Weekly Reflection

In these final weeks of the church year, our texts turn decidedly apocalyptic, that is, they point us to the end times. Unlike many modern popular ideas about end times that focus on who gets lifted up into heaven (and who gets left behind), Jesus speaks about end times in ways that point us back to life on earth. In our second reading this Sunday, we will be caught up in the clouds to meet God in the air, perhaps not on our way up to an ethereal heaven, but on God's way down to resurrect this world of pain and brokenness. In the parables, Jesus' invitation in light of the coming reign of God is to live in a manner that tends to our neighbor and recognizes the urgency of transformation toward God's reign of love and mercy.

In our eucharistic prayers we proclaim that "Christ will come again." That belief should instill in us attention and urgency: to recognize the needs of the world and respond to God's call to do whatever our particular part of that work might be in this moment to bring forth God's reign on earth, knowing we won't ever do it perfectly.

We hear all this in the midst of two moments in our shared national consciousness – Election Day and Veterans Day. The Episcopal Church has provided time for prayer and encouragement to engage in our shared civil life leading up to the election. We continue to pray for our nation in an ongoing way. We pray in gratitude for those who have served our nation and for peace that war may be no more. Our prayers are not simply offering up to God whatever happens and then going on about our day, but rather a recognition that God is meeting us here in the nation in which we happen to live in this moment, and calling forth a new way of being that cares for all people.

To that end, one of my prayers of late has been this song, which manages, I think, to hold both our gratitude for the nation in which we find ourselves as well as prays for a broadness of God's grace for the whole of creation: https://youtu.be/0CuvFMwrEN0?si=lv8_Gum9gpQi7soT

-Pastor Steven