

“Meet me here”



A Service of Choral Evensong



Sunday, October 11, 2026 | 5:30 P.M.



St. John's
Episcopal Church

Deep Roots. True Belonging. Abundant Grace.

*“Meet me here,
where the old fence ends
and the horizon begins”*

National Coming Out Day can trace its roots back to October 11, 1987, the date of the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The march, held between October 8-13, was the second march on the Capitol. Now observed annually and around the world, National Coming Out Day continues to raise awareness of justice for the LGBT community and civil rights.

This day in the church calendar celebrates St. Philip the Deacon. Also called Philip the Evangelist, this saint was known for his healing, care for the poor, and his inclusion of those on the margins, including Samaritans and, as heard in our lection today, the baptism of an Ethiopian eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

One of the oldest liturgies in the Anglican tradition, Choral Evensong (sung Evening Prayer) combines the monastic offices of Vespers (sung at sunset) and Compline (sung before bedtime) and is drawn almost entirely from holy scripture. The service includes musical settings of the canticles Magnificat and Nunc dimittis.

Today’s service of Choral Evensong features music composed by members of the LGBTQ+ community. A look at The Episcopal Church’s record reveals a decades-old history of speaking out on issues related to equal justice. Support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Affirmation—and reaffirmation—of the civil rights of LGBTQ+ people. Denunciation of abuse in relationships. Combatting discrimination against those who are HIV positive. Advocating for access to gender-affirming care. Condemning book censorship at schools and libraries.

These examples, and the many related churchwide resolutions, represent and live out our baptismal covenant to respect **the dignity of every human being**. Undergirding our words—and more importantly, we hope, our actions—is our bedrock belief that we love God by loving and caring for God’s people.

Prelude

*Raise yourself up to your God
Evening Song*

Ethel Smyth (1858 - 1944)
David Hurd (b. 1950)

Introit

Meet me here

Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)

Madison Drace, *soprano*

Meet me here. Won't you meet me here
Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins
There's a balm in the silence like an understanding air
where the old fence ends and the horizon begins

We've been walking through the darkness on this long, hard climb
Carried ancestral sorrow for too long a time
Will you lay down your burden Lay it down, come with me.
It will never be forgotten Held in love, so tenderly

Meet me here. Won't you meet me here
Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins There's a joy in the singing
Like an understanding air Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins

Then we'll come to the mountain We'll go bounding to see
That great circle of dancing And we'll dance endlessly
And we'll dance with the all the children Who've been lost along the way
We will welcome each other Coming home, this glorious day

We are home in the mountain And we'll gently understand
That we've been friends forever That we've never been alone
We'll sing on through any darkness And our Song will be our sight
We can learn to offer praise again Coming home to the light...

Text: Craig Hella Johnson

The Procession *(Please stand)*

THE INVITATORY AND PSALTER

The Preces

Margaret Burk (b. 1992)

Cantor O Lord, open thou our lips.
Choir And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
Cantor O God, make speed to save us.
Choir O Lord, make haste to help us.
Cantor Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
Choir As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.
Cantor Praise ye the Lord.
Choir The Lord's name be praised.

Please be seated for the psalm.

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

THE LESSONS

The First Lesson

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.

You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; and you shall not lie to one another. And you shall not swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord.

You shall not defraud your neighbor; you shall not steal; and you shall not keep for yourself the wages of a laborer until morning. You shall not revile the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.

You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

[Leviticus 19:9-16]

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath regarded
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me,
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.
He hath showed strength with his arm;
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel,
as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Second Lesson

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit

of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. [Acts 8:26–40]

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Nunc dimittis *St. John's, Tallahassee Service*

Richard Webster (b. 1952)

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,
to be a light to lighten the Gentiles,
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed *(Sung by all, standing)*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand
of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge
the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

The Lesser Litany

Margaret Burk

Cantor The Lord be with you.
Choir And with thy spirit.
Cantor Let us pray.

The congregation may kneel.

Choir Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer *(Sung by the choir)*

Our Father, who 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 bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Suffrages

Cantor O Lord, show thy mercy upon us.
Choir And grant us thy salvation.
Cantor O Lord, save the State.
Choir And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.
Cantor Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
Choir And make thy chosen people joyful.
Cantor O Lord, save thy people.
Choir And bless thine inheritance.
Cantor Give peace in our time, O Lord.
Choir Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.
Cantor O God, make clean our hearts within us.
Choir And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collects

- Cantor* Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, even as thou and he are one: Grant that thy Church, being bound together in love and obedience to thee, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom thou didst send, the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
- Choir* Amen.
- Cantor* Almighty God, who hast created us in thine own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
- Choir* Amen.
- Cantor* Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for thy love's sake.
- Choir* Amen.

Please be seated.

The Sermon

The Rev. Melanie Salsgiver
Deacon

Offertory

*The offering received at this service will support **Equality Florida**, Florida's statewide civil rights organization dedicated to securing full equality for Florida's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community.*

Anthem

Do not be afraid
Stephanie Bonev, *soprano*

Philip J. Stopford (b. 1977)

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name; you are mine.
When you walk through the waters, I'll be with you;
you will never sink beneath the waves.
When the fire is burning all around you, you will never be consumed by the flames.
When the fear of loneliness is looming, then remember I am at your side.
When you dwell in the exile of a stranger, remember you are precious in my eyes.
You are mine, O my child, I am your Father, and I love you with a perfect love.

Text: Gerard Markland (b. 1953)

The General Thanksgiving *(Standing)*

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all people.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace,
and for the hope of glory.
And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to thy service,
and by walking before thee
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost,
be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Dismissal

Cantor Let us bless the Lord.
Choir Thanks be to God.

The Grace

Officiant The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy
Ghost, be with us all evermore.
All Amen.

Hymn *(Sung by all, standing)*



1 Cre - at - ing God, your fin - gers trace the bold de - signs of
2 Sus - tain - ing God, your hands up - hold earth's mys - teries known or
3 Re - deem - ing God, your arms em - brace all now de - spised for
4 In - dwell - ing God, your gos - pel claims one fam - ily with a



farth - est space; let sun and moon and stars and light and
yet un - told; let wa - ter's fra - gile blend with air, en -
creed or race; let peace, de - scend - ing like a dove, make
bil - lion names; let ev - ery life be touched by grace un -



what lies hid - den praise your might.
a - bling life, pro - claim your care.
known on earth your heal - ing love.
til we praise you face to face.

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Please be seated for the voluntary.

Voluntary

Prelude in G Major, BWV 568

J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

SERVING IN THE LITURGY

Officiant..... The Reverend Melanie Salsgiver, *Deacon*
Director of Music Marissa Hall
Choirs..... St. John's Adult Choir and Choristers
Cantor..... Conner Fabrega
Organists..... Kim King, Adam Ravain
Lectors Stephanie Schwartz, *Equality Florida*; Jonathan Jackson

Sung Compline

a service of quiet reflection offered to God at the end of the day
will resume Sunday, October 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Please Join Us

Sunday, November 1

4:00 p.m.

Mass for All Souls
featuring Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*

Sunday, December 13

7:00 p.m.

St. John's Annual Festival of
Advent Lessons & Carols
followed by a dessert reception



St. John's
Episcopal Church

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