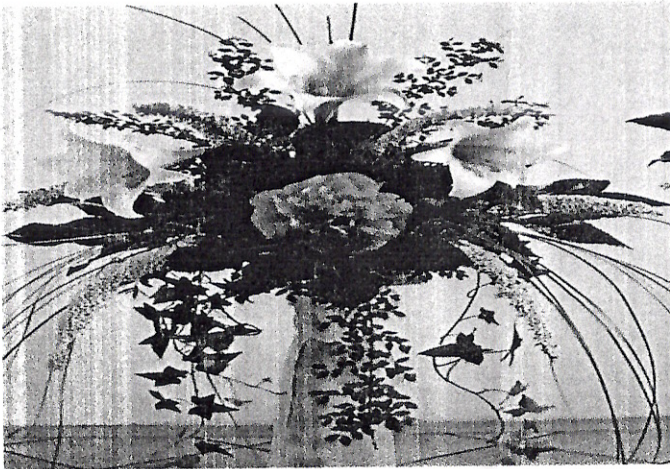
Closing Sentence and Scripture

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ANNOUNCEMENTS: See inside bulletin

Closing Hymn

Dismissal



FELLOWSHIP HOUR

The Christian Gathering continues after this service with fellowship and refreshments in the undercroft.

PLEASE JOIN US!!!!!!

July 19 - A Parishioner



7 PENTECOST

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 10



Revised Common Lectionary
TRACK TWO

Sunday, July 12, 2026

COLLECT

Traditional

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Contemporary

O LORD, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING: Isaiah 55:10-13

AS THE RAIN and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Refrain

Let the valleys shout for joy and sing.

Psalm 65:[1-8], 9-14 from the Book of Common Prayer

- [1 You are to be praised,
O God, in Zion; * to
you shall vows be per-
formed in Jerusalem.
- 2 To you that hear
prayer shall all flesh
come, * because of their
transgressions.
- 3 Our sins are stronger
than we are, * but you
will blot them out.
- 4 Happy are they whom
you choose and draw
to your courts to dwell
there! * they will be
satisfied by the beauty
of your house, by the
holiness of your temple.
- 5 Awesome things will
you show us in your
righteousness, O God
of our salvation, * O
Hope of all the ends of
the earth and of the seas
that are far away.
- 6 You make fast the
mountains by your
power; * they are girded
about with might.
- 7 You still the roaring of
the seas, * the roaring
of their waves, and the
clamor of the peoples.
- 8 Those who dwell at the
ends of the earth will
tremble at your marvel-
ous signs; * you make
the dawn and the dusk
to sing for joy.]
- 9 You visit the earth and
water it abundantly;
you make it very plen-
teous; * the river of God
is full of water.
- 10 You prepare the grain, *
for so you provide for
the earth.
- 11 You drench the fur-
rows and smooth out
the ridges; * with heavy
rain you soften the
ground and bless its
increase.

- 12 You crown the year with
your goodness, * and
your paths overflow
with plenty.
- 13 May the fields of the
wilderness be rich for
grazing, * and the hills
be clothed with joy.
- 14 May the meadows
cover themselves with
flocks, and the valleys
cloak themselves with
grain; * let them shout
for joy and sing.

SECOND READING: Romans 8:1-11

THERE IS THEREFORE now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

JESUS WENT OUT and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen! Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR THE WEEK:

Monday, July 13, 2026

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Thursday, July 16, 2026

Friday, July 17, 2026

Saturday, July 18, 2026

Sunday, July 19, 2026

11 a.m.

- Morning Prayer-in person, ZOOM

NEWS FROM AROUND THE EPISCOPAL & ANGLICAN DIOCESES

Saturday, August 5, 2026, Jonathan Daniels and the Martyrs of the Alabama Pilgrimage, 1 S. Washington St., Hayneville, AL

Friday, September 11, 2026, at 5 pm and September 12, 2026, at 4 pm, Clergy and Lay Leader of Color Retreat, Camp McDowell. Registration is available on-line at dioala.org

See dioala.org for the latest Anglican Communion News

T.U. EVENTS (tusa.org)

'Tuskegee Rising,' 22nd TNAA (Tuskegee National Alumni Association) Convention, July 30-August 2, 2026, Memphis, TN. Registration available online.

COMMUNITY EVENTS (Auburn, Montgomery, Tuskegee)

Harriott II Riverboat Cruises, Montgomery: Friday Night Dinner Cruise, Saturday Getaway Cruise and Sunday Evening Blues Cruise, recurring weekly on specified nights from June 6, 2026, until November 28, 2026.

