

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, July 25

The Collect: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Track 1 Old Testament: 2 Samuel 11:1-15 read from the New Living Translation

11 In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of Rabbah. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

2 Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. 3 He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." 4 Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period. Then she returned home. 5 Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent David a message, saying, "I'm pregnant."

6 Then David sent word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent him to David.

7 When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab and the army were getting along and how the war was progressing. 8 Then he told Uriah, "Go on home and relax." David even sent a gift to Uriah after he had left the palace. 9 But Uriah didn't go home. He slept that night at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

10 When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he summoned him and asked, "What's the matter? Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long?"

11 Uriah replied, "The Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah are living in tents, and Joab and my master's men are camping in the open fields. How could I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife? I swear that I would never do such a thing."

12 "Well, stay here today," David told him, "and tomorrow you may return to the army." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 Then David invited him to dinner and got him drunk. But even then he couldn't get Uriah to go home to his wife. Again he slept at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

14 So the next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and gave it to Uriah to deliver. 15 The letter instructed Joab, "Station Uriah on the front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People

Track 1 Psalm 14 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." *

All are corrupt and commit abominable acts;
there is none who does any good.

2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon us all, *

to see if there is any who is wise,
if there is one who seeks after God.

3 Every one has proved faithless;

all alike have turned bad; *

there is none who does good; no, not one.

4 Have they no knowledge, all those evildoers *

who eat up my people like bread
and do not call upon the Lord?

5 See how they tremble with fear, *

because God is in the company of the righteous.

6 Their aim is to confound the plans of the afflicted, *

but the Lord is their refuge.

7 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come out of Zion! *
when the Lord restores the fortunes of his people,
Jacob will rejoice and Israel be glad.

Track 2 Old Testament: 2 Kings 4:42-44 read from the New Living Translation

42 One day a man from Baal-shalishah brought the man of God a sack of fresh grain and twenty loaves of barley bread made from the first grain of his harvest. Elisha said, "Give it to the people so they can eat."

43 "What?" his servant exclaimed. "Feed a hundred people with only this?"

But Elisha repeated, "Give it to the people so they can eat, for this is what the Lord says: Everyone will eat, and there will even be some left over!" 44 And when they gave it to the people, there was plenty for all and some left over, just as the Lord had promised.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm: 145:10-19 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

10 All your works praise you, O Lord, *
and your faithful servants bless you.

11 They make known the glory of your kingdom *
and speak of your power;

12 That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

14 The Lord is faithful in all his words *
and merciful in all his deeds.

15 The Lord upholds all those who fall; *
he lifts up those who are bowed down.

16 The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, *

and you give them their food in due season.

17 You open wide your hand *

and satisfy the needs of every living creature.

18 The Lord is righteous in all his ways *

and loving in all his works.

19 The Lord is near to those who call upon him, *

to all who call upon him faithfully.

Epistle: Ephesians 3:14-21 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. 16 I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. 18 I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: John 6:1-21 read from the New Revised Standard Version Anglicized

6 After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. 3 Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. 5 When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' 6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. 7 Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a

little.’ 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, 9 ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’ 10 Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.’ 13 So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. 14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’

15 When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, 17 got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

18 The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. 20 But he said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’ 21 Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On July 29 we celebrate the First Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in The Episcopal Church. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*

On July 29, 1974, the feast of Martha and Mary of Bethany, eleven women deacons were ordained to the priesthood at the Church of the Advocate, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

“We are certain that the Church needs women in priesthood to be true to the gospel understanding of human unity in Christ,” explained the eleven ordinands in a public statement.

One year earlier, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church had defeated a resolution to amend the canons on ordination to state that they “shall be equally applicable to men and women.” A similar resolution in 1970 had also been narrowly defeated. After the 1973 convention, a group began exploring the possibility of ordaining women without General Convention action.

After months of planning, Merrill Bittner, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Allison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Suzanne Hiatt, Marie Moorefield, Jeannette Piccard, Betty Bone Schiess, Katrina Welles Swanson, and Nancy Hatch Wittig were ordained by three retired or resigned bishops—Daniel Corrigan, Robert DeWitt, and Edward Welles—in the presence of one active bishop, Antonio Ramos of Costa Rica, and a congregation of about 2000.

Following the ordination, a special session of the House of Bishops, convened on August 14, 1974, determined that the ordinations were not only canonically irregular but also invalid. At their regularly scheduled meeting in October 1974, the bishops affirmed the principle of ordaining women but condemned the bishops who had acted without the church’s authorization.

A year later, on September 7, 1975, E. Lee McGee, Alison Palmer, Elizabeth Rosenberg, and Diane Tickell were ordained to the priesthood by retired Bishop George Barrett at the Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington, DC. Two weeks later, the House of Bishops decried this action as well.

On September 16, 1976, the General Convention voted to amend the canons to stipulate that both women and men are eligible for ordination. The House of Bishops determined that each woman ordained before 1977 could function as a priest after a “completion of the ritual acts” performed in Philadelphia or Washington.

Let us pray: O God, you poured your Spirit from on high to bless and summon these women, who heard the strength of your call: Equip, guide, and inspire us with wisdom, boldness, and faith to trust you in all circumstances, hear you preach new life to your Church, and stretch out our hands to serve you, as you created us and redeemed us in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God everlasting. **Amen.**