

Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church
A Service of Evening Prayer
Commemorating the Life of Frederick Douglass (1818 –1895)
Wednesday, February 19, 2025 (transferred)

Opening Sentence

Officiant Light and Peace in Jesus Christ our Savior.
All ***Thanks be to God.***

Officiant

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God. -Matthew 5:14-16

Officiant

Let us pray.

All

Gracious God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Psalm 35:23-28

Antiphon Be not far from me, O God; rise up to help me.

23 Awake, arise, to my cause! *
to my defense, my God and my Lord!

24 Give me justice, O God, according to your righteousness; *
do not let them triumph over me.

25 Do not let them say in their hearts, "Aha! just what we want!" *
Do not let them say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 Let all who rejoice at my ruin be ashamed and disgraced; *
let those who boast against me be clothed with dismay and shame.

27 Let those who favor my cause sing out with joy and be glad; *
let them say always, "Great is the Holy One, who desires the prosperity of God's servant."

28 And my tongue shall be talking of your righteousness *
and of your praise all the day long.

Antiphon Be not far from me, O God; rise up to help me.

First Reading

Reader A reading from the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas.

"The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view

of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out... It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm."

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

All ***Thanks be to God.***

Canticle

Isaiah 51:6-8

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;*
For the heavens will vanish like smoke.

the earth will wear out like a garment,*
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never end.

All you who know righteousness,*
you people who have my teaching in your hearts,

do not fear the reproach of others,*
and do not be dismayed when they revile you.

For the moth will eat them up like a garment,*
and the worm will eat them like wool;

but my deliverance will be forever,*
and my salvation to all generations.

Second Reading

Reader A reading from the Gospel of Luke (4:14-21).

Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Reader Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.
All ***Thanks be to God.***

Shared Reflection

The Magnificat

***My soul proclaims your greatness, O God;
my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior, *
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.***

***From this day all generations will call me blessed; *
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.***

***You have mercy on those who fear you *
from generation to generation.***

***You, O God, have shown strength with your arm, *
and scattered the proud in their conceit,***

***Casting down the mighty from their thrones *
And lifting up the lowly.***

***You have filled the hungry with good things *
and sent the rich away empty.***

***You have come to the help of your servant Israel, *
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,***

***The promise made to our forebears, *
to Abraham, Sara and their children forever.***

***Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God, *
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.***

The Prayers

Officiant God be with you.
People ***And also with you.***
Officiant Let us pray.

***God in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.***

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

Suffrages

- V. Show us your mercy, O God;
R. ***And grant us your salvation.***
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R. ***Let your people sing with joy.***
V. Give peace, O God, in all the world;
R. ***For only in you can we live in safety.***
V. O God, keep this nation under your care;
R. ***And guide us in the way of justice and truth.***
V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. ***Your saving health among all nations.***
V. Let not the needy, O God, be forgotten;
R. ***Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.***
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. ***And sustain us by your Holy Spirit.***

The Officiant invites additional prayers, silently or aloud.

Collects

Officiant

Almighty God, we bless your Name for the witness of Frederick Douglass, whose impassioned and reasonable speech moved the hearts of people to a deeper obedience to Christ: Strengthen us also to speak on behalf of those in captivity and tribulation, continuing in the way of Jesus Christ our Liberator; who with you and the Holy Spirit dwells in glory everlasting. ***Amen.***

Keep watch, dear God, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, O 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. ***Amen.***

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O God, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. ***Amen.***

Officiant Let us bless God.
People ***Thanks be to God.***

Officiant

The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. ***Amen.***

Sources

- This evening prayer service is adapted from Vespers in the *Saint Helena Breviary* (Church Publishing, 2006); Evening Prayer in *Enriching Our Worship I* (New York: Church Publishing, 1998); and the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church Publishing, 1979).
- The Psalm translation is from *The CSF Office Book* (Community of St. Francis, 1995). The Antiphon on the Psalm is from *The Saint Helena Breviary*, p. 228.
- *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* is available online at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23>
- The collect and second reading appointed for today can be found in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* at <https://www.lectionarypage.net/LesserFF/Feb/Douglass.html>
- The Canticle is from *The Saint Helena Breviary*, p. 228.