

## Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Feb. 1, 2026

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 New Revised Standard Version Bible Anglicized

**The Collect:** Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### Old Testament: Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.

2 Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord,  
and you enduring foundations of the earth;  
for the Lord has a controversy with his people,  
and he will contend with Israel.

3 'O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,  
and redeemed you from the house of slavery;  
and I sent before you Moses,  
Aaron, and Miriam.

5 O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,  
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,  
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.'

6 'With what shall I come before the Lord,  
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings,  
with calves a year old?  
7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with tens of thousands of rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
8 He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

### **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

#### **Psalm: Psalm 15**

1 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? \*  
who may abide upon your holy hill?  
2 Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, \*  
who speaks the truth from his heart.  
3 There is no guile upon his tongue;  
he does no evil to his friend; \*  
he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.  
4 In his sight the wicked is rejected, \*  
but he honors those who fear the Lord.  
5 He has sworn to do no wrong \*  
and does not take back his word.  
6 He does not give his money in hope of gain, \*  
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.  
7 Whoever does these things \*  
shall never be overthrown.

## **Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

## **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

## **Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12**

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

3 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### **The gospel of the Lord**

**On February 4 we celebrate the life of Anskar, Archbishop of Hamburg, Missionary to Denmark and Sweden. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Anskar was one of those valiant Christians of whom it might be said, "These shall plant the seed, but others shall reap the harvest." As Archbishop of Hamburg, he was papal legate for missionary work among the Scandinavians. The immediate result of his devoted and perilous labors was slight: two churches established on the border of Denmark and one priest settled in Sweden. He also participated in the consecration of Gotbert, first bishop in Sweden.

Anskar was born in the Somme region of France in 801, and educated in the outstanding monastic school near Corbie. His teaching skill led him to be chosen to be sent out by Corbie as master of a new monastery school, in Saxon Germany. His strongest call, however, was to be a missionary.

He was stirred, his biographer Rimbert says, by a prolonged vision, in which a voice said, "Go and return to me crowned with martyrdom." When King Harald of Denmark sought missionaries for that country in 826, Anskar was one of those selected. Rimbert notes that Anskar's missionary purpose caused astonishment. Why should he wish to leave his

brothers to deal with “unknown and barbarous folk”? Some of the brethren tried to deter him; others mocked him.

Steadfast in his resolve, Anskar established a school and mission in Denmark, working conscientiously but unsuccessfully to convert and evangelize. He was not totally discouraged. Another vision appeared, with a voice saying, “Go and declare the work of God to the nations.” Shortly afterward (about 829), he was called to Sweden and eagerly accepted. Meager aid both from the monastery and the emperor frustrated his efforts.

While still a young man, Anskar was consecrated Archbishop of Hamburg in 831, and continued his work among the Scandinavians until 848, when he retired to the See of Bremen and died in 865. The seeds of his efforts were not to bear fruit until over one hundred years later, when Viking devastation, weakness in the Frankish Church, and the lowest ebb of missionary enthusiasm came to an end. The rich harvest of conversion was three generations away. Nevertheless, Anskar is looked upon by Scandinavians as their apostle.

**Let us pray:** Almighty and everlasting God, who sent your servant Anskar to sow the seeds of faith among the people of Scandinavia: Keep your Church from discouragement in the day of small things, knowing that when you have begun a good work you will bring it to a fruitful conclusion; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**