

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, July 14

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 New International Version Bible

The Collect: O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Track 1 Old Testament: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

6 David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. 2 He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. 3 They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart 4 with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. 5 David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

” So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. 13 When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14 Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, 15 while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

16 As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.

17 They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord.

18 After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. 19 Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 1 Psalm: Psalm 24

- 1 The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, *
the world and all who dwell therein.
- 2 For it is he who founded it upon the seas *
and made it firm upon the rivers of the deep.
- 3 "Who can ascend the hill of the Lord? " *
and who can stand in his holy place?"
- 4 "Those who have clean hands and a pure heart, *
who have not pledged themselves to falsehood,
nor sworn by what is a fraud.
- 5 They shall receive a blessing from the Lord *
and a just reward from the God of their salvation."
- 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, *
of those who seek your face, O God of Jacob.
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors; *
and the King of glory shall come in.
- 8 "Who is this King of glory?" *
"The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle."
- 9 Lift up your heads, O gates;
lift them high, O everlasting doors; *
and the King of glory shall come in.
- 10 "Who is he, this King of glory?"
"The Lord of hosts,

he is the King of glory.”

Track 2 Old Testament: Amos 7:7-15

7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. 8 And the Lord asked me, “What do you see, Amos?” “A plumb line,” I replied.

Then the Lord said, “Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

9 “The high places of Isaac will be destroyed
and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined;
with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam.”

Amos and Amaziah

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: “Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. 11 For this is what Amos is saying:

““Jeroboam will die by the sword,
and Israel will surely go into exile,
away from their native land.””

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. 13 Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.”

14 Amos answered Amaziah, “I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. 15 But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm: Psalm 85:8-13

8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *

that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together; *

righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *

and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *

and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him, *

and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-14

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Mark 6:14-29

14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

15 Others said, "He is Elijah."

And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

16 But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

17 For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. 18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, 20 because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

21 Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. 22 When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." 23 And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

24 She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

25 At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now

the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

26 The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27 So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, 28 and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. 29 On hearing of this, John’s disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

The Gospel of the Lord

On July 21 we celebrate the life of Albert John Luthuli, Prophetic Witness in South Africa. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Albert John Mvumbi Luthuli was the first African to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of his leadership in South Africa’s nonviolent struggle against apartheid. A man of noble bearing, charitable, intolerant of hatred, and adamant in his demands for equality and peace among all people, Luthuli forged a philosophical compatibility between two cultures—the Zulu culture of his native Africa and the Christian-democratic culture of Europe.

Born into a Christian family in 1898, Luthuli was educated in mission schools, took a college degree in Durban, and spent the first fifteen years of his working life as a school teacher before taking on the responsibilities of political activism. In 1936, he was elected a Zulu chief and was made responsible for a five thousand person community in the sugar lands of Natal. This led to a number of other elected and appointed positions related to the struggle for civil rights in South Africa, culminating in his election as President of the Natal region of the African National Congress in 1945, becoming National President in 1952. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1960 for his work against apartheid.

Luthuli’s increasing prominence as a leader of the anti-apartheid movement was met with significant resistance by the white South African government. His movements were restricted, his publications banned, and he was imprisoned on several occasions.

A Methodist lay preacher, Luthuli believed the struggle for civil rights was a Christian struggle and his participation and leadership grew out of his understanding of Christian discipleship. "My own urge because I am a Christian, is to get into the thick of the struggle with other Christians, taking my Christianity with me and praying that it may be used to influence for good the character of the resistance." When confronted by the South African government with an appeal to suspend his activism, Luthuli is reported to have said, "The road to freedom is via the cross."

Although Luthuli's death on July 21, 1967, was nearly a quarter century before the end of apartheid in South Africa, he is remembered as a Christian statesman in the fight against political, racial, and religious oppression.

Let us pray: God of peace, who called your servant Albert Luthuli to be a leader in the struggle against apartheid: Strengthen your Church, that in union with his example and prayers, we might resist injustice in all its forms; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for all time. **Amen.**