

## **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, July 18**

**The Collect:** Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **Track 1 Old Testament: 2 Samuel 7:1-14a read from the New American Standard Bible**

7 Now it came about, when the king lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I live in a house of cedar, but the ark of God remains within the tent.” 3 Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.”

4 But in the same night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, 5 “Go and say to My servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: “Should you build Me a house for My dwelling? 6 For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; rather, I have been moving about in a tent, that is, in a dwelling place. 7 Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”’”

8 Now then, this is what you shall say to My servant David: ‘This is what the Lord of armies says: “I Myself took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader over My people Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have eliminated all your enemies from you; I will also make a great name for you, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. 10 And I will establish a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will malicious people oppress them anymore as previously, 11 even from the day that I appointed judges over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you. 12 When your days are finished and you lie

down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me;

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

**Track 1 Psalm 89:20-37 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

- 20 I have found David my servant; \*  
with my holy oil have I anointed him.
- 21 My hand will hold him fast \*  
and my arm will make him strong.
- 22 No enemy shall deceive him, \*  
nor any wicked man bring him down.
- 23 I will crush his foes before him \*  
and strike down those who hate him.
- 24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, \*  
and he shall be victorious through my Name.
- 25 I shall make his dominion extend \*  
from the Great Sea to the River.
- 26 He will say to me, 'You are my Father, \*  
my God, and the rock of my salvation.'
- 27 I will make him my firstborn \*  
and higher than the kings of the earth.
- 28 I will keep my love for him for ever, \*  
and my covenant will stand firm for him.
- 29 I will establish his line for ever \*  
and his throne as the days of heaven."
- 30 "If his children forsake my law \*  
and do not walk according to my judgments;
- 31 If they break my statutes \*  
and do not keep my commandments;
- 32 I will punish their transgressions with a rod \*

and their iniquities with the lash;  
33 But I will not take my love from him, \*  
nor let my faithfulness prove false.  
34 I will not break my covenant, \*  
nor change what has gone out of my lips.  
35 Once for all I have sworn by my holiness: \*  
'I will not lie to David.  
36 His line shall endure for ever \*  
and his throne as the sun before me;  
37 It shall stand fast for evermore like the moon, \*  
the abiding witness in the sky.' "

**Track 2 Old Testament: Jeremiah 23:1-6 read from the New American Standard Bible**

23 "Woe to the shepherds who are causing the sheep of My pasture to perish and are scattering them!" declares the Lord. 2 Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not been concerned about them; behold, I am going to call you to account for the evil of your deeds," declares the Lord. 3 "Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. 4 I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the Lord.

5 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord,  
"When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;  
And He will reign as king and act wisely  
And do justice and righteousness in the land.

6 In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will live securely;  
And this is His name by which He will be called,  
'The Lord Our Righteousness.'

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

## **Track 2 Psalm 23 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

1 The Lord is my shepherd; \*

I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures \*

and leads me beside still waters.

3 He revives my soul \*

and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I shall fear no evil; \*

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; \*

you have anointed my head with oil,

and my cup is running over.

6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, \*

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## **Epistle: Ephesians 2:11-22 read from the New Century Version Bible**

11 You were not born Jewish. You are the people the Jews call "uncircumcised." Those who call you "uncircumcised" call themselves "circumcised." (Their circumcision is only

something they themselves do on their bodies.) 12 Remember that in the past you were without Christ. You were not citizens of Israel, and you had no part in the agreements with the promise that God made to his people. You had no hope, and you did not know God.

13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away from God are brought near through the blood of Christ's death. 14 Christ himself is our peace. He made both Jewish people and those who are not Jews one people. They were separated as if there were a wall between them, but Christ broke down that wall of hate by giving his own body. 15 The Jewish law had many commands and rules, but Christ ended that law. His purpose was to make the two groups of people become one new people in him and in this way make peace. 16 It was also Christ's purpose to end the hatred between the two groups, to make them into one body, and to bring them back to God. Christ did all this with his death on the cross. 17 Christ

came and preached peace to you who were far away from God, and to those who were near to God. 18 Yes, it is through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit.

