

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 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: O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because in our weakness we can do nothing good without you, give us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Jeremiah 17:5-10

5 Thus says Yahweh,

“Cursed is the person who trusts in humankind
and makes flesh his strength,
and turns aside his heart from Yahweh.

6 And he will be like a juniper in the wilderness,
and he will not see when good comes,
and he will dwell in the parched places in the desert,
in a land of salt flats, where no one lives.

7 Blessed be the person who trusts in Yahweh,
and Yahweh is his trust.

8 For he will be like a tree planted by water,
and to the stream it sends its roots,
and it will not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves will be luxuriant,
and in the year of drought it will not be anxious,
and it will not cease from the bearing of fruit.

9 The heart is deceitful more than anything else,
and it is disastrous. Who can understand it?

10 I, Yahweh, examine the mind,
I test the heart,
and give to each one according to his way,
according to the fruit of his deeds.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 1

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.
- 4 It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, *
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

12 Now if Christ is preached as raised up from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised either. 14 But if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain. 15 And also we are found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if after all, then, the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, Christ has not been raised either. 17 But if Christ has not been raised, your faith is empty; you are still in your sins.

18 And as a further result, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have put our hope in Christ in this life only, we are of all people most pitiable.

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Luke 6:17-26

17 And he came down with them and stood on a level place, and a large crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all of Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast district of Tyre and Sidon, 18 who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, and those who were troubled by unclean spirits were cured. 19 And the whole crowd was seeking to touch him, because power was going out from him and healing them all.

20 And he lifted up his eyes to his disciples and said,

“Blessed are the poor,

because yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are those who are hungry now,

because you will be satisfied.

Blessed are those who weep now,

Because you will laugh.

22 Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For their fathers used to do the same things to the prophets.

24 “But woe to you who are rich,

because you have received your comfort.

25 Woe to you who are satisfied now,

because you will be hungry.

Woe, you who laugh now,

because you will mourn and weep.

26 Woe whenever all people speak well of you,

for their fathers used to do the same things to the false prophets.

The Gospel of the Lord

On February 22 we celebrate the life of Eric Liddell, Missionary to China. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Eric Henry Liddell was born on January 16, 1902, at Tientsin (now Tianjin), in China, the second son of missionary parents. At the age of six, he was sent with his older brother to Eltham College, Blackheath, London, a boarding school for the children of missionaries. Liddell remained there until he enrolled in Edinburgh University. He excelled in athletics throughout his educational career.

Liddell won a position on the British track and field team for the Paris Olympic games of 1924, winning the gold in the 400 metre, setting a world record, and a bronze in the 200 metre. His best event as a university athlete was the 100 metre, and he was highly favored to win gold in the Olympics, but he elected not to run because the heat was to be held on Sunday, conflicting with his personal commitment to keep the sabbath. The award-winning film, *Chariots of Fire*, is the story of Eric Liddell and his participation in Olympiad VIII.

After his graduation from Edinburgh, Liddell returned to North China, near his birthplace, and served as a missionary from 1925- 1943. He was ordained in the Church of Scotland in 1932 and in 1934 married Florence Mackenzie, the daughter of Canadian missionaries to China. Together they had three daughters.

Because of ongoing conflict between China and Japan in the 1930's, Liddell and his family endured significant hardships. In 1941, after the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor, the British government advised expatriates to leave the country. Florence Liddell took the children and fled to Canada in 1941. Eric and his brother Rob stayed on and continued their work. In 1943, Liddell was interned in the Japanese concentration camp at Weihsein.

Although Liddel did have an opportunity to leave the camp as part of an exchange of British and Japanese prisoners, he gave his place to a pregnant woman instead. Having won the respect of his captors, he is remembered by camp survivors for his ministry among them. He died in 1945 shortly before the camp's liberation.

Let us pray: God, whose strength bears us up as on mighty wings: We rejoice in remembering your athlete and missionary, Eric Liddell, to whom you gave courage and resolution in contest and in captivity; and we pray that we also may run with endurance the race set before us and persevere in patient witness, until we wear that crown of victory won for us by Jesus our Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**