



## St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

### FEAST OF ZITA OF TUSCANY (MORNING PRAYER)

*Saint Stephen's welcomes everyone who wishes to follow Christ, worship together, grow in faith and share God's love through service to others.*

*From Wikipedia*



Zita (c.1212 – 27 April 1272), also known as Sitha or Citha, was an Italian saint, the patron saint of maids and domestic servants. She is often appealed to in order to help find lost keys. She is often confused with St. Osyth or Ositha, an important English Saint with a town named after her.

Zita entered domestic service at the age of twelve and served the same family for almost fifty years. Through her diligence and fidelity, she became a trusted and valued servant. She spent her days doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. Zita was known for her kindness and generosity to the poor.

#### Life

Zita was born in Tuscany in a village not far from Lucca, to Giovanni and Buonissima Lombardo. Her maternal uncle, Graziano, was a hermit who dwelt on a

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**Wednesday, 26 April 9:30am**

**Announcements and Welcome**

**Deacon Dottie Gutwein**

## Opening Sentences

BCP p. 78

Leader: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.

## Confession of Sin

BCP p. 79

Leader: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*(Short Silence may be kept.)*

**All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and Forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Leader: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

## The Invitatory and Psalter

BCP p. 80-82

Leader: Lord, open our lips.

People: **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

**All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

*Leader chooses either the Venite or the Jubilate*

BCP p. 82-83

### Venite

Come, let us sing to the Lord; \*  
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving \*  
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, \*  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are the caverns of the earth, \*  
and the heights of the hills are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it, \*  
and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, \*  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture  
and the sheep of his hand. \*

Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

**OR**

### **Jubilate**

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; \*

serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song.

Know this: The Lord himself is God; \*

he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people  
and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; \*

give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; \*

and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

### **The Lessons**

#### **The Psalm: Psalm 16** *(Read in Unison)*

**1 Protect me, O God, for I take refuge  
in you; \***

**I have said to the Lord, "You are my  
Lord,  
my good above all other."**

**2 All my delight is upon the godly that  
are in the land, \***  
**upon those who are noble among the  
people.**

**3 But those who run after other gods \*  
shall have their troubles multiplied.**

**4 Their libations of blood I will not offer,  
\* nor take the names of their gods  
upon my lips.**

**5 O Lord, you are my portion and my cup; \*  
it is you who uphold my lot.**

**6 My boundaries enclose a pleasant  
land; \*  
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.**

**7 I will bless the Lord who gives me  
counsel; \***

**my heart teaches me, night after  
night.**

**8 I have set the Lord always before me; \*  
because he is at my right hand I  
shall not fall.**

**9 My heart, therefore, is glad, and my  
spirit rejoices; \*  
my body also shall rest in hope.**

**10 For you will not abandon me to the  
grave, \*  
nor let your holy one see the Pit.**

**11 You will show me the path of life; \*  
in your presence there is fullness of  
joy,  
and in your right hand are pleasures  
for evermore.**

#### **First Lesson A Reading from Exodus (1:15–21)**

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the

midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

Reader: The Word of the Lord

**People: Thanks be to God**

### **Gospel Lesson:**

**Deacon :** The holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to

**Mark (12:41–44)**

**People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.** *(No need to stand)*

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord

**People: Thanks be to God**

### *Reflection on readings / homily (optional)*

### **The Apostles Creed**

BCP p. 96

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **The Prayers**

BCP p. 97

Leader The Lord be with you.

