

HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING

In Scripture and Prayer and The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Week of June 19, 2022

Collect for Proper 7

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen. BCP 230

Track 1 and Track 2 Readings

During the long green season after Pentecost, there are two tracks (or strands) each week for Old Testament readings. Within each track, there is a Psalm chosen to accompany the particular lesson. The Revised Common Lectionary allows us to make use of either of these tracks, but once a track has been selected, it should be followed through to the end of the Pentecost season, rather than jumping back and forth between the two strands.

The first track of Old Testament readings (“Track 1”) follows major stories and themes, read mostly continuously from week to week. In Year A we begin with Genesis, in Year B we hear some of the great monarchy narratives, and in Year C we read from the later prophets. (*We are in Year C this year*).

A second track of readings (“Track 2”) follows the Roman Catholic tradition of thematically pairing the Old Testament reading with the Gospel reading, often typologically—a sort of foretelling of Jesus Christ’s life and ministry, if you will. This second track is almost identical to our previous Book of Common Prayer lectionary.

Within each track there may be additional readings, complementary to the standard reading; these may be used with the standard reading, or in place of it.

Credit to The Rev Dr. J. Barrington Bates and quoted from [The Lectionary Page](#).

Introducing the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

In late 2021 The National Council of Churches in collaboration with The Society for Biblical Literature unveiled an [updated edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible](#). Its acronym in biblical studies is NRSVue. I will use the NRSVue in this Season after Pentecost. An * indicates that the Kindle Edition (from which I am taking the text) has a cross reference to the line of text being read. Where there is a footnote in the Kindle Edition, I will include the text of the footnote in line with what you are reading. **For more information about the NRSVue see:** <https://bit.ly/Learn159> on the Baptist News website or <https://bit.ly/Learn157> from the Perkins School of Theology/SMU website

Isaiah 65:1-9 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, 2021

¹I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those

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who did not seek me. I said, “Here I am, here I am,” to a nation that did not call on my name.* ²I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices;* ³a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and offering incense on bricks;* ⁴who sit inside tombs and spend the night in secret places; who eat the flesh of pigs, with broth of abominable things in their vessels;* ⁵who say, “Keep to yourself; do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.” These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day long.* ⁶See, it is written before me: I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their laps* ⁷their [Gk Syr: Heb *your*] iniquities and their [Gk Syr: Heb *your*] ancestors’ iniquities together, says the Lord; because they offered incense on the mountains and reviled me on the hills, I will measure into their laps full payment for their actions.* ⁸Thus says the Lord: As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, “Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,” so I will do for my servants’ sake and not destroy them all. ⁹I will bring forth descendants from Jacob and from Judah inheritors of my mountains; my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall settle there.*

Galatians 3:23-29 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, 2021

²³Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be reckoned as righteous by faith.* ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.* ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, [Gk: *seed*] heirs according to the promise.*

Luke 8:26-39 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, 2021

²⁶Then they arrived at the region of the Gerasenes, [Other ancient authorities read *Gadarenes* or *Gergesenes*] which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on shore, a man from the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had not worn [Other ancient authorities read *a man from the town who had had demons for a long time met him. He was not wearing*] any clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, shouting, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me,”* ²⁹for Jesus [Gk *he*] had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.* ³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding, and the demons [Gk *they*] begged Jesus [Gk *him*] to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out

of the man and entered the swine, and the herd stampeded down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.* ³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they became frightened.* ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed.* ³⁷Then the whole throng of people of the surrounding region of the Gerasenes [Other ancient authorities read *Gadarenes* or *Gergesenes*] asked Jesus [Gk *him*] to leave them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.* ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone out begged that he might be with him, but Jesus [Gk *him*] sent him away, saying, ³⁹“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Psalm 22:19-28 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, 2021

Note: Though only verses 19-28 will be read in worship, I have printed the entire Psalm here for our study.

