

Family has gone home after a wonderful visit for Christmas. I will be back recording next week.

Thank you for your patience.

Second Sunday after Christmas, January 5, 2025

The Collect: O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Collect and Psalms are from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer.

The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel are from the Amplified Bible.

Old Testament: Jeremiah 31:7-14

7 For thus says the Lord,

“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,

And shout for the first and foremost of the nations [the chosen people, Israel];

Proclaim, give praise and say,

‘O Lord save Your people,

The remnant of Israel!’

8 “Behold, I am bringing them from the north country,

And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth,

Among them [will be] the blind and the lame,

The woman with child and she who labors in childbirth, together;

A great company, they will return here [to Jerusalem].

9 “They will come with weeping [in repentance and for joy],

And by [their] prayer [for the future] I will lead them;

I will make them walk by streams of waters,

On a straight path in which they will not stumble,

For I am a Father to Israel,
And Ephraim (Israel) is My firstborn.”

10 Hear the word of the Lord, O you nations,
And declare it in the isles and coastlands far away,
And say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him
And will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.”

11 For the Lord has ransomed Jacob
And has redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he.

12 “They will come and sing aloud and shout for joy on the height of Zion,
And will be radiant [with joy] over the goodness of the Lord—
For the grain, for the new wine, for the oil,
And for the young of the flock and the herd.
And their life will be like a watered garden,
And they shall never sorrow or languish again.

13 “Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance,
And the young men and old, together,
For I will turn their mourning into joy
And will comfort them and make them rejoice after their sorrow.

14 “I will fully satisfy the soul of the priests with abundance,
And My people will be satisfied with My goodness,” says the Lord.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 84 or 84:1-8

1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *

My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of
the Lord;

my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

2 The sparrow has found her a house

and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *

by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts,

my King and my God.

3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *

they will always be praising you.

4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *

whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find

it a place of springs, *

for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, *

and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

7 Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; *

hearken, O God of Jacob.

8 Behold our defender, O God; *

and look upon the face of your Anointed.

[9 For one day in your courts is better than

a thousand in my own room, *

and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God

than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.

10 For the Lord God is both sun and shield; *

he will give grace and glory;

11 No good thing will the Lord withhold *

from those who walk with integrity.

12 O Lord of hosts, *

happy are they who put their trust in you!]

Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a

3 Blessed and worthy of praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ, 4 just as [in His love] He chose us in Christ [actually selected us for Himself as His own] before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy [that is, consecrated, set apart for Him, purpose-driven] and blameless in His sight. In love 5 He predestined and lovingly planned

for us to be adopted to Himself as [His own] children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the kind intention and good pleasure of His will— 6 to the praise of His glorious grace and favor, which He so freely bestowed on us in the Beloved [His Son, Jesus Christ].

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers; 17 [I always pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation [that gives you a deep and personal and intimate insight] into the true knowledge of Him [for we know the Father through the Son]. 18 And [I pray] that the eyes of your heart [the very center and core of your being] may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit], so that you will know and cherish the hope [the divine guarantee, the confident expectation] to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (God's people), 19 and [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His [active, spiritual] power is in us who believe.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15,19-23 or Luke 2:41-52 or Matthew 2:1-12

Matthew 2:13-15,19-23

13 Now when they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod intends to search for the Child in order to destroy Him.”

14 So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. 15 He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet [Hosea]: “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

19 But when Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, 20 “Get up! Take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead.” 21 Then Joseph got up, and took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod [the Great], he was afraid to go there. Then being

warned by God in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee, 23 and went and settled in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Luke 2:41-52

41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year for the Passover Feast. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the Feast; 43 and as they were returning [to Nazareth], after spending the required number of days [at the Feast], the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem. Now His parents did not know this, 44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and traveled a day’s journey; and [then] they began searching [anxiously] for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45 When they did not find Him, they went back to Jerusalem looking for Him [everywhere]. 46 Three days later they found Him in the [court of the] temple, sitting among the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 All who heard Him were amazed by His intelligence and His understanding and His answers. 48 When they saw Him, they were overwhelmed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You treated us like this? Listen, Your father and I have been [greatly distressed and] anxiously looking for You.” 49 And He answered, “Why did you have to look for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?” 50 But they did not understand what He had said to them. 51 He went down to Nazareth with them, and was continually submissive and obedient to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men.

Matthew 2:1-12

2 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king (Herod the Great), magi (wise men) from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 So he called together all the chief priests and scribes of the people and [anxiously] asked them where the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed) was to be born. 5 They replied to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what has been written by the prophet [Micah]: 6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

are not in any way least among the leaders of Judah;
For from you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.”

7 Then Herod secretly sent for the magi and learned from them the [exact] time the star [had first] appeared. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.” 9 After hearing the king, they went their way; and behold, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them [continually leading the way] until it came and stood over the place where the young Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And after entering the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, after opening their treasure chests, they presented to Him gifts [fit for a king, gifts] of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned [by God] in a dream not to go back to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

The Gospel of the Lord

**Closing Prayer: On January 9 we celebrate the life of Julia Chester Emery Missionary.
Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.**

Julia Chester Emery was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, on September 24, 1852. In 1876 she succeeded her sister, Mary, as Secretary of the Woman’s Auxiliary of the Board of Missions, which had been established by the General Convention in 1871. During the forty years she served as Secretary, Julia helped the Church to recognize its call to proclaim the gospel both at home and overseas. Her faith, her courage, her spirit of adventure, and her ability to inspire others combined to make her a leader respected and valued by the whole Church.

She visited every diocese and missionary district within the United States, encouraging and expanding the work of the Woman’s Auxiliary, and in 1908 she served as a delegate to the Pan-Anglican Congress in London. From there she traveled around the world, visiting missions in remote areas of China, in Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Hawaii, and then

all the dioceses on the Pacific Coast before returning to New York. In spite of the fact that travel was not easy, she wrote that she went forth “with hope for enlargement of vision, opening up new occasions for service, acceptance of new tasks.” Through her leadership a network of branches of the Woman’s Auxiliary was established which shared a vision of and a commitment to the Church’s mission. An emphasis on educational programs, a growing recognition of social issues, development of leadership among women, and the creation of the United Thank Offering are a further part of the legacy Julia left to the Church when she retired in 1916. In 1921, the year before she died, on January 9, 1922, the following appeared in the Spirit of Missions: “In all these enterprises of the Church, no single agency has done so much in the last half-century to further the Church’s Mission as the Woman’s Auxiliary.” Much of that accomplishment was due to the creative spirit of its Secretary for forty of those fifty years, Julia Chester Emery.

Let us pray: God of all creation, you call us in Christ to make disciples of all nations and to proclaim your mercy and love: Grant that we, after the example of your servant Julia Chester Emery, may have vision and courage in proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ, our light and our salvation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**