July 24, 2016 10th Sunday after Pentecost Karen Pinner

The First Reading is Genesis 18:20-32

20Then the Lord said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and

 Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! 21I must go down and

 see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry

 that has come to me; and if not, I will know.”

22So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord.

23Then Abraham came near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the

 righteous with the wicked? 24Suppose there are fifty righteous within

 the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the

 fifty righteous who are in it? 25Far be it from you to do such a thing,

 to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the

 wicked! Far be that from you!

 Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”

26And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city,

 I will forgive the whole place for their sake.”

27Abraham answered, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord,

 I who am but dust and ashes. 28Suppose five of the fifty righteous

 are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?”

And He said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

29Again he spoke to him, “Suppose forty are found there.”

He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”

30Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak.

 Suppose thirty are found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.”

31He said, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord.

 Suppose twenty are found there.”

 He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.”

32Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once

 more. Suppose ten are found there?”

He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”

**Word of God, word of life.**

 **7/24/16 Karen**

Please read responsively with me Psalm 138

1I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods

I will sing your praise.
2**I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,**

**because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;** **for you have glorified**

 **your name and your word above all things.**
3When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.
4**All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord,** **when they have**

**heard the words of your mouth.**
5They will sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.
6**The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly,** **perceiving the haughty**

**from afar.**
7Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth

your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.
8**You will make good your purpose for me;** **O Lord, your steadfast**

**love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

First reading Gomorrah = guh-MOR-uh

This is one of the great biblical dialogs. The drama is evident. Each time that God agrees to a request, Abraham ups the ante. Help the assembly hear Abraham’s hesitancy in the face of the Almighty as well as his tenacity. Help all to hear the grace of God each time God accedes to Abraham’s request. The lesson demands a broad reading.

Second reading Colossians = kuh-LOSH-unz

 How blessed we are to have two particularly marvelous lessons to read in one morning! This lesson requires the urgent voice of a dedicated teacher. It should ring with the passion of deep conviction. Step by step the author urges the hearer to grow in grace as the body of Christ. Take your time with this reading. Allow the hearer to follow the logic and assimilate the word pictures.

 7/24/16 Karen

the Second Reading is Colossians 2:6-19

6As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your

 lives in him, 7rooted and built up in him and established in the faith,

 just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.

9For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

11In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting

 off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ;

 12when you were buried with him in baptism,

 you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God,

 who raised him from the dead.

13And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your

 flesh, God made you alive together with him,

 when he forgave us all our trespasses, 14erasing the record that stood

 against us with its legal demands.

 He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

15He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of

 them, triumphing over them in it.

16Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink

 or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths.

17These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance

 belongs to Christ.

18Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement

 and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause

 by a human way of thinking, 19and not holding fast to the head,

 from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its

 ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

**Word of God, word of life.**