**People And also with you.**

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross that he might draw the whole world to himself: Mercifully grant that we, who glory in the mystery of our redemption, may have grace to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

The Suffrages (A)

BCP p. 121-122

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

**R. And grant us your salvation.**

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

**R. Let your people sing with joy.**

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

**R. For only in you can we live in safety.**

V. Lord, 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 Lord, be forgotten;

**R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

**R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

The Collects

BCP p. 228, 98-100

*The Collect of the Day*

**Merciful God, who has given to us all things necessary for life and godliness; Grant that we, like your servant Zita, may be faithful in the exercise of our duties and that, whatever you give us to do, we may do it heartily to you for the honor and glory of your Name; through him who has called us to virtue, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.**

*Collect for the Renewal of Life*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## *Collect for Guidance*

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Intercessory Prayer:**

### **Birthdays, Anniversaries, Healing, Travel, Gratitude**

*(The Leader invites the people to offer their prayers silently or aloud)*

*(Leader concludes the service with ONE or the other of the following:)*

Prayer of General Thanksgiving

BCP p. 101

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.**

**We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable 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 pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.****

**OR**

*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 Lord, 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.****

## **Dismissal**

**Leader:** People of St. Stephen's, what does God call us to do?

**People:** **We are called to love and serve.**

**Deacon:** *Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in God's Spirit.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia!*

**People** **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia, (Alleluia!)**

Continued...

neighboring mountain where he had built a church and a shelter for travelers.<sup>[2]</sup> Her elder sister became a Cistercian nun.

At the age of 12, she became a servant in the household of the Fatinellis, a well-to-do family of silk merchants. Signora Fatinelli allowed Zita to attend school for a year and then put her to be trained under an older maid. Seeing how fond everyone was of Zita, the older maid did everything in her power to discredit her as negligent and lazy. Zita never attempted to defend herself. The other servants interpreted her piety as posturing.

By her meek and humble self-restraint, she at last succeeded in overcoming the malice of her fellow-servants. She gave one-third of her wages to her parents, kept a third, and gave the rest to the poor. The mistress of the house placed Zita in charge of the household almsgiving, and allowed her to visit the sick poor in their own homes and tend to their needs. A small room isolated from the rest of the house was put at Zita's disposal. She would venture out in the evenings and invite some poor homeless woman to supper. The room had a bed, and was offered as safe shelter for the night.<sup>[2]</sup>

She always rose several hours before the rest of the family and took care to hear Mass every morning before she began work. She attended to her tasks with diligence and fidelity, and studied when possible to anticipate what needed to be done. It was Signora Fatinelli dying wish that Zita be placed in charge of the household. Zita continued to serve the Fatinellis after the death in 1260 of Guglielmo Fatinelli when his son Pagano became the head of the family.<sup>[2]</sup>

## **Legends**

A story sometimes depicted in art concerns Zita carrying bread in her cloak to bring to the poor. Jealous servants reported this to the master, who confronted Zita. Upon opening the cloak, however, it was found to be full of flowers. A similar tale is told of [Elizabeth of Hungary](#).

One anecdote relates a story of Zita giving away her own food during a famine, and then that of her master. When he remonstrated with her for depleting the family's own resources, they found the pantry fully stocked.<sup>[3]</sup>

There are various versions of the miracle of the loaves. On one morning, Zita left her chore of baking bread either to tend to someone in need, or was deep in prayer in her room. She returned to find in the kneading-trough the loaves all ready set and prepared, or already baked. Since neither the servants nor the mistress knew who had prepared the bread, it was commonly attributed to angels.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

On another occasion, Zita was returning from distributing alms when she encountered a beggar. Having nothing left to give him, she accompanied him to the village well to draw him a cool drink. She let a copper jug down into the well, and in the act of holding it out to him, made the sign of the cross over the water, praying that this drink might be blessed to the poor wayfarer. As he made to drink, he found that the water had turned into wine.

## **Death and canonization**

Zita died peacefully in the Fatinelli house on April 27, 1272. It is said that a star appeared above the attic where she slept at the moment of her death. She was 60 years old,<sup>[6]</sup> and had served and edified the family for 48 years. By the time of her death, she had become practically venerated by the family. After 150 miracles had been attributed to Zita's intercession and recognized by the church, she was [canonized](#) in 1696.<sup>[7]</sup>

[Cont. online Wikipedia](#)

