

**The Last Sunday after the Epiphany
The Feast of Absalom Jones
February 15, 2026
4:00 PM**

Celebrant: The Right Reverend Daniel G. P. Gutierrez

The Preacher: The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry

The Rector: The Very Reverend Canon Martini Shaw

The Assisting Clergy: The Reverend Samantha Vincent-Alexander,
The Reverend Laurie Wurm, The Reverend Fr. Walter Thorne, The Very Reverend Samuel Kirabi

Deacon of the Mass: The Reverend Canon Toneh Smyth

MCs: The Reverend Fr. Daren Evans and Kathryn Brossa, Seminarian-in-charge, Church of St. Alban,
Roxborough

Vergers: Karen Ragland and Eugene Golson

Music Ministry Directors: Dr. Jay Fluellen, Waltier Blocker, Dr. Rollo Dilworth
and Robert Newton Davenport

Percussionist: Wayne Brown, Jr.; **Bass:** Wayne Brown, III

Trumpeter: Bruce Frazier

Music Ministry: St. Thomas Chancel Choir, St. Thomas Gospel Choir, Christ Church, St. Peter's Church,
St. James School and VocalEssence Singers of This Age (Minneapolis)

Dance Ministry: St. Thomas Angels in Motion

Order of Service

The Gathering Music

A Meditation Prayer

Eugene Golson, Verger

The Prelude

St. James Community Choir

A Special Prayer at the Final Resting Place of Blessed Absalom Jones The Very Reverend Samuel Kirabi

The Opening Hymn- "Blessed Absalom"

Lift Every Voice and Sing (LEVAS) #44

1) Born in bondage, born in shackles, Born stripped of all dignity

Absalom Jones was bound determined, That he would one day be free;

Blessed Abs'lom, leads us, guides us, In the bonds of unity.

2) Seeking to expand horizons, Bible, primer he did find;

To each word he was attentive, Learning, lest he fall behind.

Blessed Abs'lom, liberates us From the prison of our mind.

3) When in Philadelphia settled, He sought persons in great need,

Dedicated to empow'rmnt, His own people did he lead.

Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we from All indifference may be freed.

4) One fine morning, while at worship, Wrested from his knees in prayer;

He, his friends, were thus evicted: "You no more may praise God here."

Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we may Stand steadfast and persevere.

5) Founded he Saint Thomas' Church for Afric's sons and daughters blest;

Full-fledged members of Christ's Body, They no longer were oppressed.

Blessed Abs'lom, pray that we may Be the church at Christ's behest.

6) Blessed Abs'lom Jones, first priest of Afric's stock within our fold;

May we, inspired by your witness Raise up priests with hearts of gold!

Blessed Abs'lom, pioneer, prophet May your story long be told!

7) Praise to Christ the Liberator; Praise Creator ever blest; Praise the Spirit, Source of comfort North to south, and east to west; Blessed Abs'lom, priest, exemplar, In God's bosom now at rest.

A Word of Welcome

The Rector

The Opening Acclamation

The Celebrant: Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The People: **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. AMEN**

The Collect for Purity

The Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy name; through Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

The Song of Praise

VocalEssence Singers of This Age

The Proclamation of the Word

The Collect of the Day

The Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

The People: **And also with you.**

The Celebrant: Let us pray.

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 forever. **AMEN**

The First Reading: Isaiah 42: 5-9

Ken Oakes, Christ Church, Philadelphia

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

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.

The Reader: The Word of the Lord.

The People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

Susan Ben and Renard Golden, St. Thomas

Psalm Response - "His Love is Everlasting"

LEVAS #273

[Response] His love, His love,

His love is everlasting.

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. [Response]

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. [Response]

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. [Response]

The Second Reading: Ephesians 4: 1-6
A Reading from the Book of Ephesians

Barbara Matteucci, St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

The Reader: The Word of the Lord.

The People: Thanks be to God.

The Gradual Hymn - "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

LEVAS #72 (vv. 1-3)

**1) I am weak but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee. [Refrain]**

**Refrain: Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**2) Thro' this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee. [Refrain]**

**3) When my feeble life is o'er,
Time for me will be no more;
Guide me gently, safely o'er
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore. [Refrain]**

The Holy Gospel: John 15: 12-15

Deacon Toneh Smyth

The Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

The People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

'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.'

The Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

The People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily Hymn- "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"

LEVAS # 72 (vv. 1-2)

**1) I am weak but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long**

As I walk, let me walk close to Thee. [Refrain]

**Refrain: Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**2) Thro' this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee. [Refrain]**

The Sermon

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, Former Presiding Bishop and Primate

The Call to Christian Discipleship

The Rector

A Musical Selection

St. James Community Choir

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

**For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN**

**The Prayers of the People – Form IV BCP 388 Tyler Willis, St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia and
Nicolas Glaster, Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys, Washington, D.C.**

Tyler Willis: Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Nicolas Glaster: Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Tyler: For Sean, our Presiding Bishop; Michael, our Former Presiding Bishop; Daniel, our Bishop; Martini our Rector; Daren our associate to the Rector; Gerald and Wil our Associate Priests; Karen and Eugene our Vergers; Paul our Associate Minister; and for all bishops and other ministers.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Nicolas: Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Tyler: We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Nicolas: Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Tyler: Bless us as we celebrate America250 and the many contributions of Black people in the growth of our nation.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Nicolas: For those incarcerated: Guide them Lord in all they do with your Grace and Love and grant them your continual help. In all their problems, your guidance; in all their dangers, your protection; and in all their sorrows, your peace. And we remember and pray for those who may have been affected by their actions.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Tyler: For those who may be experiencing loneliness or sadness following the death of a loved one, grant them your presence and comfort.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Nicolas: Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Tyler: Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Nicolas: We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Tyler: Prince of Peace, help us.

God of Grace save us.

Nicolas: In the communion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thomas, Absalom, and all of the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God.

To thee, Lord our God.

The Concluding Collect

The Celebrant

The Confession

BCP 360

The Celebrant: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us kneel and confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

The Celebrant and The People:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. AMEN

The Absolution

The Celebrant

Almighty God, have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. AMEN

The Peace

The Celebrant: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

The People: And also with you.

A Dance Selection

St. Thomas Angels in Motion

The Holy Eucharist

The Offertory Sentence and Offering

The Oblation Bearers

Betsy Ackerman, Christ Church, Philadelphia,
Micah Vinson and Khalil Childs, Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys, Washington, D.C.

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The Offertory Musical Selection

The Mass Choir; St. Thomas, St. Peter's and Christ Church

The Great Thanksgiving

The Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

The People: And also with you.

The Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

The People: We lift them to the Lord.

The Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

The People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. (*Celebrant adds a short Proper Preface*)

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

The Sanctus

The Celebrant and the People:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

The Memorial Acclamation (Sung)

The Celebrant and People:

Jesus Christ has died.

Jesus Christ is risen.

Jesus Christ will come again.

The Celebrant: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **AMEN**

The Lord's Prayer (arr. Albert Hay Malette)

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray.

The Celebrant and People:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

The People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

The Agnus Dei

The Celebrant: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

The People: Have mercy upon us.

The Celebrant: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

The People: Have mercy upon us.

The Celebrant: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world.

The People: Grant us thy peace.

The Prayer of Humble Access

Let us pray: We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. AMEN

The Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Distribution of Communion

(All baptized persons who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are invited to receive the Holy Sacrament. If you only wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms on your chest.)

A Communion Musical Selection

VocalEssence Singers of This Age

The Post-Communion Prayer

The Celebrant and People:

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. AMEN

Sending Forth of the Lay Eucharistic Visitors

The Celebrant: In the healing name of Jesus and with the compassionate embrace of this parish family, I send you forth bearing these Holy Gifts to those to whom you go today, so that they may share with us in the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood.

The People: We who are many are one body, and we all share one bread and one cup.

The Announcements

Richard Jones, Rector's Warden

Greetings

The Reverend Samantha Vincent-Alexander

Rector, Christ Church, Philadelphia

The Reverend Laurie Wurm

Rector, St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia

The Reverend Carolyn Cavaness

Pastor, Mother Bethel A. M. E. Church, Philadelphia

Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green, Sr.

Presiding Prelate, First Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Acknowledgements

The Honorable Marvin O. Henry, Jr.

Worshipful Deputy at Large, Prince Hall Grand Lodge of PA

Dr. Angelina Arrington

Head of School, Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys, Washington, D.C.

Mr. David Kasievich

Head of School, St. James School, Philadelphia

Mr. Arthur Sudler

Director, St. Thomas Historical Society and Archives

Mr. Michael Coard, Esq.

Founder, Avenging The Ancestors Coalition (ATAC)

The Blessing of Birthdays, Anniversaries and Travel

The Rector

The Final Blessing

Bishop Daniel G.P. Gutierrez

The Closing Hymn - “When the Saints Go Marching In”

**1) O when the saints go marching in,
O when the saints go marching in,
O Lord, I want to be in that number
when the saints go marching in.**

**2) O when the sun refused to shine,
O when the sun refused to shine,
O Lord, I want to be in that number
when the sun refused to shine.**

**3) O when they crown him Lord of all,
O when they crown him Lord of all,
O Lord, I want to be in that number
when they crown him Lord of all.**

The Dismissal

Deacon Toneh Smyth

The Postlude

St. Thomas Music Ministry

The End of Mass: This is a reminder that the Mass (service) ends following the closing hymn and dismissal. Please make an extra effort to refrain from unnecessary chatter and departure from the service before its conclusion. This request is being made to respect all gathered wishing to embrace the fullness of worship.