

# HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT IS SAYING

In Scripture and Prayer and The Great Cloud of Witnesses

Week of August 21, 2022

*Collect for Proper 16*

Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. BCP 232

## **Isaiah 58:9b-14** NRSVue, 2021

*In our Hebrew Bible lesson the prophet draws a distinction between false and true worship. God will hear the prayers of those who act justly and extend themselves for the hungry and afflicted. Such genuine sacrifice delights the Lord's heart, and for such worshippers God will prove a sure guide and sustainer. The sabbath, the Lord's holy day, is to be observed and honored.*

<sup>9b</sup> If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, <sup>10</sup> if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. <sup>11</sup> The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail. <sup>12</sup> Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. <sup>13</sup> If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests or pursuing your own affairs; <sup>14</sup> then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

## **Hebrews 12:18-29** NRSVue, 2021

*In this epistle lesson disciples are said to stand, not before Mount Sinai, but before Mount Zion of the heavenly Jerusalem. Theirs is an unshakable kingdom. The covenant at Sinai was made in terror. Through the covenant brought about by Jesus' sacrifice, the new people become God's children. Not to heed the voice of Christ, however, is more dangerous than it was not to hear God's words spoken through Moses. The God of fire who shook the earth at Sinai will shake earth and heaven once more. Only what is unshaken will remain.*

<sup>18</sup> You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup> (For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.") <sup>21</sup> Indeed, so

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terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”) <sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup> and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

<sup>25</sup> See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking, for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.” <sup>27</sup> This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

## Luke 13:10-17 NRSVue, 2021

*In our gospel lesson Jesus, on the sabbath day, heals a long-suffering woman from an infirmity she has had for many years. The effect of Jesus' laying on of hands is immediate. Rather than rejoicing at the blessing received by the woman, the official in the place of worship protests Jesus' trespass against one traditional understanding of sabbath regulations, an argument apparently current in Jesus' time. Jesus sharply contrasts these rules with the kindness routinely shown to animals, shaming the official and causing all to marvel at his words and deeds.*

<sup>10</sup> Now [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup> And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” <sup>13</sup> When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. <sup>14</sup> But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day.” <sup>15</sup> But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it to water? <sup>16</sup> And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?” <sup>17</sup> When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things being done by him.

## Psalm 103:1-8 BCP 733

*A hymn of blessing in thanksgiving for healing forgiveness and for all the Lord's acts of compassion and justice.*

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, \*  
and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, \* and forget not all his benefits.
- 3 He forgives all your sins \* and heals all your infirmities;
- 4 He redeems your life from the grave \*  
and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;
- 5 He satisfies you with good things, \*  
and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
- 6 The Lord executes righteousness \*  
and judgment for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made his ways known to Moses \*  
and his works to the children of Israel.
- 8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, \*  
slow to anger and of great kindness.

## Supplemental Resources

### Hebrews 12:18-29. A Homiletical Perspective

*By Frederick H. Borsch is the Retired Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles and Professor of New Testament and Chair of Anglican Studies, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Can you remember the worst thunderstorm of your life? Torrents of rain are lashed about with the wind. Each boom of thunder seems to shake the house to its foundations. Bolts of lightning zigzag fiercely down from the dark heavens. My older sister tells me it is just God taking my picture, but I am not amused.

One can imagine people of old drawing from the imagery of such a terrifying storm to describe in fearsome poetry an encounter with the God of righteousness, holiness, and judgment: “thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet” coming down on Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:16). Perhaps some ancient prophet had witnessed a volcanic eruption or lived through an earthquake. Speaking of which, how fearfully I remember the 1994 Northridge earthquake in Los Angeles. Before dawn our whole house was wrenching about, crammed with shattering noise and fear.

One has to love Annie Dillard’s admonition to the average churchgoer:

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“Does anyone have the foggiest idea of the power we so blithely invoke?... It is madness to wear ladies’ straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews.”(1) More than this! The creator God, one now also understands, is the God of supernovae and neutron stars. Aspects of such divine might and majesty are fearfully alluded to in scene one of this scriptural passage.