19 Now you who are not Jewish are not foreigners or strangers any longer, but are citizens together with God's holy people. You belong to God's family. 20 You are like a building that was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone in that building, 21 and that whole building is joined together in Christ. He makes it grow and become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in Christ you, too, are being built together with the Jews into a place where God lives through the Spirit.

### **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

#### **Gospel: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 read from the New International Version Bible**

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.

31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

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

**Closing Prayer: On July 20 we celebrate the lives of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1902; Amelia Bloomer, 1894; Sojourner Truth, 1883; and Harriet Ross Tubman, 1913. Liberators and Prophets read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses**

### **Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815–1902**

Born on November 12, 1815, into an affluent, strict Calvinist family in Johnstown, New York, Elizabeth, as a young woman, took seriously the Presbyterian doctrines of predestination and human depravity. She became very depressed, but resolved her mental crises through action. She dedicated her life to righting the wrongs perpetrated upon women by the Church and society.

She and four other women organized the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19–20, 1848. The event set her political and religious agenda for the next 50 years. She held the Church accountable for oppressing women by using Scripture to enforce subordination of women in marriage and to prohibit them from ordained ministry. She held society accountable for denying women equal access to professional jobs, property ownership, the vote, and for granting less pay for the same work.

In 1881, the Revised Version of the Bible was published by a committee which included no women scholars. Elizabeth founded her own committee of women to write a commentary on Scripture, and applying the Greek she learned as a child from her minister, focused on passages used to oppress and discriminate against women.

Although Elizabeth blamed male clergy for women's oppression, she attended Trinity Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls with her friend Amelia Bloomer. As a dissenting prophet, Elizabeth preached hundreds of homilies and political speeches in pulpits throughout the nation. Wherever she visited, she was experienced as a holy presence and a liberator. She never lost her sense of humor, despite years of contending with opposition, even from friends. In a note to Susan B. Anthony, she said: "Do not feel depressed, my dear friend, what is good in us is immortal, and if the sore trials we have endured are sifting out pride and selfishness, we shall not have suffered in vain." Shortly before she died in New York City, on October 26, 1902, she said: "My only regret is that I have not been braver and

bolder and truer in the honest conviction of my soul.”

### **Amelia Jenks Bloomer 1818–1894**

Amelia Jenks, the youngest of six children, born in New York on May 27, 1818, to a pious Presbyterian family, early on demonstrated a kindness of heart and strict regard for truth and right. As a young woman, she joined in the temperance, anti-slavery, and women’s rights movements.

Amelia Jenks Bloomer never intended to make dress reform a major platform in women’s struggle for justice. But, women’s fashion of the day prescribed waist-cinching corsets, even for pregnant women, resulting in severe health problems. Faith and fashion collided explosively when she published in her newspaper, *The Lily*, a picture of herself in loose-fitting Turkish trousers, and began wearing them publicly. Clergy, from their pulpits, attacked women who wore them, citing Moses: “Women should not dress like men.” Amelia fired back: “It matters not what Moses had to say to the men and women of his time about what they should wear. If clergy really cared about what Moses said about clothes, they would all put fringes and blue ribbons on their garments.” Her popularity soared as she engaged clergy in public debate.

She insisted that “certain passages in the Scriptures relating to women had been given a strained and unnatural meaning.” And, of St. Paul she said: “Could he have looked into the future and foreseen all the sorrow and strife, the cruel exactions and oppression on the one hand and the blind submission and cringing fear on the other, that his words have sanctioned and caused, he would never have uttered them.” And of women’s right to freedom, “The same Power that brought the slave out of bondage will, in His own good time and way, bring about the emancipation of woman, and make her the equal in power and dominion that she was in the beginning.”

