

DEACONESS AND TEACHER, 24 SEPT. 1947

**COLLECT: (*Remain Standing*)**

Loving God, who called Anna Alexander as a deaconess in your church: Grant us the wisdom to teach the gospel of Christ to whomever we meet, by word and by example, that all may come to the enlightenment that you intend for your people; through Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior. **Amen.**

**First Reading: Esther 5:1-14 (*Please be seated*)**

Reader: A reading from the book of Esther.

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne inside the palace opposite the entrance to the palace. As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won his favour and he held out to her the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the top of the sceptre. The king said to her, 'What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom.' Then Esther said, 'If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet that I have prepared for the king.' Then the king said, 'Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther desires.' So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. While they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, 'What is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.' Then Esther said, 'This is my petition and request: If I have won the king's favour, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet

that I will prepare for them, and then I will do as the king has said.'

Haman went out that day happy and in good spirits. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and observed that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was infuriated with Mordecai; nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home. Then he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh, and Haman recounted to them the splendour of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honoured him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the ministers of the king. Haman added, 'Even Queen Esther let no one but myself come with the king to the banquet that she prepared. Tomorrow also I am invited by her, together with the king. Yet all this does me no good so long as I see the Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate.' Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, 'Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go with the king to the banquet in good spirits.' This advice pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

# Psalm

Reader: Let us pray together the words of **Psalm 78**.

1 Hear my teaching, O my people; \*  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable; \*  
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.

3 That which we have heard and known,  
and what our forefathers have told us, \*  
we will not hide from their children.

4 We will recount to generations to come the  
praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, \*  
and the wonderful works he has done.

5 He gave his decrees to Jacob  
and established a law for Israel, \*  
which he commanded them to teach their  
children;

6 That the generations to come might know,  
and the children yet unborn; \*  
that they in their turn might tell it to their children;

7 So that they might put their trust in God, \*  
and not forget the deeds of God,  
but keep his commandments;

8 And not be like their forefathers,  
a stubborn and rebellious generation, \*  
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,  
and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The people of Ephraim, armed with the bow, \*  
turned back in the day of battle;

10 They did not keep the covenant of God, \*  
and refused to walk in his law;

11 They forgot what he had done, \*  
and the wonders he had shown them.

12 He worked marvels in the sight of their  
forefathers, \*  
in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He split open the sea and let them pass  
through; \*  
he made the waters stand up like walls.

14 He led them with a cloud by day, \*  
and all the night through with a glow of fire.

15 He split the hard rocks in the wilderness \*  
and gave them drink as from the great deep.

16 He brought streams out of the cliff, \*  
and the waters gushed out like rivers.

17 But they went on sinning against him, \*  
rebellious in the desert against the Most High.

18 They tested God in their hearts, \*  
demanding food for their craving.

19 They railed against God and said, \*  
"Can God set a table in the wilderness?"

20 True, he struck the rock, the waters gushed  
out, and the gullies overflowed; \*  
but is he able to give bread  
or to provide meat for his people?"

21 When the Lord heard this, he was full of  
wrath; \*

a fire was kindled against Jacob,  
and his anger mounted against Israel;

22 For they had no faith in God, \*  
nor did they put their trust in his saving power.

23 So he commanded the clouds above \*  
and opened the doors of heaven.

24 He rained down manna upon them to eat \*  
and gave them grain from heaven.

25 So mortals ate the bread of angels; \*  
he provided for them food enough.

26 He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens\*  
and led out the south wind by his might.

27 He rained down flesh upon them like dust \*  
and wingèd birds like the sand of the sea.

28 He let it fall in the midst of their camp \*  
and round about their dwellings.

29 So they ate and were well filled, \*  
for he gave them what they craved.

30 But they did not stop their craving, \*  
though the food was still in their mouths.

31 So God's anger mounted against them; \*  
he slew their strongest men  
and laid low the youth of Israel.

32 In spite of all this, they went on sinning \*  
and had no faith in his wonderful works.

33 So he brought their days to an end like a breath \*  
and their years in sudden terror.

34 Whenever he slew them, they would seek him, \*  
and repent, and diligently search for God.

35 They would remember that God was their rock, \*  
and the Most High God their redeemer.

36 But they flattered him with their mouths \*  
and lied to him with their tongues.

37 Their heart was not steadfast toward him, \*  
and they were not faithful to his covenant.

38 But he was so merciful that he forgave their  
sins and did not destroy them; \*  
many times he held back his anger  
and did not permit his wrath to be roused.

39 For he remembered that they were but flesh, \*  
a breath that goes forth and does not return.

## **Acts 18:12-28** (*Please be seated*)

Reader: A reading from the book of Acts.

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. They said, 'This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law.' Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters.' And he dismissed them from the tribunal. Then all of them seized Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.

After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow. When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; but on taking leave of them, he said, 'I will return to you, if God wills.' Then he set sail from Ephesus.

When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## **Luke 3:15-22** *(Please stand as you are able)*

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

**People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Christ**