

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Welcome to Morning Prayers here in the Appleton Chapel of the Memorial Church. I invite you to rise and join our responsorial Psalm, which is number 130, on page 65 of your black psalter. Please join in making your responses in bold.

Out of the depths, have I called to you, O God, hear my voice. Let your ears consider well the voice of my supplications.

Congregation:

If you were to note what is done amiss, O God, who would stand?

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

For there is forgiveness with you, therefore you shall be feared.

Congregation:

I wait for you, O God. My soul waits for you. In your word is my hope.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

My soul waits for you more than sentries for the morning, more than sentries for the morning.

Congregation:

O Israel, wait upon God, for with God there is mercy.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

With God there is plenteous redemption. God shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Congregation:

(singing)

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

This is a reading from the 11th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, beginning at the fifth verse.

Jesus said to them, "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 who's arrived and I have nothing to set before him.' And your friend 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 anything because he is his friend, at least because of your persistence, he will get up and give whatever he needs. So I say to you, ask and it will be given to you. Search and you will find. Knock

and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks, receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened." Here ends the lesson.

I'm an Anglican, of course, or from the Anglican tradition. And as in a lot of things, the Anglican position on sainthood is highly Protestant in its theology and very Roman in its practice, in its observance. Which means, we kind of go through all the motions of devotion to saints, but we actually don't really expect our saints to be, well, saints. We try to remember them in their fullness. Especially when we remember a relatively recent figure, when the figure has not had generations of forgetting, to cover over all the not so savory aspects of their character. We don't have the luxury of forgetting all those things, and we have to remember that person and their fullness. Which is good. We should remember that humans are humans, even saints are humans. But it can also be uncomfortable, especially when we have to remember things that we don't regard as saintly. Sort of like I talked about last week.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton is our saint for today. When she was born in Johnstown, New York in 1815. An incredibly important essential figure in the women's rights movement in this country, in a sort of victory for intersectionalism, she came to her women's rights work through her abolition work.

She had traveled with her husband, to London, for the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840, committed as she was to the abolition of slavery. But when she arrived, she discovered that she was not welcome at the convention because she was a woman. And so, outside the walls of the convention, she connected with Lucretia Mott, the abolitionist, American Quaker abolitionist. In 1846, Elizabeth moved from Boston to Seneca Falls. In 1848, she held a famous woman's rights conference in Seneca Falls, which among other things called for women to have the vote in this country. At the time, that was quite a controversial position to take, but it soon became a centerpiece, perhaps the centerpiece, of the American women's rights movement. She befriended Susan B. Anthony in 1851. During the Civil War, she founded the Women's National Loyal League, which gathered 300,000 signatures, demanding the abolition of slavery by constitutional amendment.

After the war, she was the founding president of the American Woman's Suffrage Association, and served in that role for 21 years. As I said, she was indispensable to the women's rights movement. She wrote a great deal also. She was also the primary author and her writing of a thing called the Women's Bible, which came out in the late 1890s. I think now, if we go to the bookstore, if anybody ever goes to bookstores anymore, if we look on Amazon, there are all kinds of Bibles that are targeted to particular populations. This was a scandalous thing when they released the Women's Bible. And she wrote most of the commentary, and most of the gloss and commentary of this new revised version of the Bible. Including the one comment when she said, when discussing the Noah's arc story, she said, "If a woman had designed the arc, there would've been more than one window." So she had a sense of humor also.

She died in 1902. As I said, she unquestionably advanced the cause of women's rights in this country. Without apology, she knocked on that door that Jesus spoke about throughout her life. But if her work began in intersectional success, it ended in intersectional failure. When the 15th Amendment to the Constitution was proposed, and promised to give black men the right to vote, she said repugnant and vile and racist things. She opposed the amendment, which is arguable as a political strategy because it did not include the right for women to vote. But the logic she used to justify that opposition was racist and hateful. And it led to the reproach of her friend, Frederick Douglass, and it then developed a breach between them that was never prepared.

Jesus says, "Knock and the door will be opened." We're meant to believe this promise. I don't know about you, who I'm not, I've asked for lots of things, not all of them have I received. I'm not sure also, that the people from whom we demand justice will be as forgiving as this friend, or indeed, as the God who loves us. And the God who loves us doesn't always seem to respond.

But whatever the case may be, I believe you do have to knock. And Elizabeth Cady Stanton did know how to knock, and knocked hard, and for her long life, and made a difference. We should learn from that example, but she also made mistakes. It seems to me that beating on the door is necessary if there is to be justice. But what surely doesn't work, is for those who stand outside that door to beat upon each other. Imagine what might come if we all turn together and beat at once, and demand that the justice that Elizabeth Cady Stanton spent so much of her life demanding.

I invite you, please, to rise in prayer.

The Lord be with you.

Congregation:

And also with you.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Let us pray.

Oh God, whose servant guides us into all truth and makes us free. Strengthen and sustain us as you did your servant Elizabeth. 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, forever and ever. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

And now, let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us, saying...

Congregation:

Our Father who are 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. 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, forever and ever. Amen.

Please join in singing closing hymn. Number 198.

Congregation/Choir:

(singing)

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be among you all, and remain with you always. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

This transcript was exported on Oct 26, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Let us bless the Lord.

Congregation:

Thanks be to God.