

## A Service of Holy Eucharist celebrating the Feast of Absalom Jones

Celebrant Blessed be the one, holy, and living God,  
*People* **Glory to God for ever and ever.**

Celebrant God be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### Readings

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 11:1-5

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse; a branch will sprout from his roots. The Lord's spirit will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of planning and strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. He will delight in fearing the Lord. He won't judge by appearances, nor decide by hearsay. He will judge the needy with righteousness, and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land. He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth; by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked. Righteousness will be the belt around his hips, and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.  
*People* **Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 137: 1-6** *read together*

Alongside Babylon's streams,  
there we sat down,  
crying because we remembered Zion.  
We hung our lyres up  
in the trees there

because that's where our captors asked us to sing;  
our tormentors requested songs of joy:  
"Sing us a song about Zion!" they said.

But how could we possibly sing  
the Lord's song on foreign soil?  
Jerusalem! If I forget you,  
let my strong hand wither!  
Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth  
if I don't remember you,  
if I don't make Jerusalem my greatest joy.

Deacon      The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to John  
*People*      **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you. No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I don't call you servants any longer, because servants don't know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Deacon      The Gospel of the Lord  
*People*      **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## **Sermon**

The Rev. Susanne Watson-Epting

## **The Prayers of the People**

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

God of love, we pray for your church: For Michael our Presiding Bishop; Alan, our bishop; for all lay and ordained ministers; and for all who seek you in the community of the faithful. Equip us with compassion and love, to carry out your work of reconciliation in the world. God of love,  
**Hear our prayers for the church.**

God of freedom, we pray for our nation, and all the nations of the world: For peace and unity across barriers of language, color, and creed; for elected and appointed leaders, that they would serve the common good. Inspire all people with courage to speak out against hatred, to actively resist evil. Unite the human family in bonds of love. God of freedom,  
**Hear our prayers for the world.**

God of justice, we pray for the earth, your creation entrusted to our care: For the animals and birds, the mountains and oceans, and all parts of your creation that have no voice of their own. Stir up in us a thirst for justice that protects the earth and all its resources, that we may leave to our children's children the legacy of beauty and abundance that you have given us. God of justice,  
**Hear our prayers for the earth.**

God of peace, we pray for this community: For our local leaders; for our schools and markets; for our neighborhoods and workplaces. Kindle in every heart a desire for equality, respect, and opportunity for all. Give us courage to strive for justice and peace among all people, beginning here at home. God of peace,  
**Hear our prayers for this community.**

God of mercy, we pray for all in any kind of need or trouble: For those whose lives are closely linked with ours, and those connected to us as part of the human family. For refugees and prisoners; for the sick and suffering, the lonely and despairing; for those facing violence; for all held down by prejudice or injustice. Awaken in us compassion and humility of spirit, as we seek and serve Christ in all persons. God of mercy,  
**Hear our prayers for all who are in need.**

God of grace, we pray for those who have died: For the faithful in every generation who have worked for justice; for prophets who called us to racial reconciliation; for martyrs who died because of hatred; and for all the communion of saints. Make us faithful to your call to proclaim your Good News, by word and

example, and bring us at last into the glorious company of the saints in light. God of grace,

**Hear our prayers for those who have died.**

### *Concluding Collect*

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **Confession**

Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

**Almighty God, Source of all that is, Giver of every good gift:**

**You create all people in your image and call us to love one another as you love us.**

**We confess that we have failed to honor you in the great diversity of the human family.**

**We have desired to live in freedom,  
while building walls between ourselves and others.**

**We have longed to be known and accepted for who we are,  
while making judgements of others based on the color of skin, or the shape of features, or the varieties of human experience.**

**We have tried to love our neighbors individually  
while yet benefitting from systems that hold those same neighbors in oppression.**

**Forgive us, Holy God.**

**Give us eyes to see you as you are revealed in all people.**

**Strengthen us for the work of reconciliation rooted in love.**

**Restore us in your image, to be beloved community,  
united in our diversity,**

**even as you are one with Christ and the Spirit,  
Holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever.**

***Amen.***

## **Absolution**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. ***Amen.***

## **The Peace**

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

## **The Offertory**

*The offertory this day is collected in support of Voorhees College and Saint Augustine University, the remaining Episcopal historically black college and university.*

## **The Great Thanksgiving**

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessed be your name throughout the earth, Lord God, for you have created wonders and, from the beginning, have drawn every living thing into communion with you. In the bounty of your creation you fashioned land and sea, sun and stars, plants and animals, that we might know the constancy of your love for us. In covenant life you drew a people to yourself, to give and receive love in your name. In the fullness of time you drew near to us in your Son, to bind us to you in the promise of everlasting life. In every time and every place you offer us brothers and sisters with whom to live your ways of forgiveness and grace. In every age you surround us with a great company of saints that we might be bound to one another in this world that you so love. And so with the company of earth and heaven we praise your name and join the unending hymn.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

God of holy unity, you are perfectly three and perfectly one; from many, make your people one in you. Sanctify your church around the world and transform our fractures into fruitfulness. Send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and this cup, that they may be for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Great is the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

God the one Father of us all, you gather us in one faith, one hope, one baptism. Draw near to your children when their lives are overshadowed by what divides. Where wars have not yet ceased, come quickly. Where hostility tears apart brothers and sisters, open your path of peace. Where the relationship between your people and your creation falters, renew our awe in the wonders you have made. Where your church's diversity fails to reflect the glorious kaleidoscope of your kingdom, lead us to greater love and wider mercy than we have ever before imagined. Hasten the day when we who share Christ's body will join him in perfect and holy communion, in the everlasting embrace of the Holy Spirit, as you draw all things to yourself, now and forever. **AMEN.**

As our Savior Christ has taught us we now pray,

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

We break this bread to share in the Body of Christ.

***We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.***

The gifts of God for the people of God.

### **Postcommunion Prayer**

Let us pray.

**Loving God, we give you thanks for restoring us in your image and nourishing us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Now send us forth a people, forgiven, healed, renewed; that we may proclaim your love to the world and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

### **Blessing**

#### **Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Sources: Enriching Our Worship I, SCLM's Prayers of the People and Confession for racial reconciliation, Eucharistic Prayers by Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher (Duke Divinity School)*