2026 Football Schedule – Tuskegee U:

August 30 - Red Tails Classic, T.U. vs U. of West AL, Montgomery

October 3 – T.U. vs Morehouse, Montgomery

November 7 – Homecoming, T.U. vs Miles, HOME

November 26 – Turkey Day Game, T.U. vs Alabama State, Montgomery

2026 Football Schedule – Auburn U.

September 12 – Auburn vs Southern Mississippi, HOME

September 19 – Auburn vs Florida, HOME

September 26 – Homecoming, Auburn vs. Vanderbilt, HOME

October 24 – Auburn vs LSU, HOME

November 7 – Auburn vs Arkansas, HOME

PRAYER LIST

CHRISTINA ANDERSON
CAROLYN BLAND*
STEPHANIE BOSWELL

MARIAN GARMON*

MARIO LIGHTFOOTE*
RONNIE LIGON

THOMAS BRAYE*
JAMES BRAYE
REBECCA LYN CARTER
CURT CARTER, SR*

CRAIG POWELL

CHARLES M. CRANK, II
PRESTON CRAYTON

JULIUS MYHAND, JR.
CLEMENT SCOTT
DAVID NGAWA**
MARTHA OSGERBY
ANNA C. OWENS
TUNESHA SMITH
ANGELICA P. SNOWDEN

LUCENIA DUNN*
SHANNON DIXON
TEDDY DOWDY*

YOLANDA P. SEAWRIGHT
DARRYL SEAWRIGHT
BRENDA D. ROBINSON*

ANITRA FULLER
ROBERT FRAZIER

LISA TECZAR
CHARLES THOMPSON**
LLOYD WILLIAMS*
E. DRAKE WHITELAW

DIANE KENNEY*

MARGARET 'KATIE' JONES
THERON JONES

*Local Parishioners

** Shut-In Parishioners

THE DIOCESAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

We pray for our Companion Diocese of Honduras and their bishop, Lloyd; For the gift of liberty, and for those oppressed and voiceless, who long for freedom; Ministries for displaced persons and refugees; and Global Episcopal Mission Network

ANNOUNCEMENTS!!

- **ARMED FORCES:** Please pray for our service men and women stationed in the U.S. and overseas, especially, Elijah Barber, DeRitha Marbory B. Green (retiring), Sam and Margaret Gunn Bunton, and Shavon Marbory Hogan.
- **PRAYERS:** Continue to pray for those on the Prayer List, friends, family and all humankind afflicted by disease, war and famine. Pray for peace!
- **REMINDER:** Please continue to furnish our Food Basket with non-perishable food items (located on the ground floor of the Education Building).
- **NEW:** The link for the Sunday ZOOM Companion Service can be reached by dialing: 1-312-626-6799, Meeting ID: 882 671 9532, Passcode 008810 or click on your email invite. Mark your calendar for the next Morning Prayer – in person service on *Sunday, July 19, 2026.*
- **NEW:** Please pray for Brenda Dowdy Robinson and the Robinson Family. Mike Robinson left this earth on Saturday, July 4, 2026. A Memorial Service is scheduled for August 15, 2026, at St. Andrew's.
- **NEW:** Work will begin very soon repairing the church elevator. Thank you for your patience.
- **NEW:** Summer Vacation is here. Please keep up with your pledges and stay safe!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARY!!

July	3 – Harriett & Charles Thompsom
	4 - Janiece Middleton
	6 – Lloyd Williams
	17 - Willim & Debra Gunn
	22 - Olive Elaine Lett
	24 – Joseph Samuel



Pentecost 7 (A) – Proper 10

[RCL]: Genesis 25:19-34; Psalm 119:105-112; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

The Bound Will in the Backrooms

*“There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
In the name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Today’s reading from the letter to the Romans can be confusing. There are two ways that we can confuse ourselves about today’s reading from Paul’s letter to the Romans. The first is to treat his distinction between flesh and Spirit as a distinction between the body and the soul, in which the body is bad and the Spirit is good.

The second way to confuse ourselves is to read his words about “setting the mind on the Spirit, and the things of the Spirit,” as a matter of just making the right choices. If we aren’t careful, we might think that Paul is telling us that if we try hard enough, we can elevate ourselves out of the human experience entirely into a realm of self-transcendence. Of course, that’s not what he’s saying at all. If we’re going to get a better understanding of what Paul is getting at here, we’re going to need to take a look at some things we might not want to look at. We need to descend into some backrooms.

