

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 24

The Collect and Psalms will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer. The Old Testament and Gospel will be read from the Revised Standard Version Bible

The Collect: Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; 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: Exodus 16:2-15

2 And the whole congregation of the people of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 and said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

4 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or not. 5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” 6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, 7 and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your murmurings against the Lord. For what are we, that you murmur against us?” 8 And Moses said, “When the Lord gives you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the Lord has heard your murmurings which you murmur against him—what are we? Your murmurings are not against us but against the Lord.”

9 And Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the Lord, for he has heard your murmurings.’” 10 And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. 11 And the Lord said to Moses, 12 “I have heard

the murmurings of the people of Israel; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'"

13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning dew lay round about the camp. 14 And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoarfrost on the ground. 15 When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.

Hear what he Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 1 Psalm: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name; *
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him, *
and speak of all his marvelous works.
- 3 Glory in his holy Name; *
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
- 4 Search for the Lord and his strength; *
continually seek his face.
- 5 Remember the marvels he has done, *
his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,
- 6 O offspring of Abraham his servant, *
O children of Jacob his chosen.
- 37 He led out his people with silver and gold; *
in all their tribes there was not one that stumbled.
- 38 Egypt was glad of their going, *
because they were afraid of them.
- 39 He spread out a cloud for a covering *
and a fire to give light in the night season.
- 40 They asked, and quails appeared, *

and he satisfied them with bread from heaven.

41 He opened the rock, and water flowed, *

so the river ran in the dry places.

42 For God remembered his holy word *

and Abraham his servant.

43 So he led forth his people with gladness, *

his chosen with shouts of joy.

44 He gave his people the lands of the nations, *

and they took the fruit of others' toil,

45 That they might keep his statutes *

and observe his laws.

Hallelujah!

Track 2 Old Testament: Jonah 3:10-4:11

10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it.

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the Lord and said, "I pray thee, Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repentest of evil. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, take my life from me, I beseech thee, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 And the Lord said, "Do you do well to be angry?" 5 Then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

6 And the Lord God appointed a plant, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm which attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he

might die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." 10 And the Lord said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm: Psalm 145:1-8

- 1 I will exalt you, O God my King, *
and bless your Name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless you *
and praise your Name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; *
there is no end to his greatness.
- 4 One generation shall praise your works to another *
and shall declare your power.
- 5 I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty *
and all your marvelous works.
- 6 They shall speak of the might of your wondrous acts, *
and I will tell of your greatness.
- 7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; *
they shall sing of your righteous deeds.
- 8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger and of great kindness.

Epistle: Philippians 1:21-30

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the

flesh is more necessary on your account. 25 Convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear omen to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. 29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, 30 engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to

this last as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ 16 So the last will be first, and the first last.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On September 24 we celebrate the life of Anna Ellison Butler Alexander. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses

The first African American deaconess in The Episcopal Church, teacher and minister in southern Georgia, Anna Ellison Butler Alexander was born to recently emancipated slaves on Butler Plantation in McIntosh County, Georgia, in 1865. She was the first African American set aside as a deaconess in The Episcopal Church in 1907. She founded Good Shepherd Church in rural Glynn County’s Pennick community, where she taught children to read—by tradition, from the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible—in a one-room schoolhouse. The school was later expanded to two rooms with a loft where Anna lived. She ministered in Pennick for 53 years, leaving a legacy of love and devotion still felt in Glynn County.

Deaconess Alexander served in difficult times, however. The Diocese of Georgia segregated her congregations in 1907 and African American congregations were not invited to another diocesan convention until 1947. Similarly, it was only in 1970 that the General Convention officially recognized deaconesses as being in deacon’s orders. However, her witness—wearing the distinctive dress of a deaconess, traveling by foot from Brunswick through Darien to Pennick, showing care and love for all whom she met—represents the best in Christian witness.

Let us pray: O God, you called Anna Alexander as a deaconess in your Church and sent her as teacher and evangelist to the people of Georgia: Grant us the humility to go wherever you send and the wisdom to teach the word of Christ to whomever we meet, that all may come to the enlightenment which you intend for your people; through Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior. **Amen.**