

A Litany for the Feast of Alexander Crummell
And
Annual UBE Sunday

Leader: For the commemoration of the life and legacy of Alexander Crummell, priest and pastor, theologian, missionary, abolitionist and educator in the Church of God we invite your prayers. We pray also all who continue in his witness to Jesus Christ, especially the Union of Black Episcopalians. Let us pray that God's justice and peace is established throughout the world and in the Church.

Leader: O Holy God, the ground of all creation and source of mercy,

People: **Have mercy on us (*Have mercy upon us*).**

Leader: O Holy Jesus, the companion of all humanity and liberator of the oppressed,

People: **Have mercy on us (*Have mercy upon us*).**

Leader: O Holy Spirit, the strength of souls and lover of justice,

People: **Have mercy on us (*Have mercy upon us*).**

Leader: For Alexander Crummell, prophetic leader for justice and reconciliation and faithful servant of Jesus Christ.

People: **Grant him rest and eternal peace.**

Silence is kept

Leader: For Alexander and all our ancestors whose works and prayers continue to shelter our lives from danger and degradation.

People: **May their presence and witness inspire us.**

Leader: For his vision of Pan-African unity, self governance and restorative justice for the peoples of Africa and the Diaspora,

People: **Deliver and restore us with hope**

Leader: For parting the sea of ignorance, for inspiring his generation and generations to come toward their spiritual and intellectual liberation.

People: **Encourage our Soul and set us free**

Leader: For the intellectual heritage of the American Negro Academy; and for the continuing work of Black Scholarship and the education of our people.

People: **Liberating Christ, we praise you.**

Leader: For his ministry as church planter and local pastor in America and in Africa.

People: **Inspire and strengthen our local works of ministry.**

Leader: We thank you for the nurture and example of Alexander's parents, educators and abolitionists. May we be nurturers of learning and models of courage for our youth.

People: **Good God, we give you thanks.**

Leader: We thank you for his courage as he faced racist violence at Noyes Academy (*New Hampshire*), and denial of admission at General Theological Seminary (*New York*), and full inclusion in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

People: **Good God, we give you thanks.**

Leader: We thank you for Oneida Institute, a Quaker School *in New York*, where his mind was sharpened and intellect affirmed.

People: **Good God, we give you thanks**

Leader: We thank you for his undiminished hunger for theological education, becoming the first person of African Descent to graduate from Cambridge University (England); and for the white laymen of the Diocese of Pennsylvania who provided for his various needs.

People: **Good God, we give you thanks**

Leader: We thank you for his twenty years of ministry in Africa; his articulated vision for Pan-African unity in Africa, the West Indies and the Americas; and for preserving him in safety when African detractors sought to take his life.

People: **Good God, we give you thanks.**

Leader: From the deep divisions that diminish all humanity, from the pain and cruelty inflicted by race and ethnicity, gender and class, sexual identity and orientation,

People: **Forgiving God, have mercy on us.**

Leader: From leaders who seek to separate and threaten the unity of the Church and human community.

People: **Protect with your gracious love.**

Leader: From laws that deny and reject the gifts and worth of all your people.

People: **Defend with your liberating power.**

Leader: From a culture which often does not care for or protect black bodies and souls; from fearful hatred that distort and devalue the dignity of black lives.

People: **Teach us to respect the dignity of every human being.**

Leader: From our disunity, tribalism, classism, self-hate, unforgiving memories, uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors and from all that divides the human family.

People: **Let us not become instruments of our own oppression.**

Leader: For the legacy of our forebears; for their gifts of organizing, self-determination, courage and dignity in the struggle against oppression: the Protestant Episcopal Society for Promoting the Extension of the Church among Colored People (1856); the Society for the Promotion of Church Work Among the Colored People (1867); the Conference of

Church Workers among Colored People (1882); and the Union of Black Clergy and Laity (1968).

People: **Healer of Souls, we bless you.**

Leader: For their successor body, the Union of Black Episcopalians; may we in our own time work to heal and be healed, to boldly witness for racial justice, and promote the Gospel of Peace.

People: **Savior of Souls, we bless you.**

Leader: For the witness of the Black Diaspora in the Anglican Communion, together with the church throughout the world we commit our lives and ministries to the mission of Christ.

People: **To you Holy Spirit, lover of souls, we offer our hearts, minds, body and strength.**

Leader: Creator God, in your grace,

People: **Bless our spirits.**

Leader: Nurturing God, in your peace,

People: **Strength our lives.**

Leader: Redeeming God, in your love,

People: **Clothe our souls.**

Leader: Sustaining God, in your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayers.**

Silence is kept.

Leader: Let us pray (*may be said in unison*)

O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**[BCP p. 840]

[Litany written by the Rev'd Canon John T.W. Harmon; and the Rt. Rev'd Nathan D. Baxter, 2016]