

First Sunday after the Epiphany, The Baptism of our Lord, Jan. 8

The First Lesson, Second Lesson and Gospel will be read from the Easy To Read Version Bible

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer.

The Collect: Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

First Lesson: Isaiah 42:1-9

1 "Here is my servant,
the one I support.

He is the one I have chosen,
and I am very pleased with him.

I have filled him with my Spirit,
and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 He will not cry out or shout
or try to make himself heard in the streets.

3 He will not break even a crushed reed.
He will not put out even the weakest flame.
He will bring true justice.

4 He will not grow weak or give up
until he has brought justice to the world.
And people in faraway places will hope to receive his teachings."

5 The Lord, the true God, said these things. (He created the sky and spread it out over the earth. He formed the earth and everything it produced. He breathes life into all the people on earth. He gives a spirit to everyone who walks on the earth.)

6 "I, the Lord, was right to call you.

I will hold your hand and protect you.

You will be the sign of my agreement with the people.

You will be a light for the other nations.

7 You will make the blind able to see.

You will free those who are held as captives.

You will lead those who live in darkness out of their prison.

8 "I am Yahweh.

That is my name.

I will not give my glory to another.

I will not let statues take the praise that should be mine.

9 In the past, I told you what would happen,
and it happened!

Now I am telling you something new,
and I am telling you now, before it happens."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 29

1 Ascribe to the Lord, you gods, *

ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Name; *

worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;

the God of glory thunders; *

the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

4 The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice; *

the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.

5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; *

the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, *

and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

7 The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire;
the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; *
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

8 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe *
and strips the forests bare.

9 And in the temple of the Lord *
all are crying, "Glory!"

10 The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; *
the Lord sits enthroned as King for evermore.

11 The Lord shall give strength to his people; *
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Second Lesson: Acts 10:34-43

34 Peter began to speak: "I really understand now that God does not consider some people to be better than others. 35 He accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what nation they come from. 36 God has spoken to the people of Israel. He sent them the Good News that peace has come through Jesus Christ, the Lord of all people.

37 "You know what has happened all over Judea. It began in Galilee after John told the people they needed to be baptized. 38 You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Messiah by giving him the Holy Spirit and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good for people. He healed those who were ruled by the devil, showing that God was with him.

39 "We saw all that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But he was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. 40 But on the third day after his death, God raised him to life and let him be seen openly. 41 He was not seen by everyone, but only by us, the ones God had already chosen to be witnesses. We ate and drank with him after he was raised from death.

42 “Jesus told us to go and speak to the people. He told us to tell them that he is the one God chose to be the Judge of all who are living and all who have died. 43 Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name. All the prophets agree that this is true.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He came to John, wanting John to baptize him. 14 But John tried to stop him. John said, “Why do you come to me to be baptized? I should be baptized by you!”

15 Jesus answered, “Let it be this way for now. We should do whatever God says is right.” Then John agreed.

16 So Jesus was baptized. As soon as he came up out of the water, the sky opened, and he saw God’s Spirit coming down on him like a dove. 17 A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the one I love. I am very pleased with him.”

The Gospel of the Lord

On January 8 we celebrate the life of Harriet Bedell, Deaconess and Missionary. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Harriet Bedell was born in Buffalo, New York, on March 19, 1875. Inspired by an Episcopal missionary, she enrolled as a student at the New York Training School for Deaconesses, where she was instructed in religion, missions, teaching, and hygiene. She then became a missionary-teacher among the Cheyenne at the Whirlwind Mission in Oklahoma. In 1916, Bedell was sent to Stevens Village, Alaska, where she was finally set apart as a deaconess in 1922. She also served as a teacher and nurse at St. John’s in the Wilderness at Allakaket, just 40 miles south of the Arctic Circle, from which she sometimes traveled by dogsled to remote villages. During her last years in Alaska, Bedell opened a boarding school.

In 1932, hearing about the plight of the Seminoles in Florida, Bedell used her own salary to reopen a mission among the Mikasuki Indians. There, she worked to revive some of their traditional crafts: dollmaking, basket-weaving, and intricate patchwork designs. The arts and crafts store that they established to sell their handicrafts improved the economy of the Blades Cross Mission. Though officially forced to retire at age 63, Bedell continued her ministry of health care, education, and economic empowerment until 1960 when Hurricane Donna wiped out her mission.

Active into her eighties, Deaconess Bedell drove an average of 20,000 miles per year during her ministry. She was one of the most popular writers in the national Episcopal mission periodical, *The Spirit of Missions*. Bedell won the respect of indigenous people through her compassion and respect for their way of life and beliefs. While active in ministry among the Cheyenne, she was eventually adopted into the tribe and given the name “Bird Woman.” The Diocese of Southwest Florida has long celebrated Harriet Bedell Day on January 8, the anniversary of her death in 1969.

Let us pray: Holy God, you chose your faithful servant Harriett Bedell to exercise the ministry of deaconess and to be a missionary among indigenous peoples: Fill us with compassion and respect for all people, and empower us for the work of ministry throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**