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?*
- 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night but find no rest.*
- 3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.*
- 4 In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 To you they cried and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*
- 6 But I am a worm and not human, scorned by others and despised by the people.*
- 7 All who see me mock me; they sneer at me; they shake their heads;*
- 8 “Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver— let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”*
- 9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.*
- 10 On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.*
- 11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near, and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls encircle me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me;*
- 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.*
- 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;*

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- 15 my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.*
- 16 For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they bound my hands and feet.*
- 17 I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me;
- 18 they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.*
- 19 But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!*
- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.*
- 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:*
- 23 You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!*
- 24 For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me but heard when I cried to him.*
- 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.*
- 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever!*
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.*
- 28 For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.*
- 29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.*
- 30 Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord*
31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.*

Supplemental Resources

Commentary on Psalm 22:19-28

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If we follow the lectionary reading for this Sunday, we enter Psalm 22 right in the middle of an anguished scream.

The psalmist has begun the psalm with a desolate cry of abandonment (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”), and then has detailed his

troubles, using vivid metaphors. He is a “worm, and not human” (verse 6). He is surrounded by “bulls,” “lions,” and “dogs” (verses 12-13, 16). He is “poured out like water” (verse 14). And he is not afraid to place blame where blame is due: “You [God] lay me in the dust of death” (verse 15).

And yet, the psalmist also knows where his help lies; strangely enough, from the same source he has just accused of foul play. As we enter the psalm, the psalmist cries, “But you, O LORD, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!” (verse 19).

Such direct address to God in both complaint and cry for help is typical, of course, of a lament. The psalmist shakes his fist at God while at the same time holding on to God in faith, knowing that his help can come from no other source. The psalmist accuses God while at the same time holding God to God’s promises. “Since my mother bore me you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help” (verses 10-11).

As we enter the psalm, then, the psalmist has shifted from complaint to cry for help, always addressing God directly. Even more dramatically, a few verses later, the psalmist moves from lament to praise. Lament ending in praise is, again, typical of the lament form (see Psalm 13:5-6, for instance). The movement from lament to praise in Psalm 22, however, is so abrupt as to cause whiplash. The psalmist cries out to God for salvation from ravenous enemies: “Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have answered me!” (22:20-21).

In the middle of verse 21, his mouth open for another cry of anguish, the psalmist inexplicably turns to praise: “From the horns of the wild oxen you have answered me!” The NRSV translates the verse, “you have rescued me,” but that is not what the Hebrew says, and it is more, perhaps, than the psalmist experiences. The psalmist may or may not be rescued, but he is answered, and the fact of God answering is enough for the psalmist. It is exactly what he first sought, after all: “O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer” (verse 2). Now that God has answered, the psalmist is moved from the depths of despair to the heights of praise.

He begins with a vow to praise (again, typical of a lament): “I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you” (verse 22). He moves quickly, then, to calling on various groups to join him in that praise: all who fear the LORD, offspring of Jacob/Israel, all the ends of the earth, all the families of the nations, all who are dying as well as those yet to be born: “proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it” (verse 31).

The praise moves out like ripples from a stone tossed into a still pond.

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The faithfulness of God to this one who has been sorely afflicted, and the fact of God's hearing and answering (verse. 24) leads to witness. The psalmist cannot help but tell of God's work. And witness does its work. God's faithfulness and loving kindness to this one individual leads to worship of the LORD, not just in the psalmist's immediate family or community, but in the whole world, across space and time. This psalm, which began with an appeal to God's faithfulness to the ancestors (verse 4), ends by witnessing to coming generations and to a people yet unborn.

As I hope this brief exposition has shown, this psalm provides much rich material for preaching. The lectionary reading, unfortunately, gives us only a taste of the psalm. To get the full effect of the movement from lament to praise, the preacher must include the first half of the psalm, as well as the last few verses which are inexplicably left out. (Granted, it is a long reading, but if one chooses to preach on this text, it is well worth the time to read the whole psalm in the congregation.)

Most parishioners, of course, will recognize the opening lament, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Psalm 22 is traditionally read on Good Friday, and was used by both Mark and Matthew as a lens through which to view the Crucifixion. But used as it is this Sunday, in the middle of the summer, perhaps the psalm can speak to the suffering that attends every life, in every season of the year, not just in Lent. The psalm teaches us often-overly-pious Christians how to lament—honestly, passionately, which still holding on to God and God's promises.

Just as importantly, Psalm 22 teaches us how to praise. The praise that ends the psalm neither negates the lament nor denies the pain of the petitioner. Indeed, the praise is made more robust by the psalmist's journey through hell. God has answered him, and that has made all the difference.

