



Flowing with Joy, Walking with God.



March 26, 2020
Richard Allen
Holy Eucharist • 6:30 pm
The Reverend Sarah van Gulden
Priest in Charge

Opening Sentences

Presider The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

Loving God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: accept our prayers and grant the power of your grace, that the weak may be strengthened, sickness turned to health, the dying made whole, and sorrow turned into joy; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Loving God, who makes us all your children by adoption in Jesus Christ: May we, following the example of your servant Richard Allen, proclaim liberty to all who are enslaved and captive in this world; through Jesus Christ, Savior of all, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The First Lesson

The Lessons

Acts 12:1-11

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Acts

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him.

The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." Peter went out and followed

him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

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

The Response

Psalm 136:1-2,10-16

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, * for his mercy endures for ever.

2 Give thanks to the God of gods, * for his mercy endures for ever.

10 Who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, * for his mercy endures for ever;

11 And brought out Israel from among them, * for his mercy endures for ever;

12 With a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, * for his mercy endures for ever;

13 Who divided the Red Sea in two, * for his mercy endures for ever;

14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it, * for his mercy endures for ever;

15 But swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea, * for his mercy endures for ever;

16 Who led his people through the wilderness, * for his mercy endures for ever.

The Gospel

John 7:25-31

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People: **Glory to you Lord Christ.**

Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, "When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you Lord Christ.**

A Litany of Healing (St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Mystic, CT)

Together we lift our prayers to you, O God of love and healing.

God the Creator, you breathe life into your whole Creation.

Help us breathe deeply of your peace and presence.

God the Son, you give us yourself to make our joy complete.

Help us give our fear, pain, and grief to you.

God the Holy Spirit, you move through our lives in unexpected ways.

Help us move in concert with your life-giving motion.

Holy Trinity, One God, accept our thanks and praise for all the blessings of this life, especially for those blessings that our present circumstances make difficult to see.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Shed the light of your healing love on all who are sick in body, mind, or spirit, that they may find new wholeness illumined by your grace.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Knit together in your love all whose relationships have frayed, that they may find reconciliation and new beginnings.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Bless all who work to improve the health of others, that they may bring hope, care, wisdom, and skill to all they serve.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Hold in the palm of your hand all who are near death and all who care for them, that they may know the peace that passes all understanding.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Grant all who turn to you the courage to participate with you in restoring this broken world to wholeness, that everyone and everything may share in the hope of your kingdom.

O Lord, hear our prayer.

At this time, I invite your prayers of thanksgiving or intercession either silently or aloud.

For these and for all other petitions that are too deep for words, we pray to you:

O Lord, hear our prayer.

You are the Lord whose promises never cease.

You are the Lord whose presence never fails.

Gracious God, you are close to us no matter how far we feel from you: draw us into the very heart of your grace and help us to live into the truth that nothing in all creation can separate us from your love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Confession of Need

Let us confess our need for God's healing grace.

Compassionate God,

we confess our weaknesses and our need for your strengthening touch.

We confess that some illnesses stem from our own fault, while others are beyond our control.

We turn to you, source of life, and ask in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ for the gifts of true healing and life in you. Amen.

May the God of love visit you in your times of trial and weakness, and raise you to newness of life, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Healing Prayers

Generous God, we give you thanks for your beloved Jesus Christ, in whom you have shared the beauty and pain of human life. Look with compassion upon all for whom we pray, and strengthen us to be your instruments of healing in the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Blessing

May the One who creates and restores everything that is, the One who is Mary's child and child of God, the One who is the Holy Spirit, May this Holy One bring you compassion and peace, and bless your lives with joy. **Amen.**

Richard Allen was born into slavery in 1760 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Allen, his parents, and his siblings were eventually sold to owner Stokely Sturgis, whose plantation was in Delaware. The Methodists were already active in Delaware, and Sturgis allowed Allen to attend church. At the age of 17, Richard underwent a classic conversion experience: I cried to the Lord both day and night, Allen said. All of a sudden my dungeon shook, my chains flew off, and, glory to God, I cried.

Allen brought members of the Methodist Church into his masters home, where Sturgis heard a sermon by the great Methodist preacher Freeborn Garrettson. Sturgis was himself converted, and he allowed Allen to hire himself out and purchase his freedom; five years later, Richard Allen was a free man.

In 1786, Allen became a preacher at St. George's United Methodist Church, but he was restricted to preaching at early morning services. Eventually, as black membership increased, the vestry decided to build a segregated section for black worshippers. Allen, along with his friend Absalom Jones, resented the segregation of his fellow black Christians, and in 1787, Allen and Jones led black worshippers out of St. George's in protest.

While Jones and many of those associated with him joined the Episcopal Church, Allen wanted to continue in his Methodist religion. He had been cooperating with Bishop Francis Asbury to spread Methodism among African Americans, and in 1794 he founded Bethel Church in Philadelphia. When the newly formed African Methodist Episcopal Church declared its independence, Allen became its first Bishop.

Throughout his life, Richard Allen remained an advocate of freedom for all people, even operating a station on the underground railroad for escaped slaves. His ardent belief in the brotherhood of all who belonged to Christ is best expressed in one of the many hymns he wrote:

Why do they then appear so mean

And why so much despised?

Because of their rich robes unseen

The world is not appriz'd.

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Office Hours

Tuesday- Thursday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm