

Compline: A Night Service for Healing
St. John's by the Campus Episcopal Church, Ames, IA
July 21, 2021

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Ross Tubman
(Liberators and Prophets, +1902, +1894, +1883, +1913)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) dedicated her life to righting the wrongs perpetrated upon women by the Church and society. She and 4 other women organized the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19-20, 1848 – an event that set her political and religious agenda for the next 50 years. In 1881, the Revised Version of the Bible was published by a committee that included no women scholars. She founded her own committee to write a commentary on Scripture, and applying Greek she had learned from her minister, focused on passages used to oppress and discriminate against women. She attended Trinity Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls with her friend Amelia Bloomer, and preached hundreds of homilies and political speeches in pulpits throughout the nation. She was experienced as a holy presence and a liberator – and never lost her sense of humor. In a note to her friend Susan B. Anthony, she said: “Do not feel depressed, my dear friend, what is good in us is immortal, and if the sore trials we have endured are sifting out pride and selfishness, we shall not have suffered in vain.”

Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818-1894) as a young woman joined in the temperance, anti-slavery and women's rights movements. She never intended to make dress reform a major platform in women's struggle for justice. But women in her day wore waist-cinching corsets, even when pregnant, resulting in severe health problems. She published in her newspaper (*The Lily*) a picture of herself in loose-fitting Turkish trousers, and began wearing them publicly. Clergy, from their pulpits, attacked women who wore them. Her popularity soared as she engaged clergy in public debate. [Thus was born the first “bloomers”.] Of women's right to freedom she said, “the same power that brought the slave out of bondage will, in His own good time and way, bring about the emancipation of woman, and make her the equal in power and dominion that she was in the beginning.” Later in life, in Council Bluffs, IA, she worked to establish churches, libraries, and school houses. She provided hospitality for traveling clergy of all denominations, and for temperance lecturers and reformers. Trinity Church at Seneca Falls, NY, where she was baptized records her as a “faithful Christian missionary all her life.”

Sojourner Truth, “Miriam of the Later Exodus” (1797-8 to 1883): Her name was Isabella, a child born to slaves owned by a wealthy Dutchman in New York. She was a slave for the first 28 years of her life, sold many times. She fled slavery with the help of Quaker friends, and joined Mother Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church at the time the African-Americans were denied the right to worship with white members of St. George's Church in Philadelphia. Going by the name of Belle she became a street-corner evangelist in poverty-stricken areas of New York City. She focused her work on a homeless shelter for women. When she was 46, she went to Long Island and Connecticut. When she stopped along the way to ask for a drink of water, she was asked her name. “My name is Sojourner”. When asked her last name, she thought of all her masters' names she had carried through life. Then the thought came: “The only master I have now is God, and His name is Truth.” She became a traveling preacher, asking to speak at white religious meetings. She never learned to read or write, but quoted the Bible extensively from memory in her sermons. She became part of the abolitionist and women's rights speakers' network. She gave a speech entitled “Ain't I a Woman” that is often referenced today refuting the preaching of the time that said that God created women to be weak and blacks to be a subservient race.

Harriet Ross Tubman, “Moses of her People” (1820-1913) was born to slaves on a plantation in Maryland. The births of slaves were recorded under property, not as persons with names. Slave families lived in fear of their children being sold off at any time. Harriet suffered beatings and a severe injury, but grew up strong and defiant, refusing to appear happy and smiling to her owners. She turned to religion to cope with the brutality and oppression. Her favorite Bible story was about Moses who led the slaves to freedom – slaves prayed for a Moses of their own. When she was about 24, she escaped to Canada, but could not forget those she left behind. She worked with the Quakers, and made at least

19 trips back to Maryland between 1851 and 1861, freeing over 300 people by leading them into Canada. There was a \$40,000 reward for her capture. Guided by God through omens, dreams, warning, she claimed her struggle against slavery had been commanded by God. She foresaw the Civil War in a vision. When it began, she joined the Union Army, serving as a cook and nurse, caring for both Confederate and Union soldiers. She served as a spy and scout. She led 300 black troops on a raid which freed over 750 slaves, making her the first American woman to lead troops into military action. In 1858 she moved to upstate New York and opened her home to African-American orphans and helpless old people. She was illiterate, but founded a school for African-American children. She joined the fight for women's rights, and worked with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, but also supported African-American women in their efforts to found their own organizations to address equality, work, and education.

(Holy Women, Holy Men: Celebrating the Saints July 20)

These four women stand in history as examples of the power of so many who believe in justice and the dignity of every human person. Where do you see them alive in today's world? Let us give thanks for all who work in their own way to bring the vision of justice for all, and for the peacemakers who look to make God's dream for this world more of a reality. Spend time this week with the Baptismal Covenant Questions in our Rite of Christian Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer, p 304-305.

The Approach

Reader 1: The angels of God guard us through the night,
Reader 2: **and quieten the powers of darkness.**

The Spirit of God be our guide
to lead us to peace and to glory.

It is but lost labor that we haste to rise up early,
 and so late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety.
 For those beloved of God are given gifts even while they sleep.

Silence

My brothers and sisters, our help is in the name of the eternal God.
who is making the heavens and the earth.

Dear God, thank you for all that is good,
 for our creation and for our humanity,
 for the stewardship you have given us of this planet earth,
 for the gifts of life and of one another,
 for your love which is unbounded and eternal.

O thou, most holy and beloved,
 my Companion, my Guide upon the way, my bright evening star.

Reader 3: We repent the wrongs we have done:

Silence

We have wounded your love

Reader 4: **O God, heal us.**

We stumble in the darkness.

Light of the world transfigure us.

We forget that we are your home.

Spirit of God, dwell in us.

Eternal Spirit, living God,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
all that we are, have been, and shall be is known to you,
to the very secret of our hearts and all that rises to trouble us.

Living flame burn into us,
cleansing wind, blow through us,
fountain of water, well up within us,
that we may love and praise in deed and in truth.

The Invocation

Reader 1: Like the first disciples before the coming of God's power at Pentecost,
We wait in faith, and pray.

Silence

Be with us, Holy Spirit;

Reader 2: nothing can separate us from your love.

Be with us as of old, fill us with your power,
direct all our thoughts to your goodness.

Be present, Holy Spirit;
Bring faith and healing and peace.

Silence

The Lord is here.

God's Spirit is with us.

The Psalmody

Psalm 146

Reader 5: Praise the Lord O my soul *

Reader 6: as long as I live I will praise the Lord.

Yes, as long as I have life *

I will sing praises to my God.

Put no trust in princes, nor in any human power *
for in them there is no help.

When they breathe their last, they return to dust *
then all their plans come to nothing.

Happy are those whose helper is the God of Jacob *
whose hope is in the Lord their God,

Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them *
who keeps a promise forever,

Who defends the cause of the oppressed *
and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets free the prisoner, and gives sight to the blind *
the Lord raises up those bowed down,
and loves those who are just.

The Lord cares for the stranger in the land,
and sustains the widows and orphans *
but turns the way of the wicked to ruin.

The Lord shall reign forever *
your God O Jerusalem shall reign for all generations.
O praise the Lord.

Psalm 31

Reader 7: O God, I have come to you for shelter *

Reader 8: let me never be put to shame.

Deliver me in the justice of your ways *
incline your ear to me and be swift to save me.

Be for me a rock of refuge, a fortress to defend me *
for you are my rock and my stronghold.

Lead me and guide me for your name's sake *
deliver me out of the net that they have laid secretly for me,
for you are my strength.

Into your hands I commit my spirit, *
for you will redeem me, eternal God of truth.

Psalm 121

Reader 9: I will lift up my eyes to the mountains,

Reader 10: but where shall I find help?

From you alone, O God, does my help come,
creator of the ever changing hills.

You will not let me stumble on the rough pathways,
you care for me and watch over me without ceasing.

I am sure that the Guardian of my people
neither slumbers nor sleeps.

**The God of all nations keeps watch,
like a shadow spread over me.**

So the sun will not strike me by day,
nor the moon by night.

You will defend me in the presence of evil,
you will guard my life.

You will defend my going out and my coming in,
this night and always.

