

The Feast of Absalom Jones

Morning Prayer

Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis
Christ Church Cathedral

Saturday, February 13, 2021
11:00 a.m.



Opening Sentence

You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but citizens together with the saints and members of the household of God. *Ephesians 2:19*

Versicle and Response

Bishop O God, let our mouth proclaim your praise.

People **And your glory all the day long.**

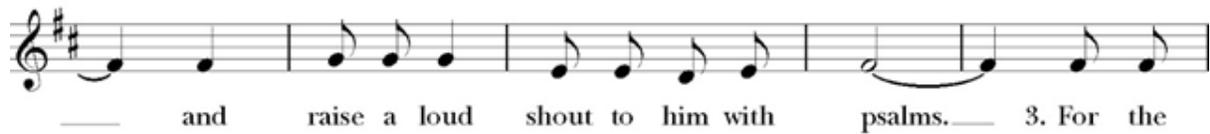
Bishop Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

Bishop Alleluia. Our God is glorious in all the saints:

People **O come let us worship. Alleluia.**

Venite (Hymnal 1982, S-35)

Jack Noble White (b. 1938)



sea is his, for he made it, _____ and his hands have
 mold - ed the dry land. _____ 6. Come, let us bow down, and bend the
 knee, _____ and kneel be-fore the Lord our Ma - ker. _____ 7. For
 he is our God, _____ and we are the peo - ple of his
 pas - ture _____ and the sheep of his hand. _____
 _____ Oh, that to - day you would heark-en to his voice! _____

Psalm 126

Chant: Christopher Caruso-Lynch

- 1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, *
 then were we like those who dream.
 - 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, *
 and our tongue with shouts of joy.
 - 3 Then they said among the nations, *
 "The Lord has done great things for them."
 - 4 The Lord has done great things for us, *
 and we are glad indeed.
 - 5 Restore our fortunes, O Lord, *
 like the watercourses of the Negev.
 - 6 Those who sowed with tears *
 will reap with songs of joy.
 - 7 Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, *
 will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.
- Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God: as it was in the beginning, *
 is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 42:5-9)

Lector: Claudia Stevens-Maddox, Christ Church Cathedral

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Canticle: The Third Song of Isaiah

(*Wonder, Love, and Praise*, 883)

Carl Haywood (b. 1949) from *Fraction Anthems, Canticles and Chants*

Refrain

A - rise, shine, for your light has come, his
glo - ry is up - on you.

For behold, darkness covers the land; *
deep gloom enshrouds the peoples.

But over you the Lord will rise, *
and his glory will appear upon you. *Refrain*

Nations will stream to your light, *
and kings to the brightness of your dawning.

Your gates will always be open; *
by day or night they will never be shut. *Refrain*

They will call you, The City of the Lord, *
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Violence will no more be heard in your land, *
ruin or destruction within your borders. *Refrain*

You will call your walls, Salvation, *
and all your portals, Praise.

The sun will no more be your light by day; *
by night you will not need the brightness of the moon. *Refrain*

A Reading from the Gospel of John (John 15:12-15)

Lector: Wendy Curto, St. John's, Speedway

Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Canticle: A Song of God's Love

Antiphon: Marilyn Haskel

Chant: Christopher Caruso-Lynch

ANTIPHON
Cantor, then all

Be - lov - ed, let us love one an - oth - er, for love is of God. Who
- ev - er does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Setting: Marilyn Haskel © 2004 Marilyn Haskel.
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In this the love of God was revealed among us, *
that God sent his only Son into the world,
so that we might live through Jesus Christ.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us *
and sent his Son that sins might be forgiven. *Antiphon*

Beloved, since God loved us so much, *
we ought also to love one another.

For if we love one another, God abides in us, *
and God's love will be perfected in us. *Antiphon*

The Sermon The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

A period of silence may be kept

The Apostles' Creed *said by all*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge
the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

Bishop God be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Bishop Let us 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.

Bishop Help us, O God our Savior;

People **Deliver us and forgive us our sins.**

Bishop Look upon your congregation;

People **Give to your people the blessing of peace.**

Bishop Declare your glory among the nations;

People **And your wonders among all peoples.**

Bishop Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;

People **Never forget the lives of your poor.**

Bishop Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

People **And your favor to those who are true of heart.**

Bishop Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

People **So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.**

The Collects

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.**

Almighty God, who after the creation of the world rested from all your works and sanctified a day of rest for all your creatures: Grant that we, putting away all earthly anxieties, may be duly prepared for the service of your sanctuary, and that our rest here upon earth may be a preparation for the eternal rest promised to your people in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Litany of Thanksgiving for the Feast of Absalom Jones

Written by The Rev. Jemonde Taylor, Rector of St. Ambrose Episcopal Church in Raleigh, North Carolina; based on "A Thanksgiving Sermon" given by the Reverend Absalom Jones on January 1, 1808.

Bishop O God of freedom and justice: we celebrate this day your servant, Absalom Jones, the first person of African Ancestry ordained in The Episcopal Church. Empower us to build a world where righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne as we pray:

Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;
let all the nations of the Earth praise you.

Intercessor Let your Church continue the ministries of reconciliation and peace. Help us grow Absalom Jones' ministry of racial justice. Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;

People **Let all the nations of the Earth praise you.**

Intercessor God who hears, you put the tears of our forebears into your book: help the nations of the world hear their citizens' concerns by responding to injustice, war, and slavery with actions that lead to peace. Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;

People **Let all the nations of the Earth praise you.**

Intercessor God of our Ancestors, Blessed Absalom reminded us that just as your chosen people acknowledged a Syrian, ready to perish, was their ancestor, we too must acknowledge that an enslaved African, ready to perish, was our ancestor: Endue our elders and leaders with wisdom and vision to reach back with the purpose of moving forward. Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;

People **Let all the nations of the Earth praise you.**

Intercessor God of compassion, you hear your people's cries and prayers in heaven: accept our intercessions and petitions as part of our worship of you. Help us remember that we stand on the prayers of our ancestors. As they prayed for current and future generations, so must we pray for our sisters and brothers today and for those to come. Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;

People **Let all the nations of the Earth praise you.**

Intercessor God who creates, Blessed Absalom reminded us that sacrifices must be accompanied with action: guide our feet to run the race without getting weary. Keep us focused on the fight for equality. Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;

People **Let all the nations of the Earth praise you.**

Intercessor Healing God, deliver those who call upon your name as we intercede for _____. You inspire our hearts with hope as we offer prayers of thanksgiving for _____. Continue to grow from strength to strength those who know you more fully, as we pray for the departed, especially _____. Glory to God for your precious record of power and goodness;

People **Let all the nations of the Earth praise you.**

Bishop O Lord, move us, who are assembled in your presence, to be always thankful for your mercies, and to act as is becoming a people who owe so much to your goodness. We ask all these blessings and mercies, only in the Name of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Offertory

The offering collected today will go to the diocesan chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians, to assist in a resolution passed in 2020 (see additional information on page 9).

You can send a check to the diocesan office and indicate "UBE Offering", or to make a gift by text, simply go to indydio.org/donate, or text "indydio" to 73256.

Anthem: Sound Over All Waters

music: Paul Halley (b. 1952)
text: John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

Sound over all waters, reach out from all lands
The chorus of voices, the clasping of hands;
Sing hymns that were sung by the stars of the morn,
Sing songs of the angels when Jesus was born;
With glad jubilations bring hope to the nations:

The dark night is ending and dawn has begun.
Arise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun.
All speech flows to music, all hearts beat as one.
The dark night is ending, and dawn has begun.

Blow, bugles of battle; the marches of peace,
East, west, north and south, let the long quarrels cease;
Sing the song of great joy that the angels began,
Sing of glory to God, and of good will to man!
Joining in chorus, the heavens bend o'er us.

(Refrain)

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

Bishop Let us bless the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Bishop The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

Voluntary Fughetta from Organ Suite no. 1

Florence Price

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Funds collected from the Offering today will be applied to a resolution, passed at the 2020 Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis. This resolution indicates that work will be done “to gather stories and examples of our historic complicity in acts of prejudice, discrimination, racism, and systemic oppression, from our congregations, members, and community partners,” and to examine historical documents for evidence of such involvement or complicity. When completed, a documentary will be presented with recommendations for next steps in reconciliation, healing, and equity.

You can send a check to the diocesan office, Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis, 1100 W. 42nd St., Suite 235, Indianapolis IN 46208) and indicate “UBE Offering”, or to make a gift by text, simply go to indydio.org/donate, or text “indydio” to 73256.

Participants in the service

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis

The Very Rev. Dr. Gray Lesesne, Dean and Rector, Christ Church Cathedral

Mr. Christopher Caruso-Lynch, Christ Church Cathedral, Director of Music (*ad interim*)

