

First Sunday after the Epiphany Sunday, January 07, 2018

The Collect: Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

Old Testament: Genesis 1:1-5 read from the Holman Christian Standard Bible

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and He called the darkness "night." Evening came and then morning: the first day.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 29 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 Ascribe to the Lord, you gods, * ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Name; * worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; * the Lord is upon the mighty waters.

4 The voice of the Lord is a powerful voice; * the voice of the Lord is a voice of splendor.

5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; * the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, * and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.

7 The voice of the Lord splits the flames of fire; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; * the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

8 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe * and strips the forests bare.

9 And in the temple of the Lord * all are crying, "Glory!"

10 The Lord sits enthroned above the flood; * the Lord sits enthroned as King for evermore.

11 The Lord shall give strength to his people; * the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Epistle: Acts 19:1-7 read from the International Children's Bible

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to Ephesus. There he found some followers. Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They said, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!"

So he asked, "What kind of baptism did you have?"

They said, "It was the baptism that John taught."

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of changed hearts and lives. He told people to believe in the One who would come after him. That One is Jesus."

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They began speaking different languages and prophesying. There were about 12 men in this group.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Mark 1:4-11 read from the King James Bible

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On January 8 we celebrate the life of Harriet Bedell Deaconess and Missionary

Harriet Bedell, missionary and friend to the Seminole Indians of Florida, was born in Buffalo, New York on March 19, 1875. She was trained as a schoolteacher but was inspired several years later by an Episcopalian missionary who spoke at her church describing the many needs of missionary work. In 1906 she applied to, and was accepted by, the New York Training School for Deaconesses, where her one-year course of study included instruction in religious matters, missions, teaching, hygiene, and hospital nursing. Following her training she was sent as a missionary-teacher to the Cheyenne Indians at Whirlwind Mission in Oklahoma.

Bedell's duties at the Whirlwind Mission were many. She cared for the sick and the poor, organized social services for the tribe, performed the duties of the rector in his absence, and provided education for the women and children. She provided religious instruction, hoping to win the confidence of the Indians and convert them to Christianity.

Because of her experience in both teaching and working with Indians, in 1916 an Episcopal bishop requested that she consider an assignment in a remote area of Alaska. Saddened by the prospect of leaving Oklahoma, she nevertheless accepted her new assignment in Stevens Village, Alaska. While there, in 1922 she was finally made a deaconess in the church, instilling in her a new and profound dedication to her vocation. The mission at Stevens Village was moved to Tanana so that a boarding school funded by church members' contributions could be established for the children who could not travel in the bad winter weather. However, in 1931, funds were so scarce that Deaconess Bedell traveled to New York to plea for more contributions. Because of the Great Depression, there was little available money, and although the church paid off the school's existing debt, there was little reason for Bedell to return to Alaska.

Through speaking engagements following her service in Alaska, Bedell was invited to visit a Seminole Indian reservation in southern Florida. Appalled by their living conditions, she began her campaign to improve the quality of life among the Mikasuki-Seminole Indians by living and working with them, not merely teaching them. She sought to revive the doll making and

basket weaving skills which had become nearly extinct. She encouraged the incorporation of the intricate patchwork designs made by Indian women into articles of clothing for both women and men. Sales from the arts and crafts store at Blades Cross Mission helped to provide improved income for the Mikasuki-Seminoles.

Bedell emphasized health and education rather than religious conversion in her work with the Seminoles; their spiritual and physical comfort was more important to her than religious conversion, and her work and friendship with the Seminoles of Florida reflected those values.

Let us pray: Holy God, you chose your faithful servant Harriet Bedell to exercise the ministry of deaconess and to be a missionary among indigenous peoples: Fill us with compassion and respect for all people, and empower us for the work of ministry throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**