

## **Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 24**

**The Collect:** Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **The Old Testament Jonah 3: 10 – 4:11 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, Anglicised**

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' And the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

The Lord God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.'

But God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?' And he said, 'Yes, angry enough to die.' Then the Lord said, 'You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labour and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a

night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?’

### **The Word of the Lord**

#### **Psalm 145: 1-8 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

- 1 I will exalt you, O God my King, \* and bless your Name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless you \* and praise your Name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; \* there is no end to his greatness.
- 4 One generation shall praise your works to another \* and shall declare your power.
- 5 I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty \* and all your marvelous works.
- 6 They shall speak of the might of your wondrous acts, \* and I will tell of your greatness.
- 7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness; \* they shall sing of your righteous deeds.
- 8 The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, \* slow to anger and of great kindness.

#### **The Epistle Philippians 1: 21 – 30 read from the Revised Standard Version Bible**

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear omen to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine.

### **The Word of the Lord**

## **The Gospel Matthew 20: 1 – 16 read from the God's Word Bible**

“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. After agreeing to pay the workers the usual day’s wages, he sent them to work in his vineyard. About 9 a.m. he saw others standing in the marketplace without work. He said to them, ‘Work in my vineyard, and I’ll give you whatever is right.’ So they went.

“He went out again about noon and 3 p.m. and did the same thing. About 5 p.m. he went out and found some others standing around. He said to them, ‘Why are you standing here all day long without work?’

“‘No one has hired us,’ they answered him.

“He said to them, ‘Work in my vineyard.’

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard told the supervisor, ‘Call the workers, and give them their wages. Start with the last, and end with the first.’

“Those who started working about 5 p.m. came, and each received a day’s wages. When those who had been hired first came, they expected to receive more. But each of them received a day’s wages. Although they took it, they began to protest to the owner. They said, ‘These last workers have worked only one hour. Yet, you’ve treated us all the same, even though we worked hard all day under a blazing sun.’

“The owner said to one of them, ‘Friend, I’m not treating you unfairly. Didn’t you agree with me on a day’s wages? Take your money and go! I want to give this last worker as much as I gave you. Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Or do you resent my generosity towards others?’

“In this way the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

## **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Prayer: On September 24th we remember Anna Ellison Butler Alexander, Deaconess and teacher. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Anna Ellison Butler Alexander was the first African American deaconess in The Episcopal Church. A teacher and minister in southern Georgia, she was born to recently emancipated slaves on Butler Plantation in MacIntosh County, Georgia, in 1865. Her father had been taught to read by the English actress Fanny Kemble. Perhaps this encouraged Anna's interest in education. She founded Good Shepherd Church in rural Glynn County's Pennick community, where she taught children to read – by tradition, from the Book of Common Prayer and the Bible – in a one-room schoolhouse. The school was later expanded to two rooms with a loft where Anna lived. She ministered in Pennick for 53 years, leaving a legacy of love and devotion still felt in Glynn County.

Deaconess Alexander served in difficult times, however. The diocese of Georgia segregated her congregations in 1907 and African American congregations were not invited to another diocesan convention until 1947. Coincidentally it was not until 1970 that the general Convention officially recognized deaconesses as being in deacon's orders. However, her witness-wearing the distinctive dress of a deaconess, traveling by foot from Brunswick through Darien to Pennick, showing care and love for all whom she met – represents the best in Christian witness.

**Let us pray:** O God, you called Anna Alexander as a deaconess in your Church, and sent her as teacher and evangelist to the people of Georgia: Grant us the humility to go wherever you send, and the wisdom to teach the word of Christ to whomever we meet, that all may come to the enlightenment which you intend for your people; through Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior. **Amen.**