**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST -- PROPER 22 *October 6, 2019  
Year C, Revised Common Lectionary***

**Lamentations 1:1-6** How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal. She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies. Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress. The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter. Her foes have become the masters, her enemies prosper, because the LORD has made her suffer for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe. From daughter Zion has departed all her majesty. Her princes have become like stags that find no pasture; they fled without strength before the pursuer.

**2 Timothy 1:1-14** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I am grateful to God--whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did--when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

**Luke 17:5-10** The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

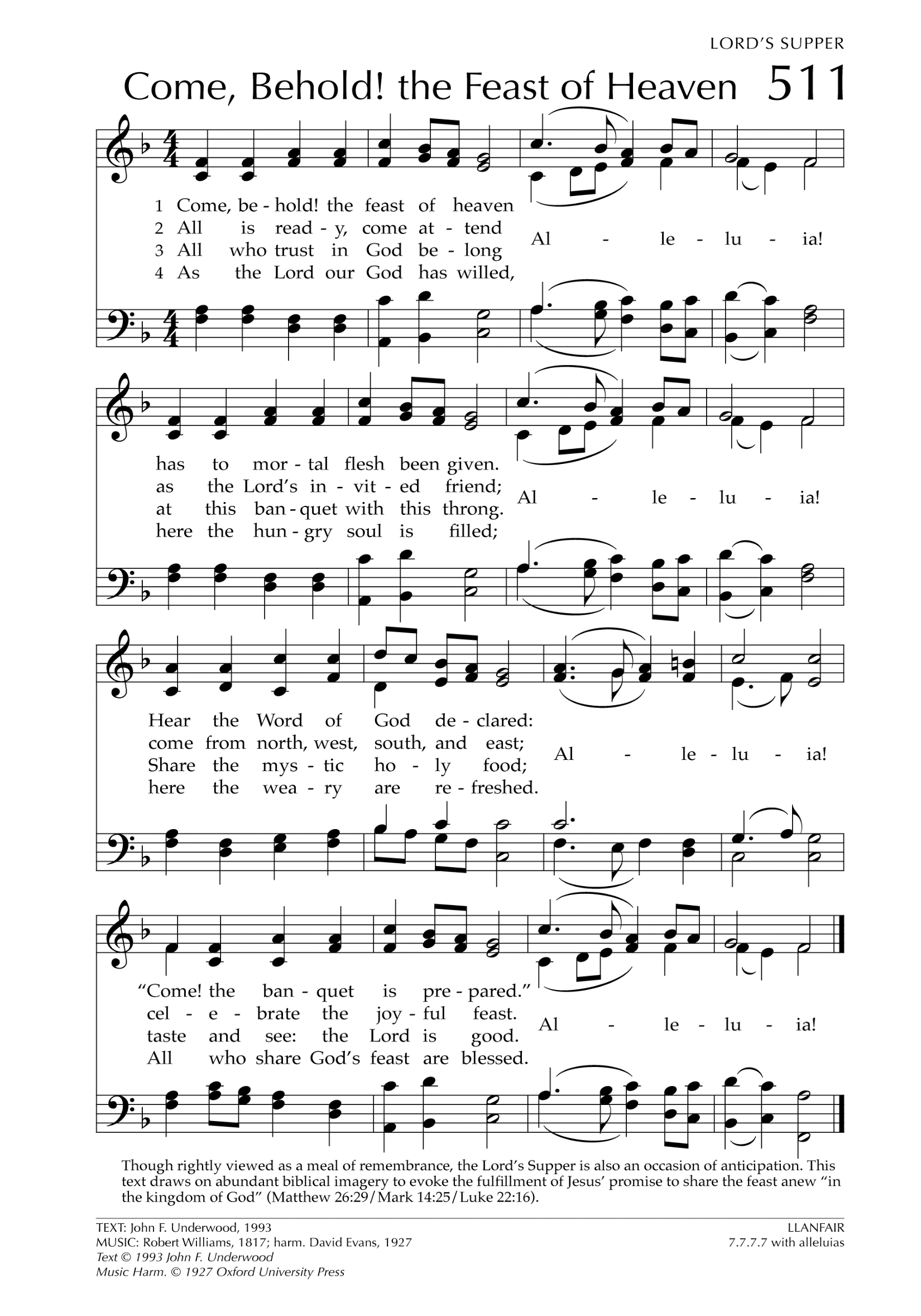
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***Reflection & Questions***

World Communion Sunday often focuses on unity at God’s table, a vision of the beloved community. In a different tone, today’s texts invite an unblinking look at the calamities and upheavals affecting brothers and sisters nearby and far away: war, conquest, displacement, economic crisis, grinding poverty, even natural disaster. Faith calls us to see and testify that these exist and that their causes are often human. To lament and grieve with the afflicted can prompt the spirit of courage to act, even if only with a must seed of faith. Today’s texts may help us to imagine the state of the world if our default position is one of grace rather than judgement, mercy rather than retribution, forgiveness rather than punishment, faith rather than cynicism. Imagine the state of our world if we trusted that God has promised to give us all the faith we need.

1. Have you ever asked God for more of something? What was it? Did you really need more or did your need to trust what you already had?
2. If the Luke text is connected to the call to forgive that comes just prior to it, how has your faith enabled you to forgive?
3. What gift has God given you that you need to rekindle? How can you rekindle it?
4. How has taught and modeled sound Christian teaching to you? What were those teachings? Are there some you need to revisit, review, or relearn?
5. The text from Lamentations is bleak. Have you experienced seasons that feel hopeless, desolate? What happened? How were you sustained during those difficult days? What did you learn as a result of them?

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