

Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany, February 23

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from The Modern English Version Bible

The Collect: O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing: Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Genesis 45:3-11, 15

3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

4 Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me," and they came near. Then he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 Now do not be upset or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 God sent me ahead of you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 "So now it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of his entire household and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says, "God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay. 10 And you will dwell in the land of Goshen, and you will be near me, you and your children and your children's children, along with your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. 11 I will provide for you there, for there are still five years of famine to come, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.'"

15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept on them. After that his brothers talked with him.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 37:1-12, 41-42

- 1 Do not fret yourself because of evildoers; *
do not be jealous of those who do wrong.
- 2 For they shall soon wither like the grass, *
and like the green grass fade away.
- 3 Put your trust in the Lord and do good; *
dwell in the land and feed on its riches.
- 4 Take delight in the Lord, *
and he shall give you your heart's desire.
- 5 Commit your way to the Lord and put your trust in him, *
and he will bring it to pass.
- 6 He will make your righteousness as clear as the light *
and your just dealing as the noonday.
- 7 Be still before the Lord *
and wait patiently for him.
- 8 Do not fret yourself over the one who prospers, *
the one who succeeds in evil schemes.
- 9 Refrain from anger, leave rage alone; *
do not fret yourself; it leads only to evil.
- 10 For evildoers shall be cut off, *
but those who wait upon the Lord shall possess the land.
- 11 In a little while the wicked shall be no more; *
you shall search out their place, but they will not be there.
- 12 But the lowly shall possess the land; *
they will delight in abundance of peace.
- 41 But the deliverance of the righteous comes from the Lord; *
he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

42 The Lord will help them and rescue them; *
he will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them,*
because they seek refuge in him.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-50

35 But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? With what body do they come?”
36 You fool! What you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 When you sow, you do not
sow the body that shall be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.
38 Then God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption; it is raised in
incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised
in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 So it is written, “The first man Adam
was made a living soul.” The last Adam was made a life-giving spirit. 46 However, that
which is spiritual is not first, but the natural, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was of
the earth, made of dust; the second man was the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of
dust, so are those who are of dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of
heaven. 49 As we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of
the man of heaven.

50 Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor
does corruption inherit incorruption.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

27 “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless
those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 To him who strikes you
on the one cheek, offer also the other. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not

withhold your tunic as well. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you. And of him who takes away your goods, do not ask for them back. 31 Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

32 “For if you love those who love you, what thanks do you receive? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks do you receive? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks do you receive? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much in return. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be the sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. 36 Be therefore merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

37 “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you: Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will men give unto you. For with the measure you use, it will be measured unto you.”

The Gospel of the Lord

On February 28 we celebrate the lives of Anna Julia Haywood Cooper, and Elizabeth Evelyn Wright. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses

Anna Julia Haywood Cooper was born on August 10, 1858, in Raleigh, North Carolina, to an enslaved woman and a white man, presumably her mother’s master. She attended St. Augustine Normal School and Collegiate Institute, founded by The Episcopal Church to educate African American teachers and clergy. There she became an Episcopalian and married George Cooper, one of her instructors, who was the second African American ordained to the Episcopal priesthood in North Carolina. She was an active member of St. Luke’s in Washington, D.C., while Alexander Crummell served as its rector.

Cooper emphasized the importance of equal education for African Americans. An advocate for African American women, Cooper assisted in organizing the Colored Women’s League

and the first Colored Settlement House in Washington, D.C. In 1892, her book *A Voice from the South* was published, in which she challenged The Episcopal Church to offer more direct support for the African American members of its church in their quest for advancement and improvement in a segregated society.

At the age of 65, on April 3, 1925, Cooper became the fourth African American woman to complete a doctorate, granted by the Sorbonne in Paris. From 1930-1942, she served as President of Freylinghuysen University in Washington, D.C. She died on February 27, 1964, at the age of 105.

Elizabeth Evelyn Wright was born in Talbotton, Georgia, in 1872. Her father was an African American and her mother of Cherokee descent.

With the encouragement of her teachers, she enrolled at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. She worked for the school during the day and attended night classes, but Olivia Washington, wife of the head of Tuskegee, Booker T. Washington, noted her promise and strength of character. Mrs. Washington made it possible for her to attend day classes.

Wright interrupted her studies and went to Hampton County, South Carolina, to establish a school for rural black children. Arsonists thwarted her efforts, and she returned to Tuskegee to finish her degree, graduating in 1894. She returned to Hampton County to re-start her school, but, once again, her efforts were turned back. Together with two colleagues, Jessie Dorsey and Hattie Davidson, she ventured to friendlier territory near Denmark, South Carolina, in 1897. There she started the Denmark Industrial Institute, modeled after Tuskegee. It continues today as Voorhees College, affiliated with The Episcopal Church.

Wright died on December 14, 1906, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Let us pray: Eternal God, you inspired Anna Julia Haywood Cooper and Elizabeth Evelyn Wright with the love of learning and the joy of teaching: Help us also to gather and use the resources of our communities for the education of all your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.