

## **Sunday, January 03, 2016 Second Sunday after Christmas**

**The Collect:** O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:7-14 read from the New Life Version Bible**

For the Lord says, "Sing loud with joy for Jacob, and call out among the heads of the nations. Make it known, give praise, and say, 'O Lord, save Your people. Save those who are left of Israel.' See, I am bringing them from the north country. And I will gather them from the farthest parts of the earth. Among them will be the blind and those who cannot walk, the woman with child and she who is giving birth, together. Many people will return here. They will come crying, and in answer to their prayers, I will lead them. I will make them walk by rivers of waters on a straight path where they will not fall. For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born."

Hear the Word of the Lord, O nations, and make it known in the lands far across the sea. Say, "He Who sent Israel everywhere will gather them, and will watch over His flock like a shepherd." For the Lord has paid the price to make Jacob free. He has made him free from the one who was stronger than he. And they will come and call out for joy on the height of Zion. They will shine with joy over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the new wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the cattle. Their life will be like a well-watered garden. They will never have sorrow again. Then the young women who have never had a man will dance for joy, and the young men and old as well. For I will change their sorrow to joy, and will comfort them. I will give them joy for their sorrow. I will fill the soul of the religious leaders with more than they need. My people will be filled with My goodness," says the Lord.

## **The Word of the Lord**

### **Psalm 84 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! \* My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

2 The sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; \* by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! \* they will always be praising you.

4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! \* whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, \* for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, \* and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

7 Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; \* hearken, O God of Jacob.

8 Behold our defender, O God; \* and look upon the face of your Anointed.

9 For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, \* and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.

10 For the Lord God is both sun and shield; \* he will give grace and glory;

11 No good thing will the Lord withhold \* from those who walk with integrity.

12 O Lord of hosts, \* happy are they who put their trust in you!

### **Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a New Living Translation Bible**

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great

pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.

Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him.

### **The Word of the Lord**

#### **Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12 read from the New Revised Standard Version Anglicised Bible**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also

go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

#### **Closing Prayer: On January 9th we celebrate the life of Julia Chester Emery.**

Julia Chester Emery was the National Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary of the Board of Missions of the Episcopal Church for forty years, from 1876 to 1916.

During her four decades as National Secretary, a position she first held at age 24, Julia visited every diocese in the United States, coordinating and encouraging work in support of missions. Invited by the Bishop of New York, Emery traveled to London as a delegate to the Pan-Anglican Congress and the Lambeth Conference in 1908. She traveled to Japan, China, Hong Kong and the Philippines to advance missionary work there, and to be able to report on it to the Episcopal women in the United States. Through her self-effacing work, women received canonical status as deaconesses and the Women's Auxiliary received an important role in the General Convention.

Emery founded the United Thank Offering (UTO). This worked by giving each woman a small box with a slit in the top and encouraging her to drop a small contribution into it whenever she felt thankful for something. Once a year, the women of the parish presented these at a Sunday service. The money was sent to national headquarters to be used for missions.

Julia Chester Emery died January 9th 1922 at the age of 69.

**Let us pray:** God of all creation, you call us in Christ to make disciples of all nations and to proclaim your mercy and love: Grant that we, after the example of your servant Julia Chester Emery, may have vision and courage in proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our light and our salvation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**