Next comes scene two in this drama, which may once have served as the closing exhortation for the Letter to the Hebrews. The second scene also inspires awe and wonder, but now one is awed by the graciousness and hospitality of God’s majesty. Now it is Mount Zion and the city of the living God that are envisioned. Here many of the great themes of the letter come to fruition. This is the age of the new and better covenant made possible through the sacrificial blood of the Son and great High Priest. Gathered in festal harmony are uncounted angels to whom Jesus was declared superior in the opening chapter of the epistle. Present in glory are all the righteous who have lived in hope of the heavenly Jerusalem. In response to the vision, there could well be sung “Jerusalem, the Golden”: “They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song, and bright with many an angel, and all the martyr throng.”(2)

God, we learn throughout the Bible, is a fierce God of judgment and holiness. God, who is beyond all comprehension, is also a God of nearly incredible mercy and sacrificial love. The coming of the glorious new covenant is contrasted with the old. This is the same God whose graciousness is wondrously made known in “the merciful and faithful high priest” who is not “unable to sympathize with our weaknesses” (Heb. 2:17; 4:15). The same God who “spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets ... in these last days ... has spoken to us by a Son” who “is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being” (1:1–3). Through him who “when he had made purification for sins, ... sat down at the right hand of the Majesty of high” (1:3), the awesome God of power and glory and judgment—of thunder and lightning and earthquake and supernovae—is revealed as the one whose throne of grace may now be approached “with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:16). The throne of divine power is set in the new Jerusalem. Further song and rejoicing break forth: “Jerusalem, My Happy Home.” There

Thy saints are crowned with glory great;  
they see God face to face;  
they triumph still, they still rejoice  
in that most happy place.(3)

Oh, but there is now yet a third scene in our drama! Do not imagine that the poetry of heaven means that one can forget that this is still the same God—the God of both righteousness and love. Probably many of us would like to emphasize God’s mercy nearly to the exclusion of judgment. That would not be the God of Scripture. Nor, when we stop to think, would we be pleased if in the end we discovered that God did not really care about unrighteousness, injustice, cruelty, and evil; that God did not care whether we tried to build at least some aspects of the kingdom here on earth—on earth as it is in heaven. Ultimately God’s justice and judgment must be included in God’s love. Therefore wrongs are still to be judged by the God of love and mercy, and the imagery of earthquake and consuming fire return.

Moreover, the warning now is more severe, because the word of graciousness has come from the heavenly Mount Zion—not just from Mount Sinai of old. Now there is no escaping when everything on earth and in heaven will be shaken. One hears the haunting song “My Lord, what a morning, when the stars begin to fall.” Suddenly I am back in my house the morning of the earthquake. Everything is shaking violently. Things I love may be destroyed. As then bishop in that diocese, I realize many of our churches could be damaged or falling down. The lives of loved ones—even my own life—could be lost.

What is it that Paul tells us? “The only thing that counts is faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6). Many things will come to an end, but “love never ends” (1 Cor. 13:8). What endures is all that has turned to love. What is unshakable is the kingdom of that God who is to be worshiped “with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:28).

David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, eds., *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year C, vol. 3* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010)

### Notes.

- (1) [Annie Dillard, \*Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters\*](#) (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 40.
- (2) Bernard of Cluny (twelfth century); trans. J. M. Neale, 1861 [Hymnal 1982, #624]
- (3) Joseph Bromehead, 1795. [Hymnal 1982, #620]

## Commentary on Psalm 103:1-8

*By Vanessa Lovelace Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Seminary Lancaster Theological Seminary Lancaster, Pa.*

Verse one of Psalm 103, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name” has inspired musical arrangements for generations.

Psalm 103 is an individual song or hymn of praise. Specifically, the object of the praise is the Lord and the individual rather than the

community adjures her or himself to praise the Lord. Support of this classification includes the use of the imperative singular form of the Hebrew verb *barak*, “bless” four times by the psalmist in verses 1-2 and 20-22.

The imperative form evokes intense feelings of immediacy and importance. It is a command to do or say something. Another characteristic of the song of praise is a description of the reasons why the Lord should be praised. One doesn’t need a reason to praise the Lord, but the psalmist nonetheless includes such justifications as the Lord’s majesty, steadfast love, mercy, and justice, on one hand, and rescue, deliverance, and healing on the other hand.