Note that there is no mention of a change of outward circumstances in the psalmist's life. He may still have enemies surrounding him, but he knows now that God has heard his cry and has answered him, and that is enough to lead to praise. Surely such a situation is true in many of our lives; when outward circumstances (illness, economic troubles) remain the same, but somehow we know that God has heard us. That knowledge, the assurance of God's presence, is enough to move us to praise.

Psalm 22 can teach us to lament honestly, to praise in the midst of hard circumstances, and to witness to the faithfulness of the God who hears and answers, from generation to generation.

Working Preacher, June 20, 2010, <https://bit.ly/Learn160> accessed May 23, 2022



Spiritual Day Hike

In the landscape where Spirit & World intersect



Week of June 19, 2022

This Week's Holy Women and Men (Witnesses to inspire us)

Commemorations in the Episcopal Church are listed in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), in Lesser Feasts and Fasts (LFF), and in a Great Cloud of Witnesses (GCoW).

Here are the Holy Women and Men remembered this week:

Jun 19 [Adelaide Teague Case](#), Educator, 1948 *LFF*

Jun 20.....[Alban](#), First Martyr of Britain, c.304 *LFF*

Jun 24.....**Nativity of Saint John the Baptist** *BCP*

Jun 25.....[James Weldon Johnson](#), Poet, 1938 *GCoW*

June 19: Adelaide Teague Case, Educator

Adelaide Teague Case was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on January 10th, 1887, but her family soon moved to New York City. She received her undergraduate education at Bryn Mawr College and her graduate degrees from Columbia University. By the time she had completed her doctorate, a position had been created for her on the faculty of the Teachers' College at Columbia, where she rose to the status of full professor and head of the department of religious education. She is remembered for advocating a child-centered rather than teacher-centered approach to education.

In 1941, when her professional accomplishments were at their height, the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts was able to convince her to leave her distinguished and comfortable position at Columbia, and she was appointed Professor of Christian Education. Although other women had taught occasional courses in the seminaries of the church, Case was the first to take her place as a full-time faculty member at the rank of Professor.

Case identified with the liberal Catholic tradition in Anglicanism. This is reflected in her first book, *Liberal Christianity and Religious Education*, in which she emphasized teaching children to engage in reasonable inquiry into their faith. Case was also active in the Religious Education Association, the Episcopal Pacifist Fellowship, and the Woman's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church. From 1946 to 1948, she served on the National Council of the Episcopal Church. Case was a proponent of women's ordination and a frequent preacher in the chapel at ETS. She continued to teach at ETS until her death on June 19th, 1948 in Boston.

Students and faculty colleagues remember her contagious faith in Christ, her deep sense of humanity, and her seemingly boundless compassion.

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Although she carried herself with style and grace, Case had struggled with health problems her entire life, but those who knew her testify to the fact that in spite of those challenges she was spirited, energetic, and fully devoted to her work. It was often said of her that she was a true believer in Christ, and that one saw Christ living in and through her.

Case believed that the point of practicing the Christian faith was to make a difference in the world. As an advocate for peace, she believed that Christianity had a special vocation to call people into transformed, reconciled relationships for the sake of the wholeness of the human family. She is said to have discovered these things not in theology or educational theory, but in a life of common prayer and faithful eucharistic practice.

Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018

June 22: Alban, First Martyr of Britain c. 304

Alban is the earliest Christian in Britain who is known by name and, according to tradition, the first British martyr. He was a soldier in the Roman army, stationed at Verulamium, a city about twenty miles northeast of London, now called St. Alban's. He gave shelter to a Christian priest who was fleeing from persecution and was converted by him. When officers came to Alban's house, he dressed himself in the garments of the priest and gave himself up. Alban was tortured and martyred in place of the priest, on the hilltop where the Cathedral of St. Alban's now stands. The traditional date of his martyrdom is 303 or 304, but recent studies suggest that the year was actually 209, during the persecution under the Emperor Septimius Severus.

The site of Alban's martyrdom soon became a shrine. King Offa of Mercia established a monastery there about the year 793, and, in the high Middle Ages, St. Alban's ranked as the premier abbey in England. The great Norman abbey church, begun in 1077, now serves as the cathedral of the diocese of St. Alban's, established in 1877. It is the second longest church in England (Winchester Cathedral is the longest, by six feet), and it is built on higher ground than any other English cathedral. In a chapel east of the choir and high altar, there are remains of the fourteenth century marble shrine of St. Alban.