Guest Musicians

Angela Brown, soprano Chloe Boeter, soprano

George Benn, tenor Bruno Sandes, baritone Nick Tucker, bass

Kenny Phelps, percussion Paulo Castro, piano

Music Notes: On this feast of Absalom Jones, our music challenges us to think about style and origins in new ways. Jack Noble White’s setting of *Come, let us sing unto the Lord*, typically accompanied by the organ, is recast as a funk-inspired solo song. Psalm 126 is set to an Anglican Chant, but one that draws on jazz improvisation. David Hurd’s setting of *Deep River* clothes the tune in a distinctly 20th century style, and Florence Price, the first commercially successful African American female composer, writes her *Fughetta* in an 18th century form. *The Third Song of Isaiah* is by Dr. Carl Haywood, noted conductor and contributor of music to *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, and is rooted in the traditions of historically African American Episcopal parishes. *A Song of God’s Love* stems from the tradition of paperless music pioneered by Marilyn Haskell at St. Paul’s Chapel in New York City. The anthem is penned by Paul Halley, a British-born, Cambridge trained organist, writing in a gospel style. *Sound Over All Waters* is dedicated to Coretta Scott King, and was sung in her honor on the occasion of her preaching at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, where Paul Halley was organist and choirmaster. Today it is sung by Angela Brown, internationally acclaimed soprano and Indianapolis native.

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Absalom Jones Biographical Information

By Arthur K. Sudler, William Carl Bolivar Director
Historical Society & Archives/African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas

Absalom Jones was born enslaved to Abraham Wynkoop a wealthy Anglican planter in 1746 in Delaware. He was working in the fields when Abraham recognized that he was an intelligent child and ordered that he be trained to work in the house. Absalom eagerly accepted instruction in reading. He also saved money he was given and bought books (among them a primer, a spelling book, and a bible). Abraham Wynkoop died in 1753 and by 1755 his younger son Benjamin had inherited the plantation. When Absalom was sixteen Benjamin Wynkoop sold the plantation and Absalom's mother, sister, and five brothers. Wynkoop brought Absalom to Philadelphia where he opened a store and joined St. Peter's Church. In Philadelphia Benjamin Wynkoop permitted Absalom to attend a night school for black people that was operated by Quakers following the tradition established by abolitionist teacher Anthony Benezet.

At twenty, with the permission of their masters, Absalom married Mary Thomas who was enslaved to Sarah King who also worshipped at St. Peter's. The Rev. Jacob Duche performed the wedding at Christ Church. Absalom and his father-in-law, John Thomas, used their savings, and sought donations and loans primarily from prominent Quakers, in order to purchase Mary's freedom. Absalom and Mary worked very hard to repay the money borrowed to buy her freedom. They saved enough money to buy property and to buy Absalom's freedom. Although he repeatedly asked Benjamin Wynkoop to allow him to buy his freedom Wynkoop refused. Absalom persisted because as long as he was enslaved Wynkoop could take his property and his money. Finally, in 1784 Benjamin Wynkoop freed Absalom by granting him a manumission. Absalom continued to work in Wynkoop's store as a paid employee.

Absalom left St. Peter's Church and began worshipping at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. He met Richard Allen who had been engaged to preach at St. George's and the two became lifelong friends. Together, in 1787, they founded the Free African Society a mutual aid benevolent organization that was the first of its kind organized by and for black people. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need. At St. George's, Absalom and Richard served as lay ministers for the black membership. The active evangelism of Jones and Allen, greatly increased black membership at St. George's. The black members worked hard to help raise money to build an upstairs gallery intended to enlarge the church. The church leadership decided to segregate the black worshippers in the gallery, without notifying them. During a Sunday morning service a dispute arose over the seats black members had been instructed to take in the gallery and ushers attempted to physically remove them by first accosting Absalom Jones. Most of the black members present indignantly walked out of St. George's in a body.

Prior to the incident at St. George's the Free African Society had initiated religious services. Some of these services were presided over by The Rev. Joseph Pilmore an assistant St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The Society established communication with similar black groups in other cities. In 1792 the Society began to build the African Church of Philadelphia. The church membership took a denominational vote and decided to affiliate with the Episcopal Church. Richard Allen withdrew from the effort as he favored affiliation with the Methodist Church. Absalom Jones was asked to provide pastoral leadership and after prayer and reflection he accepted the call.

The African Church was dedicated on July 17, 1794. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Magaw, rector St. Paul's Church, preached the dedicatory address. Dr. Magaw was assisted at the service by The Rev. James Abercrombie, assistant minister at Christ Church. Soon thereafter the congregation applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on the following conditions: 1) that they be received as an organized body; 2) that they have control over their own local affairs; 3) that Absalom Jones be licensed as layreader, and, if qualified, be ordained as minister. In October 1794 it was admitted as the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. The church was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1796. Bishop William White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802.

Jones was an earnest preacher. He denounced slavery, and warned the oppressors to "clean their hands of slaves." To him, God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." But it was his constant visiting and mild manner that made him beloved by his congregation and by the community. St. Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. The congregants formed a day school and were active in moral uplift, self-empowerment, and anti-slavery activities. Known as "the Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church," Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God's instrument. Jones died on this day in 1818.