Psalm 103 has the superscription “Of David.” This psalm is one among 73 psalms attributed to David in the Old Testament hymn book. There is a tradition of ascribing the authorship of most psalms to David. However, most scholars agree that the superscriptions are later redactions. This view should not be regarded as dismissive of David’s role in the composition of the psaltery. Rather, it is more helpful to consider the importance for the ancient community of associating David and the monarchy with the divine-human relationship expressed in the psalms.

Still, the presence of the feminine voice in Psalm 103 should not be disregarded either. Despite the use of masculine pronouns by many commentators to refer to the psalmist, perhaps due to the Davidic attribution, Hebrew nouns and verbs are gendered, and the psalmist speaks in the feminine voice when exhorting oneself to *barak* the Lord.

### **I will bless the Lord with my whole being**

The closely related Hebrew noun *berek* for “kneel” suggests that to bless the Lord involves kneeling before or lying prostrate before the Lord. It is not then enough in Psalm 103:1 for the song writer to just bless the Lord but to also do so with his or her soul. The Hebrew noun *nephesh* translated in English as “soul” also means “life,” “being,” or “inmost being.” The psalmist expresses the same sentiment in different words in the next line: “all that is within me.” We are offered a glimpse into the mindset of the psalmist who understands that to bless the Lord is to utter a full-throated, bodily response in recollection of the Lord’s benefits (Psalm 103:2).

Speaking in the second person the psalmist reckons all of the benefits that God has bestowed on him or her in verses 3-5. God forgives your sins (Psalm 103:3). There is a semantic range of meanings for the term of “sin” in the Hebrew Bible lexicon. The Hebrew noun for “sin” in verse three is *’aon*, which means “guilt,” “iniquity,” “a mistake,” or “unjust” act.

The psalmist can be confident that God does not cause her or him to suffer the guilt or consequences of their iniquities because God forgives. God heals your diseases. God is the divine healer who makes the psalmist

whole. God redeems your life (Psalm 103:4). To redeem (*ga'al*) is a legal term in Hebrew, which refers to one person buying back another person or possession from the bondage of debt. Here it is God who has rescued the psalmist from the snare of the Pit or trap, an expression meaning to rescue from the grave. Not only has God saved the psalmist from life threatening illness and injury, but God also bestows good things upon the psalmist. God crowns you with steadfast love (*hesed*) and mercy (Psalm 103:4). Both terms have the covenantal relationship between God and Israel in the background. Finally, God satisfies you. The psalmist is supplied with a lifetime of good things, which in turn rejuvenate the psalmist as in his or her youth (Psalm 103:5).

### **God is on the side of the oppressed**

The hymn shifts in verse 6 from the individual to the communal in singing of the Lord's righteousness ("vindication") and justice on behalf of those who are oppressed. James H. Cone, regarded as the father of Black liberation theology, wrote *God of the Oppressed* to grapple with the socio-historical situation of blacks in the U.S. and the response found within the gospel of Jesus Christ. Fundamental to Cone's theological construct was that God was on the side of the poor and oppressed. For Cone and the psalmist, the oppressed are the politically or socially downtrodden.

In Psalm 103:6 the inference is that the oppressed are the people of Israel, who God sided with. As evidence, the psalmist points to God's self-revelation to Moses through God's salvific acts towards the people of Israel in the wilderness (Psalm 103:7). It was to Moses in Exodus 34:6 that God showed an abundance of restraint after the golden calf incident, declaring that the Lord is a God who is "merciful and gracious," "slow to anger," and "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." The psalmist finds that these words bear repeating in verse 8, although faithfulness is omitted here. The Lord's steadfast love (*hesed*) for Israel is mentioned for the second time in this passage (see also Psalm 103:11), underscoring its significance for the relationship between God and Israel. In the context of the Babylonian exile, Psalm 103 offers hope that despite Israel's iniquities, God's loyalty to the covenant is expressed as God's forgiveness.

Just as important as it is to bless God, we should also not forget the psalmist's message that since God is quick to forget our iniquities, we should be swift to recount the benefits that God has bestowed on us. In the words of gospel singer and songwriter Andre Crouch, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. He has done great things. Bless his holy name."

