

Epiphany 1A
January 8, 2023

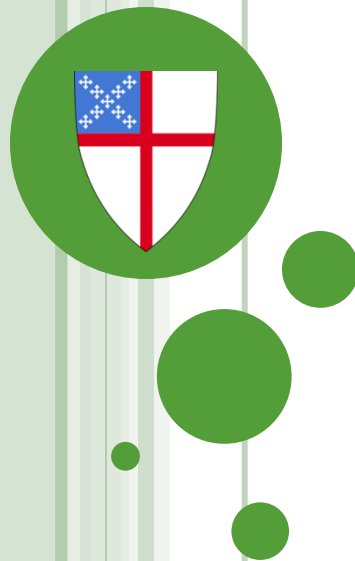
Harriett Bedell
(1875 - 1969)



Deaconess & Missionary

Isaiah 42:1-9
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

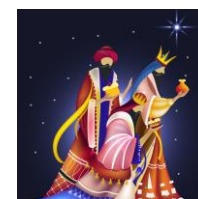
St. John's Episcopal Church, Centreville VA
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Harriet Bedell, missionary & friend to Florida's Seminoles, was born in Buffalo, NY and trained as a schoolteacher but was later inspired by an Episcopal missionary who spoke at her church about the many needs of his calling. In 1906 she applied to, and was accepted by, the New York Training School for Deaconesses, where her one-year course of study included instruction in religious matters, missions, teaching, hygiene, and hospital nursing. She was then sent as a missionary-teacher to Cheyenne Indians at Whirlwind Mission, OK. There she cared for the sick & the poor, organized tribal social services, served as the rector in his absence, & provided education for the women and children. She also provided religious instruction, hoping to win the Indians' confidence & convert them to Christianity. In 1916, Harriet's skill & success drew the attention of an Episcopal bishop who asked her to consider an assignment to a remote area of Alaska. Saddened to leave her mission, she nevertheless accepted the assignment to Stevens Village, AK. In 1922, she finally became a deaconess, instilling in her a new, even more profound dedication to her vocation. The Stevens Village mission moved to Tanana to allow a church-funded boarding school to be established for the children who could not travel to her in the bad winter weather. But by 1931, funds were so scarce that Deaconess Bedell traveled to New York to plea for contributions. Because of the Great Depression, money was tight, and although the Episcopal church paid off the school's existing debt, Bedell's mission shifted again. During her speaking tour following her Alaska service, she was invited to visit a Mikasuki Seminole Indian reservation in southern Florida. Appalled by their living conditions, she began another campaign to improve their quality of life, not merely teaching them, but living and working with them. She helped to revive their doll making and basket weaving skills which had become nearly extinct. She encouraged the incorporation of the intricate patchwork Indian designs into clothing for both women and men. Sales from the arts and crafts store at Glade Cross Mission improved income for the tribe. Believing their spiritual and physical comfort to be more important than religious conversion, Bedell emphasized health & education vice religious conversion in her work. Her work and friendship with the Seminoles spoke volumes and reflected those values.



Deaconess Harriett Bedell



Collect for Epiphany 1A

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.



Prayer for Epiphany 1A [Deaconess Harriet Bedell]

Holy God, fill us with compassion and respect for all people, and empower us for the work of ministry whether near or far away; that like thy servant Harriet Bedell, we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, and by giving up ourselves to your service. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

The Servant Songs of Isaiah

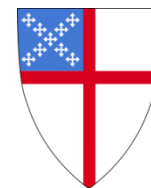
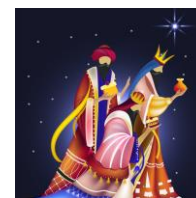
Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

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Special Status

- Isaiah Chs 42-53 contain 4 Servant Songs. The Servant is God's agent to do God's work in the world
- 2 of them in today's lesson
- 1st song (42:1-4) is the Servant's call to "bring justice to the nations"
- 2nd song, (49:1-6), defines Servant's mission "to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel"
- 3 characteristics of the servant.
- 1st, YHWH upholds the servant, giving him what he needs to succeed
- 2nd, Since YHWH chose the servant, he is acting on YHWH's not his own
- 3rd, the servant is not a mere tool in YHWH hands but one who brings joy to God—note correlation between this verse & Matthew 3:17 where, at Jesus' baptism, "Behold, a heavenly voice says, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased'."
- Vv2-3: He will faithfully bring justice
- V4: He won't fail nor be discouraged
- V6: YHWH calls you in righteousness
- V8: God's *kabod* (glory) is brilliant presence—so awesome that mortals cannot view it and live
- V9: YHWH will do what idols can't do, i.e., tell of new things before they occur.

EPHANY 4A: YHWH'S AGENT! [ISAIAH 42:1-9]



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Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

The Acts of the Apostles

The good news is
for everyone!

Acts 10:34-43

We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

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EPHAPHANY 1A: I CAME, I SAW, I BELIEVE! (ACTS 10:34-43)

--Belief in Jesus' resurrection should help us see things differently. Based on what it says in the text, what does this witness to resurrection see differently?

--Does his assertion test believers in resurrection to see differently?

--Luke followed conventions of his day to compose the Apostles' speeches

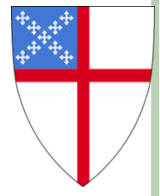
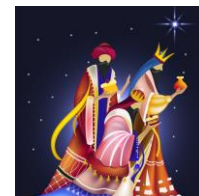
--Peter telling the Jesus story contains characteristic Lukan emphases

1. bringing of peace (V36)
2. God's anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit & power (V38)
3. centrality of Jerusalem (V39)
4. Jesus brings forgiveness of sins (V43)

--As he rehearses Jesus' story, Peter makes 2 statements to reinforce the inclusivity of the gospel.

1. 1st, V36 makes a politically charged claim that Jesus as "Lord of all", i.e., of all persons & nations, even above the emperor!
2. 2nd, V42 IDs Jesus as "judge of the living & the dead" reaffirming the totality of Jesus' lordship

--Does faith affect how we relate to power structures in our society? Does our belief in resurrection lead us to speak truth to power? Or do we assent to belief in Jesus' resurrection without it making a discernible impact on how we conduct ourselves and relate to others?



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Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.



And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

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Opening Act

--Jesus' public activity does not begin until Matthew 4:17.

--By Ch 3 his ID as God's agent whose public activity enacts God's will & reign.

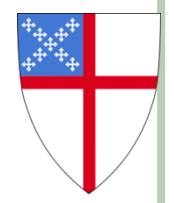
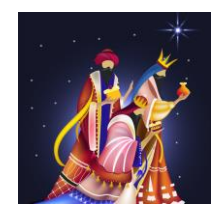
1. contextualized in God's life-giving, ruling activity among & the nations,
2. divinely commissioned to manifest God's saving presence,
3. born of Mary, t
4. threatened by King Herod
5. homaged by the magi,
6. neglected by Jerusalem leaders
7. protected by Joseph,
8. attested by the scriptures,
9. guided by God,
10. and witnessed to by John

--VV13-17::Verbalizing Jesus' ID, God bears witness His son

1. John's baptizing activity sets stage
2. Jesus imposes his authority with his demand for immediate baptism
3. Jesus' baptism expresses his obligation to live God's will
4. God confirms Jesus' identity and commitment, sending empowering Spirit & declaring Jesus' ID
5. Climax of the scene isn't baptism itself but the vision & audition Jesus hears when arising from the water.

EPHANY 1A:

[MATTHEW 3:13-17]



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