

A Service of Evening Prayer  
Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church  
Readings Commemorating the Life of James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)  
June 24, 2020

Opening Chant: Open My Heart

Ana Hernandez  
Music By Heart #31

The musical score is presented in two systems. Each system contains three staves: Part 1 (treble clef), Part 2 (treble clef), and Part 3 (bass clef). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "O - pen my heart, o - pen my heart." The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system continues the melody and lyrics.

**Opening Sentence**

*Officiant*

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting." Acts 2:1-2

*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.**

**Light of the World *Phos hilaron***

*Light of the world, in grace and beauty,  
Mirror of God's eternal face,  
Transparent flame of love's free duty,  
You bring salvation to the human race.  
Now, as we see the lights of evening,  
We raise our voice in hymns of praise;  
Worthy are you of endless blessing,  
Sun of our night, lamp of our days.*

**Psalm 46:1-8**

*Antiphon I have observed the misery of my people; I have heard their cry; I know their sufferings.\*  
I will send you to bring my people into freedom.*

**1 God is our refuge and strength, \* a very present help in trouble.**

**2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, \* and though the mountains be toppled  
into the depths of the sea;**

**3 though its waters rage and foam, \*and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.**

**4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, \* the holy habitation of the Most High.**

**5 God is in the midst of this city; it shall not be overthrown; \* God shall help it at the break of day.**

**6 The nations make much ado, and the dominions are shaken; \* God has spoken, and the earth shall melt away.**

**7 The Lord of hosts is with us; \* the God of Jacob is our stronghold.**

**8 Come now and look upon the works of the Lord, \* what awesome things God has done on earth.**

*Antiphon I have observed the misery of my people; I have heard their cry; I know their sufferings.\*  
I will send you to bring my people into freedom.*

**First Reading**

*Lector: A reading from James Weldon Johnson.*

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

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

### **Canticle**

**Ephesians 3:16-19**

***I pray that, according to the riches of God's glory,\*  
you may be strengthened in your inner being  
with power through the Holy Spirit.***

***May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith,\*  
as you are rooted and grounded in love.***

***I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,\*  
what is the breadth and the length and height and depth  
of the love of God for us, and that you may know the love of Christ***

***That surpasses knowledge,\*  
and be filled with all the fullness of God.***

### **Second Reading**

*Reader*            A reading from the Gospel of Luke (1:57-75).

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.  
He has raised up a mighty savior for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.  
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,  
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,  
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness  
before him all our days.

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

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

## **Reflection**

## **The Magnificat**

*Antiphon* ***Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must leave self behind,\*  
take up the cross every day, and follow me.***

***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.*

*Antiphon      Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must leave self behind, \*  
take up the cross every day, and follow me.*

### **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.**

## Collects

### *Officiant*

Eternal God, who gave your servant James Weldon Johnson a heart and voice to praise your Name in verse: As he gave us powerful words to glorify you, may we also speak with joy and boldness to banish hatred from your creation; in the Name of Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

O Christ, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. **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

- The Chant "Open My Heart" is by Ana Hernandez and can be found in *Music By Heart* (New York: Church Publishing, 2008), 31.
- 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 adapted from A Liturgical Psalter which can be found online at: <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/GS2016-Liturgical-Psalter-2016-05-04.pdf>
- The readings for James Weldon Johnson can be found at [http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/james\\_weldon\\_johnson.htm](http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/james_weldon_johnson.htm)
- The first reading, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was written by James Weldon Johnson together with the music composed by his brother J. Rosamond Johnson, in 1900 for a celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. The text with narrative can be found online at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46549/lift-every-voice-and-sing>