



**VESPERS**  
**on the eve of the Lesser Feast of**  
**Absalom Jones**

**1818**

**2026 Feb 12**

As members of a parish in the Diocese of New Westminster, we acknowledge that we are gathered from a variety of locations within the traditional and unceded ancestral territory of the Coast Salish people, including but not limited to, the halq'-emylém speaking Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Musqueam, Tseil-watuth, and Tsawwassen nations.

# The Preparation

## *Officiant*

Born into enslavement in 1746 in Delaware, Absalom Jones was eventually granted a manumission (a legal document granting him freedom) and began worshipping at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church where he met Richard Allen who had been engaged to preach at St. George's and the two became lifelong friends. In 1781 they founded the Free African Society, a mutual aid benevolent organization, the first of its kind for black people. At St. George's, Absalom and Richard served as lay ministers for the black membership. When the church leadership decided to segregate the black worshippers in an upstairs gallery without notifying them, a dispute arose over the seats black members had been instructed to take in the gallery and most of the black members indignantly walked out in protest. In 1792 the Free African Society began to build the African Church of Philadelphia. The church membership took a vote and decided to affiliate with the Episcopal 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. Soon thereafter the congregation applied

## The Preparation (Cont'd)

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 lay reader, and, if qualified, be ordained as a priest. In October 1794 it was admitted as the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas. 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 always acted on “behalf of the oppressed and distressed.” St. Thomas Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. 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 February 13, 1818.

Adapted from *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*,  
Episcopal Church of the United States

## The Preparation (Cont'd)

*Officiant*

O God, make speed to save us,  
**O Lord, make haste to help us.**

From the rising of the Sun to its setting  
**your glory is proclaimed in all the world.**

Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:  
**as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever.**  
**Amen.**

# Act of Praise

More Than We Can Ask or Imagine  
Common Praise 86

## *Cantor or Officiant*

More than we can ask or imagine, more than we can ever dare to dream, we are the children of heaven's creation, God's own beloved, each called by name. And we cry Glory! Glory! Glory to God who calls us by name! Glory! Glory! Glory to God! Glory we sing!

More than we will ever imagine, more than we will ever understand; we are sent to walk with compassion, to live out God's love by heart and by hand. And we cry Glory! Glory! Glory to God who presses us on! Glory! Glory! Glory in God! Glory our song.

More than we can ask or imagine, more than we could ever desire; out of the dust God's building a kingdom, like wine from the press, like bread from the fire. And we cry Glory! Glory! Glory to God! Glory we cry! Glory! Glory! Glory on earth, Glory on high! Glory! Glory! Glory to God! Glory we cry! Glory! Glory! Glory on earth! Glory on high! Glory on earth! Glory on high!

# The Psalm

Psalm 126

## *Psalmist*

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, \*  
**then were we like those who dream.**

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, \*  
**and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations, \*  
**"The Lord has done great things for them."**

The Lord has done great things for us, \*  
**and we are glad indeed.**

Restore our fortunes, O Lord, \*  
**like the watercourses of the Negev.**

Those who sowed with tears \*  
**will reap with songs of joy.**

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, \*  
**will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

# The Psalm Prayer

Praise to you, God of our salvation. Your generous gifts surpass all that we can ask or imagine. You have delivered us from the exile of sin and restored us to new life in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Glory and honour and praise to you for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

# The Reading

## John 15: 12 - 15

### *Reader*

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.”

# Response

*After a brief period of reflection  
the Reader says:*

Blessed are the meek for they shall  
inherit the Earth.

**Thanks be to God!**

# Affirmation of Faith

## *Officiant*

Let us affirm our faith as we recite “Hear, O Israel”.

**Hear, O Israel,  
the Lord our God, the Lord is one.**

**Love the Lord your God  
with all your heart,  
with all your soul,  
with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.**

**This is the first and the great commandment.  
The second is like it:  
Love your neighbour as yourself.**

**There is no commandment greater than these.**

# Intercessions, Petitions & Thanksgivings

## *Officiant*

To God who welcomes all in love, we offer our prayers for the good of the church and the concerns of those in need, responding to the bidding, Gracious God, with “Hear our Prayers”.

In the Anglican Communion, we pray for the Diocese of Tasmania, the Anglican Church of Australia, the Rt. Revd. Dr. Richard Condie, Bishop; and the members and associates of the Society of Ordained Scientists as they seek to bring faith to the scientific community, science to the church, and both to the world at large. Gracious God, **Hear our Prayers.**

In the Anglican - Lutheran - Moravian cycle, we pray for the people and clergy of the Diocese of Central Newfoundland; the dean, council, and congregations of the Two Rivers, Nith Valley and Niagara Areas of the Eastern Synod; and for a growing openness to dialogue and encounter with people of other faith traditions during World Interfaith Harmony Week. Gracious God, **Hear our Prayers.**

## Intercessions, Petitions and Thanksgivings (Cont'd)

### *Officiant*

In our Diocese, we pray for the Archdeaconry of Burrard;  
St. Margaret, Cedar Cottage, Vancouver - The Revd Heidi  
Brear ; St. Mark, Ocean Park - The Revd David Taylor.  
Gracious God, **Hear our Prayers.**

In this Parish of Holy Trinity Cathedral, we pray for John,  
our Archbishop; Stephanie, our priest; Bishop Benny and  
the people of Northern Philippines; our sister Parish of St.  
Gabriel, the Archangel, in Lubon; and for all members of  
the Parish as we prepare for the Annual Vestry meeting.  
Gracious God, **Hear our Prayers.**

God of every land and nation, you have created all people  
and you dwell among us in Jesus Christ. Listen to the  
cries of those who pray to you, and grant that, as we  
proclaim the greatness of your name, all people will know  
the power of love at work in the world. We ask this  
through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

# The Collect

*Officiant*

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honouring 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 Saviour Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

# The Lord's Prayer

## *Officiant*

Believing in the promises of God,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we 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,  
and 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 forever.  
Amen.**

# The Sending Forth

*Deacon (or Officiant)*

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Officiant*

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**