Later in life, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, a frontier town, she worked to establish churches, libraries, and school houses. She provided hospitality for traveling clergy of all denominations, and for temperance lecturers and reformers. Trinity Episcopal Church, Seneca Falls, New York, where she was baptized, records her as a “faithful Christian

missionary all her life.” Amelia Jenks Bloomer died in Council Bluffs on December 30, 1894.

### **Sojourner Truth, “Miriam of the Later Exodus” 1797–8 to 1883**

Isabella (Sojourner Truth) was the next-to-youngest child of several born to James and Elizabeth, slaves owned by a wealthy Dutchman in New York, in 1797 or 1798. For the first 28 years of her life she was a slave, sold from household to household.

She fled slavery with the help of Quaker friends, first living in Philadelphia, then New York, where she joined the Mother Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church when African Americans were being denied the right to worship with white members of St. George’s Church in Philadelphia. Belle (as Isabella was called) became a street corner evangelist in poverty-stricken areas of New York City, but quickly realized people needed food, housing, and warm clothing. She focused her work on a homeless shelter for women.

When she was about 46, Belle believed she heard God say to her, “Go east.” So, she set out east for Long Island and Connecticut. Stopping at a Quaker farm for a drink of water, she was asked her name. “My name is Sojourner,” Belle said. “What is your last name?” the woman asked. Belle thought of all her masters’ names she had carried through life. Then the thought came: “The only master I have now is God, and His name is Truth.”

Sojourner became a traveling preacher, approaching white religious meetings and campgrounds and asking to speak. Fascinated by her charismatic presence, her wit, wisdom, and imposing six-foot height, they found her hard to refuse. She never learned to read or write, but quoted extensive Bible passages from memory in her sermons. She ended by singing a “home-made” hymn and addressing the crowd on the evils of slavery. Her reputation grew, and she became part of the abolitionist and women’s rights speakers’ network.

During a women’s rights convention in Ohio, Sojourner gave the speech for which she is best remembered: “Ain’t I a Woman.” She had listened for hours to clergy attack women’s rights and abolition, using the Bible to support their oppressive logic: God had created women to be weak and blacks to be a subservient race. In her speech she retorted, “If the

first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.”

Sojourner Truth died on November 26, 1883, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

### **Harriet Ross Tubman, “Moses of her People” 1820–1913**

Slave births were recorded under property, not as persons with names; but we know that Harriet Ross, born sometime during 1820 on a Maryland Chesapeake Bay plantation, was the sixth of eleven children born to Ben Ross and Harriet Green. Although her parents were loving and they enjoyed a cheerful family life inside their cabin, they lived in fear of the children being sold off at any time.

Harriet suffered beatings and a severe injury, but grew up strong and defiant, refusing to appear happy and smiling to her owners. To cope with brutality and oppression, she turned to religion. Her favorite Bible story was about Moses who led the Israelites out of slavery. The slaves prayed for a Moses of their own.

When she was about 24, Harriet escaped to Canada, but could not forget her parents and other slaves she left behind. Working with the Quakers, she made at least 19 trips back to Maryland between 1851 and 1861, freeing over 300 people by leading them into Canada. She was so successful, \$40,000 was offered for her capture.

Guided by God through omens, dreams, warnings, she claimed her struggle against slavery had been commanded by God. She foresaw the Civil War in a vision. When it began, she quickly joined the Union Army, serving as cook and nurse, caring for both Confederate and Union soldiers. She served as a spy and scout. She led 300 black troops on a raid which freed over 750 slaves, making her the first American woman to lead troops into military action.

In 1858 – 9, she moved to upstate New York where she opened her home to African American orphans and to helpless old people. Although she was illiterate, she founded

schools for African American children. She joined the fight for women's rights, working with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, but supported African American women in their efforts to found their own organizations to address equality, work, and education. She died on March 10, 1913, in Auburn, New York.

**Let us pray:** O God, whose Spirit guides us into all truth and makes us free: Strengthen and sustain us as you did your servants Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner, and Harriet. Give us vision and courage to stand against oppression and injustice and all that works against the glorious liberty to which you call all your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**