

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, Feb. 5

The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from English Standard Version Bible Anglicised.

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

The Collect: Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Old Testament: Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)

58 "Cry aloud; do not hold back;

lift up your voice like a trumpet;

declare to my people their transgression,

to the house of Jacob their sins.

2 Yet they seek me daily

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that did righteousness

and did not forsake the judgement of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgements;

they delight to draw near to God.

3 'Why have we fasted, and you see it not?

Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?'

Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure,

and oppress all your workers.

4 Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight

and to hit with a wicked fist.

Fasting like yours this day

will not make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is such the fast that I choose,

a day for a person to humble himself?
Is it to bow down his head like a reed,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
Will you call this a fast,
and a day acceptable to the Lord?
6 “Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.
9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’
If you take away the yoke from your midst,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.
11 And the Lord will guide you continually
and satisfy your desire in scorched places
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters do not fail.

12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 112:1-9, (10)

1 Hallelujah!

Happy are they who fear the Lord *
and have great delight in his commandments!

2 Their descendants will be mighty in the land; *
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches will be in their house, *
and their righteousness will last for ever.

4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright; *
the righteous are merciful and full of compassion.

5 It is good for them to be generous in lending *
and to manage their affairs with justice.

6 For they will never be shaken; *
the righteous will be kept in everlasting remembrance.

7 They will not be afraid of any evil rumors; *
their heart is right;
they put their trust in the Lord.

8 Their heart is established and will not shrink, *
until they see their desire upon their enemies.

9 They have given freely to the poor, *
and their righteousness stands fast for ever;
they will hold up their head with honor.

10 The wicked will see it and be angry;
they will gnash their teeth and pine away; *
the desires of the wicked will perish.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12, (13-16)

2 And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,

nor the heart of man imagined,

what God has prepared for those who love him”—

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord

On February 5 we celebrate the lives of Roger Williams, and Anne Hutchinson, Prophetic Witnesses. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Born in London in 1603, Roger Williams was ordained and served as a priest in the Church of England. Williams found that he could not abide by the rigorous, high-church policies of Archbishop William Laud, and in 1630, he sailed to New England in search of religious liberty.

Upon his arrival in Boston, Williams encountered further obstacles to religious freedom. In particular, Williams objected to the ability of the civil authorities to punish religious offenses, and in his book *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution*, he advocated for a “wall of separation” between civil and religious powers. He believed also in the fundamental right of all people to follow their consciences in matters of religious belief. He left Massachusetts and founded a

nearby settlement called Providence, believing God had guided him to this new land. He was eventually granted a charter for the colony of Rhode Island, the new constitution of which granted wide religious latitude and freedom of practice. Williams founded the first Baptist Church in Providence, though he refused to be tied to the tenets of an established church.

Like Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson (born Anne Marbury at Alford, Lincolnshire, England, in July 1591), also immigrated to Massachusetts in hope of finding religious freedom. She was an outspoken advocate of the rights and equality of women, challenging the dominant views of the Puritan leadership. She held Bible studies in her home for the women of her community, at which she welcomed critical examination of the faith. As a result of her activities, she found herself at odds with not only the religious authorities, but the state civil authorities as well, and, in 1638, she was tried by the General Court of Massachusetts, presided over by Governor John Winthrop, and was branded as a dangerous dissenter and banished from the colony. Anne eventually relocated to what is now the Bronx, New York, where she and her family were killed, save one daughter, by a group of Siwanoy Indians on August 20, 1643.

Today, both Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson are remembered as early champions of religious liberty in the United States and as prophets of the individual's freedom of fellowship with the Creator.

Let us pray: O God, our light and salvation, who makes all free to worship you: May we ever strive to be faithful to your call, following the example of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, that we may faithfully set our hands to the Gospel plow, confident in the truth proclaimed by your Son Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**