The Venerable Bede gives this account of Alban's trial: "When Alban was brought in, the judge happened to be standing before an altar, offering sacrifice to devils . . . 'What is your family and race?' demanded the judge. 'How does my family concern you?' replied Alban; 'If you wish to know the truth about my religion, know that I am a Christian and am ready to do a Christian's duty.' 'I demand to know your name,' insisted the judge. 'Tell me

at once.’ ‘My parents named me Alban,’ he answered, ‘and I worship and adore the living and true God, who created all things.’ ”

A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018

June 24: The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

John the Baptist, the prophet, and forerunner of Jesus, was the son of elderly parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, and according to the Gospel of Luke, he was related to Jesus on his mother’s side. His birth is celebrated six months before Christmas Day, since, according to Luke, Elizabeth became pregnant six months before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

John figures prominently in all four Gospels, but the account of his birth is given only in the Gospel according to Luke. His father, Zechariah, a priest of the Temple at Jerusalem, was struck speechless because he doubted a vision foretelling John’s birth. When his speech was restored, Zechariah uttered a canticle of praise, the Benedictus, which is one of the canticles used in the Daily Office, traditionally at Morning Prayer.

John lived ascetically in the desert. He was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt, and ate locusts and wild honey. He preached repentance, and called upon people to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom and of the Messiah, baptizing his followers to signify their repentance and new life. Jesus himself was baptized by John in the Jordan River.

John is remembered during Advent as a prophet, and at Epiphany as the baptizer of Jesus. The Gospel according to John quotes the Baptist as saying to his followers that Jesus is the Lamb of God, and prophesying, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

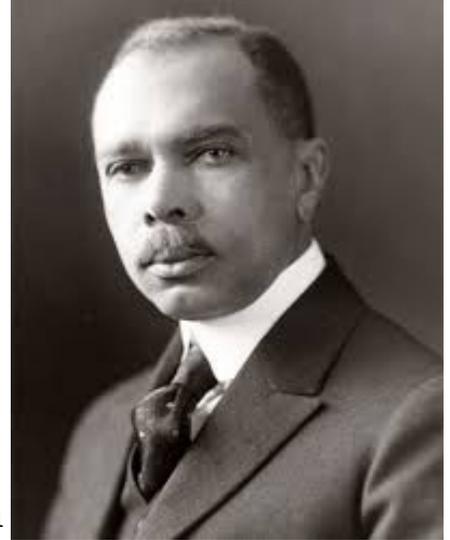
Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018

Collect for the Commemoration

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Savior by preaching repentance: Make us so to follow his teaching and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and, following his example, constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth’s sake; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. BCP 241

June 25: James Weldon Johnson, Poet, 1938

James Weldon Johnson was born on June 17, 1871, in Jacksonville, Florida. His parents stimulated his academic interests, and he was encouraged to study literature and music. Johnson enrolled at Atlanta University with the expressed intention that the education he received there would be used to further the interests of African Americans. He never reneged on that commitment. In the summer after his freshman year, Johnson taught the children of former slaves. Of that experience he wrote, “In all of my experience there has been no period so brief that has meant so much in my education for life as the three months I spent in the backwoods of Georgia.” After graduation, he became the principal of the largest high school in Jacksonville, during which time he was paid half of what his white counterparts were paid, even though the school excelled under his leadership.



In 1900, he collaborated with his brother, Rosamond, a composer, to create “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing.” Written in celebration of President Lincoln’s birthday, the song, still popular today, has become known as the “African American National Anthem.” Due to the success of their collaboration, Johnson moved to New York in 1901 to join his brother, and together they attained success as lyricist and composer for Broadway.

In 1906, Johnson was invited to work for the diplomatic corps and became U.S. Consul to Venezuela and later Nicaragua. During his Nicaraguan tenure, Johnson was a voice of reason and reconciliation in a time of civil unrest and turmoil. His ability to bring together people of differing viewpoints toward a common vision served Johnson well in the 1920’s, when he became an organizer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Johnson was a prolific poet and anthologist. He edited *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922), a major contribution to the history of African American literature. His book of poetry, *God’s Trombones* (1927), seven biblical stories rendered into verse, was influenced by his impressions of the rural South.

James Weldon Johnson died on June 26, 1938.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018