The Holy Scripture

Wisdom of Solomon 7:24-28

Reader 11:

Wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is the breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of God's goodness. Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets; for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.

(silence for reflection)

Luke 11:5-10

Reader 12:

Jesus said to the disciples “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock and it shall be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”

(silence for reflection)

Reader 13:

Let us pray:

O God, whose Spirit guides us into all truth and makes us free: Strengthen and sustain us as you did your servants Elizabeth, Amelia, Sojourner, and Harriet. Give us vision and courage to stand against oppression and injustice and all that works against the glorious liberty to which

you call all your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Prayers

Reader 2: God, you are working still, breaking down and building up;
 open our eyes to discern your hands
 so that we make take our place as laborers together with you.
 (p. 614, NZ Book of Common Prayer)

Reader 1: Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,

Reader 3: **For you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love.**

Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye;
Hide me under the shadow of your wings.

Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

Reader 4: Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping,
 That awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Reader 5: Praise be to God, I have lived to see this day.
 God's promise is fulfilled, and my duty done.
 At last you have given me peace, for I have seen with my own eyes
 the salvation you have prepared for all nations –
 a light to the world in its darkness, and the glory of your people Israel.
 Glory be to God, sustaining, redeeming, sanctifying,
 as in the beginning, so now, and forever. Amen.

Reader 4: Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping,
 That awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep may rest in your peace.

Reader 6: Eternal Spirit,
 Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
 Source of all that is and that shall be,
 Father and Mother of us all,
 Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
 The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
 Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
 Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
 In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
 In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
 From trials too great to endure, spare us.
 From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

We pray this night for the healing of our nation and our world.

Reader 1: Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed we may live in justice and peace.

God of grace and mercy:

Reader 5: Hear our prayer.

Reader 5: O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect.

God of grace and mercy:

Reader 6: Hear our prayer.

Reader 6: Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. We pray especially for those on our prayer list. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy.

God of grace and mercy:

Reader 7: Hear our prayer.

Reader 7: Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

God of grace and mercy:

Reader 8: Hear our prayer.

Reader 8: We give thanks for birthdays this week in our parish of Norman Rudi (7/22), Dan Nutini (7/22), Craig Forney (7/25), Derek Olsen (7/26), Miles Nutini (7/28). We pray for the candidates for the next Bishop of the Diocese of Iowa: Jennifer+, Betsey+ and Elizabeth+. Guide and protect each one of them in the coming days. Give us all discerning minds and hearts, and may your Spirit guide all those who will cast electing ballots. We give thanks for the 18 years of Spirit-led service by Bishop Alan and Donna. And we ask for your blessing on our Rector Amma Kim, assisting priest Mary Jane+, our postulant for the diaconate, Greta; and our ministry intern, Chad.

God of grace and mercy:

Reader 9: Hear our prayer.

Reader 9: We pray for the people of eSwatini, Haiti, Afghanistan, South Africa and other areas of our world caught in the frightening grips of civil unrest as pleas for greater democracy are ignored and denied. We pray for the people and clergy in these areas.

God of grace and mercy,

ALL: Hear our prayer.

Reader 10:

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you, bring the nations into your fold, pour out your spirit upon all flesh, and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Reader 11: God of the present moment,

God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart;
 Bring hope and courage to us as we wait in uncertainty.
 Bring hope that you will make us the equal of whatever lies ahead.
 Bring courage to endure what cannot be avoided,

for your will is health and wholeness;

You are God, and we need You. Amen. (p. 747, NZ Book of Common Prayer)

Reader 5: Lord, it is night.

The night is for stillness.

Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done;
 what has not been done has not been done;
 let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives
 rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
 all dear to us,
 and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,
 new joys,
 new possibilities.

In your name we pray. Amen.

Reader 2: God be in my head, and in my understanding.

Reader 3: God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

Reader 4: God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

Reader 5: God be in my heart, and in my thinking.

Reader 6: God be at my end, and at my departing.

Reader 1: To God the Creator,
 who loved us first and gave this world to be our home,
To God the Redeemer,
 who loves us and by dying and rising pioneered the way of freedom.
To God the Sanctifier,
 who spreads the divine love in our hearts,
Be praise and glory for time and for eternity.

ALL: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!