[Working Preacher post for August 21, 2022](#) Accessed 20 August 2022

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# Spiritual Day Hike

In the landscape where Spirit & World intersect



Week of August 21, 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:*

Aug 23.....[Martin de Porres, 1639, Rosa de Lima, 1617, and Toribio de Mogrovejo, 1606](#) Witnesses to the Faith in South America GCoW

**Aug 24....[Saint Bartholomew The Apostle](#), BCP & LFF**

Aug 25.....[Louis, King of France](#), 1270 GCoW

Aug 26.....[Thomas Gallaudet, 1902, and Henry Winter Syle, 1890](#), Priests, LFF

Aug 27.....[Monica, Mother of Augustine of Hippo](#), 387 LFF

## From the Introduction to A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018

This [2018] volume, *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*, is a further step in the development of liturgical commemorations within the life of The Episcopal Church. These developments fall under three categories. First, this volume presents a wide array of possible commemorations for individuals and congregations to observe. Recognizing that there are many perspectives on the identity and place of exemplary Christians in the life of the Church, this volume proposes that the metaphor of a “family history” is a fitting way to describe who is included. As such, the title of this volume is drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, recalling that “we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1). The people found in this volume are not all definitively declared to be saints, but are Christians who have inspired other Christians in different times and places.

## August 23: Martine de Porres, 1639, Rosa de Lima, 1617, and Toribio de Mogrovejo, 1606

Toribio de Mogrovejo, born in Spain in 1538 and a brilliant student of law and theology, was called in 1580 to serve as archbishop of Lima. He objected that he was a layman but was overruled, ordained priest and bishop, and arrived in Peru in 1581 as archbishop. Confronted with the worst of colonialism, Toribio fought injustice in both the church and the civil order. He baptized and confirmed many thousands of souls and founded many churches, religious houses, hospitals, and the first seminary in the Western hemisphere, at Lima in 1591. Among his flock were Martin de Porres and Rosa de Lima.

## Day Hike -2

Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru, on December 9, 1579, the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and a young black former slave. Because Martin inherited the dark skin of his mother, his father abandoned the family. Martin apprenticed to a barber-surgeon and, after learning the trade, he applied to the Dominicans to be a “lay helper.” Placed in charge of the infirmary, his tender care of the sick and his reputation as a healer led the community to request his religious profession, despite a long-standing policy that “no black person may be received to the holy habit or profession of our Order.” That policy was rescinded and Martin took vows as a Dominican brother in 1603.

Rosa de Lima, born in 1586 and friend of Martin, shared his passion for the sick and the poor. Rosa was exceedingly beautiful, but because of her family’s fading fortunes, she feared being married off to a wealthy man, her looks a compensation for the lack of suitable dowry. To sabotage this possibility, Rosa disfigured her face and, to contribute to her family’s upkeep, took in sewing and worked as a gardener. An abiding passion for the poor eventually led her to the Third Order of St. Dominic and a reclusive life of prayer that sustained her works of mercy for the poorest of the poor, particularly for indigenous peoples, slaves, and others on the margins of society, until her death in 1617.

These three, bound in baptism, community, and friendship, testify to the power of baptismal relationship and communion, and Christian faith transmitted from generation to generation incarnate in works of service and mercy.

*A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018*

## August 24: Saint Bartholomew The Apostle

*This Feast is one of many Holy Days “regularly observed throughout the year.” The Calendar of the Episcopal Church is detailed on pages 15-18 of the Book of Common Prayer, 1979. Other Holy Days are listed on pages 16-17 in the BCP.*

Bartholomew is one of the twelve Apostles known in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke only by name. His name means “Son of Tolmai,” and he is sometimes identified with Nathanael, the friend of Philip, the “Israelite without guile” in John’s Gospel, to whom Jesus promised the vision of angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

There is a tradition that Bartholomew traveled to India, and Eusebius reports that when Pantaenus of Alexandria visited India, between 150 and 200, he found there “the Gospel according to Matthew” in Hebrew, which had been left behind by “Bartholomew, one of the Apostles.”

An ancient tradition maintains that Bartholomew was flayed alive at Albanopolis in Armenia.

*Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018*

## August 25: Louis, King of France, 1270

Louis IX was born at Poissy on April 25, 1214. His father, Louis VIII, died when Louis IX was 11 years old; he was crowned King at Rheims on

November 29, 1226. His mother and regent, Blanche of Castile, inspired his early religious exercises of devotion and asceticism. At age 20, Louis married Margaret of Provence, who bore him 11 children, 9 of whom lived past infancy. Blanche remained a major influence on her son Louis IX until her death in 1252.

A man of unusual purity of life and manners, he was sincerely committed to his faith and to its moral demands. Living simply, dressing plainly, visiting hospitals, helping the poor, and acting with integrity and honesty, Louis IX believed that the crown was given him by God and God would hold him accountable for his reign.

During a campaign in 1242, King Louis became very ill. In an act customary of the piety and politics of his time and culture, he vowed if he recovered that he would lead a Crusade against the Muslims. Leaving his mother Blanche in charge of the kingdom, Louis led the Seventh Crusade (1248-1254). After an unsuccessful struggle, including capture by Egyptian forces, Louis IX went home to France.

Back in France, Louis's piety inspired his patronage of the arts and encouraged the spread of Gothic architecture. One of his most notable commissions is Sainte-Chapelle ("Holy Chapel"), erected as a shrine for the Crown of Thorns and a fragment of the True Cross, precious relics of the Passion of Jesus that Louis had purchased in 1239–41 for a sum twice the total cost of the chapel itself.

A deplorable aspect of medieval Christianity was its anti-semitism, and despite his attempts to cultivate holiness, Louis IX was complicit in official action against Jewish believers. Louis ordered the expulsion of all Jews engaged in usury and the confiscation of their property to finance his crusade. At the urging of Pope Gregory IX, Louis also ordered the burning in Paris in 1243 of some 12,000 manuscript copies of the Talmud and other Jewish books and increased the power and authority of the Inquisition in France.

In 1270, Louis IX led the Eighth Crusade to Tunis. There, Louis developed "flux of the stomach" and died August 25, 1270.

*A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018*

## **August 26: Thomas Gallaudet, 1902, and Henry Winter Syle, 1890, Priests**

Ministry to the deaf in The Episcopal Church begins with Thomas Gallaudet and his protégé, Henry Winter Syle. Without Gallaudet's genius and zeal for the spiritual well-being of deaf persons, it is improbable that a history of ministry to the deaf in the Episcopal Church could be written. He has been called "The Apostle to the Deaf."

## Day Hike –4

Gallaudet was born June 3rd, 1822, in Hartford. He was the eldest son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, founder of the West Hartford School for the Deaf, and his wife, Sophia, who was deaf.

After graduating from Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, Thomas announced his desire to become a priest in the Episcopal Church. His father, who was a Congregationalist minister, prevailed upon him to postpone a final decision, and to accept a teaching position in the New York Institution for Deaf-Mutes. There he met and married a deaf woman named Elizabeth Budd.

Gallaudet was ordained deacon in 1850 and served his diaconate at St. Stephen's Church, where he established a Bible class for deaf persons. Ordained a priest in 1851, Gallaudet became Assistant Rector at St. Ann's Church, where he conceived a plan for establishing a church that would be a spiritual home for deaf people. This became a reality the following year, with the founding of St. Ann's Church for Deaf-Mutes. The congregation was able to purchase a church building in 1859, and it became a center for missionary work to the deaf continuing into its merger with the parish of Calvary-St. George in 1976. As a result of this ministry, mission congregations were established in many cities. Gallaudet died on August 27th, 1902.

One fruit of Gallaudet's ministry was Henry Winter Syle. Born in China, he had lost his hearing as a young child as the result of scarlet fever. Educated at Trinity College, Hartford; St. John's College, Cambridge, England; and Yale University, Syle was a brilliant student, who persisted in his determination to obtain an education in spite of his deafness and fragile health. He was encouraged by Gallaudet to offer himself for ordination as a priest, and was supported in that call by Bishop William Bacon Stevens of Pennsylvania, against the opposition of many who believed that the impairment of one of the senses was an impediment to ordination. Syle was ordained as a deacon in 1876, the first deaf person to be ordained in this church, and later ordained as a priest in 1883. In 1888, he built All Souls Church for the Deaf in Philadelphia, the first Episcopal church constructed especially for deaf persons. He died on January 6th, 1890.

*A Great Cloud of Witnesses, 2018*