Backrooms, the psychological horror movie made by 20-year-old YouTuber Kane Preston, is turning out to be the unlikely hit of the summer. Without belaboring the point or giving too many spoilers, the premise is something like this: We see the story unfold through the perspective of Clark, a failed architect and failing furniture store owner. Clark is a divorced man with a drinking problem who has been living in his store because he has nowhere else to go. And yet he is resolutely unable to grasp, really grasp, that he is the one who got

himself into this predicament. He blames everyone but himself. One thing leads to another, and Clark falls into an alternate dimension in the basement of his store, room after room of featureless yellow corridors lit by buzzing fluorescent lights. There are monsters in this suburban maze, but these monsters come from what you bring with you: your burdens, fears, and shame – and yes, your sins. In the end (spoiler alert), Clark chooses to stay in the Backrooms, where he can be just as monstrous as he wants to be. He tells his therapist, who by the end of the movie has been pulled into the Backrooms with him, “I don’t think I want to change. I like it in here.” His therapist replies, “I can’t save anyone. It’s just not up to me.”¹

Which brings us back to our passage from Paul’s letter to the Romans. In Romans, “the flesh” represents the power of fallen desire, the delusions of human self-sufficiency, the illusion that we have power in ourselves to help ourselves. If we are “in the flesh,” we refuse to let God heal in us what needs healing, to transform in us what needs transforming. In the Backrooms, everyone is given over to the flesh. In the Backrooms, everyone’s will is bound, as Luther put it, as our desires are completely turned in on themselves and we are unable to save ourselves from them. The metaphors at the heart of *Backrooms* have a deeper truth about the human experience. We are all in the Backrooms—or rather the Backrooms are in us—as the fissure between lost and found, flesh and spirit, runs through every human heart.

We can’t find our way out of this maze alone, that much we know. Tragically we also can have a hard time letting Jesus pull us out. We can have a hard time admitting that we need Jesus to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. In *Fear and Trembling*, Søren Kierkegaard tells us that it is but a “little mystery” that “it is better to give than to receive,” and “a great mystery” that “it is far more difficult to receive than to give.” He writes, “what love for God it takes to be willing to let oneself be healed!”² As anyone who has experienced it knows, healing can be hard, and the power of emotional and spiritual inertia cannot be underestimated. None of this is straightforward.

The Christian life isn’t a matter of linear progress—a constant springing forward, or a race run in a straight line. Instead, it’s a two-step dance that starts with our repentance, where we acknowledge both our need to be changed and our inability to do it for ourselves. In his commentary on Romans, Karl Barth writes, “Repentance is the ‘primary’ ethical action upon which all ‘secondary’ ethical conduct depends and by which it is illuminated. Repentance is – the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, even what is good and acceptable and perfect...repentance, as the ‘primary’ ethical action, is the act of

¹ Kane Parsons, dir., *Backrooms* (A24, 2006).

² Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 103-104.

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rethinking.”³ The first step in “rethinking”: being transformed by the renewing of our minds to ask ourselves some very hard questions. Or rather, the first step is to let God—as God is revealed to us in Scripture—ask those questions of us. There, we find out that every day, in every way, we *aren’t* getting better and better. On the contrary, left to our own devices, we tend to only make things worse.

Barth continues:

This pressure towards enjoyment, possession, success, knowledge, power, rightness; this vigorous movement towards an attainable, comprehensible perfection; this pressure, in fact, towards works, forms the mysterious pivot round which the whole world of human genius revolves. But...our whole behavior, always and to the world’s end, bears stamped upon it the form of this world. We must not delude ourselves. There are no moral actions, such as love, or honesty, or purity, or courage, which have rid themselves of the form of this world. As there is no pure act of thought, so there is no pure act of will.⁴

Or, as the contemporary artist Jenny Holzer put it much more succinctly in one of her installations, “Protect me from what I want.”⁵ It’s one of my prayers every day. “Lord, protect me from what I want.” Even when what I want is to follow Jesus, because my following is always going to be distorted by my own distorted desires.

Fortunately, none of us will be forced to put these principles to the test in a distorted and literal alternate dimension full of monsters, like we see in *Backrooms*. But they apply just as much in the ordinary, day-in day-out ways that we can stray, even when we try to follow Jesus. The answer to the problem of our flesh-bound will isn’t to “try harder,” because every day, in every moment, every time we falter, we discover that all our trying can’t save us. The good news is that Jesus can, and he already has. That’s the fertile ground where the work of the cross is planted in our hearts. That’s the garden of heavenly delight where we can hear again the gospel announcement that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Every time we stray, no matter how lost we think we are, God is chasing after us and inviting us to come back—to come and follow. There, we can know again, as if for the first time, the immeasurable measure of Christ’s gift of grace.

We start over. We can always start over.

³ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 469.

⁴ Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 466-467.

⁵ Jenny Holzer, *Survival Series: Protect Me From What I Want*, Electronic LED Display, Times Square, New York, 1982.

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