

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, June 16

The Collect and Psalms will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer
The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the Lexham English Bible

The Collect: Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Track 1 Old Testament: 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.

35 Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel mourned over Saul, and Yahweh regretted that he made Saul king over Israel.

16 Then Yahweh said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn about Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel! Fill up your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have chosen a king for myself among his sons.” 2 But Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears, he will kill me.” Yahweh said, “You must take a heifer from the herd with you, and you must say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh.’ 3 You will invite Jesse to the sacrifice and I will make known to you what you must do. You will anoint for me the one whom I tell you.”

4 So Samuel did what Yahweh said. He came to Bethlehem, and the elders of the city came trembling to meet him. They said, “Have you come in peace?” 5 He said, “I come in peace. I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” So he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they came, he saw Eliab and said, “Surely his anointed one is before Yahweh!”

7 But Yahweh said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For God does not see what man sees, for a man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and

made him pass before Samuel, and he said, "This one also Yahweh has not chosen." 9 So Jesse made Shammah pass before Samuel, but he said, "Yahweh also has not chosen this one." 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "Yahweh has not chosen any of these."

11 Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" And he said, "The youngest still remains, but look, he is shepherding the flock." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we cannot sit down until he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him. Now he was ruddy with beautiful eyes and of handsome appearance. And Yahweh said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. Then the Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon David from that day on. Then Samuel got up and went to Ramah.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 20

- 1 May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble, *
the Name of the God of Jacob defend you;
- 2 Send you help from his holy place *
and strengthen you out of Zion;
- 3 Remember all your offerings *
and accept your burnt sacrifice;
- 4 Grant you your heart's desire *
and prosper all your plans.
- 5 We will shout for joy at your victory
and triumph in the Name of our God; *
may the Lord grant all your requests.
- 6 Now I know that the Lord gives victory to his anointed; *
he will answer him out of his holy heaven,
with the victorious strength of his right hand.
- 7 Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, *
but we will call upon the Name of the Lord our God.

8 They collapse and fall down, *
but we will arise and stand upright.

9 O Lord, give victory to the king *
and answer us when we call.

Track 2: Old Testament: Ezekiel 17:22-24

'22 Thus says the Lord Yahweh: 'And I will take, even I, from the treetop of the high cedar, and I will plant it, from the head of its new plant shoot I will pluck a tender one, and I will plant it, even I, on a high and lofty mountain. 23 On the height of the mountain of Israel I will plant it, and it will carry branches, and it will bear fruit, and it will become a noble cedar, and all of the birds of all wings will dwell under it in the shade of its branches. 24 And all of the trees of the field will know that I, Yahweh, I will bring low a high tree, and I will exalt a low, fresh tree, and I will make a dry tree flourish. I, Yahweh, I have spoken, and I will do it.'"

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 92:1-4,11-14

1 It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord, *
and to sing praises to your Name, O Most High;
2 To tell of your loving-kindness early in the morning *
and of your faithfulness in the night season;
3 On the psaltery, and on the lyre, *
and to the melody of the harp.
4 For you have made me glad by your acts, O Lord; *
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.
11 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, *
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.
12 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord *
shall flourish in the courts of our God;
13 They shall still bear fruit in old age; *
they shall be green and succulent;

14 That they may show how upright the Lord is, *
my Rock, in whom there is no fault.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:6-17

6 Therefore, although we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— 7 for we live by faith, not by sight— 8 so we are confident and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

9 Therefore indeed we have as our ambition, whether at home in the body or absent from the body, to be acceptable to him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive back the things through the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

11 Therefore, because we know the fear of the Lord, we are attempting to persuade people, but we are revealed to God, and I hope to be revealed in your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to boast about us, in order that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.

13 For if we are out of our senses, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one died for all; as a result all died. 15 And he died for all, in order that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised.

16 So then, from now on we know no one from a human point of view, if indeed we have known Christ from a human point of view, but now we know him this way no longer.

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Mark 4:26-34

26 And he said, "The kingdom of God is like this: like a man scatters seed on the ground.

27 And he sleeps and gets up, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows—he does

not know how. 28 By itself the soil produces a crop: first the grass, then the head of grain, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the crop permits, he sends in the sickle right away, because the harvest has come.”

30 And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or by what parable can we present it? 31 It is like a mustard seed that when sown on the ground, although it is the smallest of all the seeds that are on the ground, 32 but when it is sown it grows up and becomes the largest of all the garden herbs, and sends out large branches so that the birds of the sky are able to nest in its shade.” 33 And with many parables such as these he was speaking the word to them, as they were able to hear it. 34 And he did not speak to them without a parable, but in private he explained everything to his own disciples.

The Gospel of the Lord

On June 22 we celebrate the life of Alban, First Martyr of Britain. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Alban is the earliest Christian in Britain who is known by name and, according to tradition, the first British martyr. He was a soldier in the Roman army, stationed at Verulamium, a city about twenty miles northeast of London, now called St. Alban's. He gave shelter to a Christian priest who was fleeing from persecution and was converted by him. When officers came to Alban's house, he dressed himself in the garments of the priest and gave himself up. Alban was tortured and martyred in place of the priest, on the hilltop where the Cathedral of St. Alban's now stands. The traditional date of his martyrdom is 303 or 304, but recent studies suggest that the year was actually 209, during the persecution under the Emperor Septimius Severus.

The site of Alban's martyrdom soon became a shrine. King Offa of Mercia established a monastery there about the year 793, and, in the high Middle Ages, St. Alban's ranked as the premier abbey in England. The great Norman abbey church, begun in 1077, now serves as the cathedral of the diocese of St. Alban's, established in 1877. It is the second longest church in England (Winchester Cathedral is the longest, by six feet), and it is built on higher ground than any other English cathedral. In a chapel east of the choir and high altar, there

are remains of the fourteenth century marble shrine of St. Alban.

The Venerable Bede gives this account of Alban's trial: "When Alban was brought in, the judge happened to be standing before an altar, offering sacrifice to devils . . . 'What is your family and race?' demanded the judge. 'How does my family concern you?' replied Alban; 'If you wish to know the truth about my religion, know that I am a Christian and am ready to do a Christian's duty.' 'I demand to know your name,' insisted the judge. 'Tell me at once.' 'My parents named me Alban,' he answered, 'and I worship and adore the living and true God, who created all things.' "

Let us pray: Almighty God, by whose grace and power your holy martyr Alban triumphed over suffering and was faithful even to death: Grant us, who now remember him in thanksgiving, to be so faithful in our witness to you in this world that we may receive with him the crown of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**