

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church



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

FEAST OF TABITHA (DORCAS) OF JOPPA

Wednesday, 25 October 2023 9:30am



Dorcas (Greek: Δορκάς, *From Wikipedia romanized: Dorkás*, used as a translated variant of the Aramaic name), or **Tabitha** (Imperial Aramaic: ,טביתא/תבתא/טבתא romanized: *Ṭabīṭā*, lit. '(female) gazelle'), was an early disciple of Jesus mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles^{[1][2]} (Acts 9:36–43, see discussion here). She lived in the port city of Joppa, today absorbed by Tel Aviv. Acts describes her as being known for her "good works and acts of mercy", sewing clothes for the poor.^{[3][4]} When she died, the widows of her community mourned her and sent urgently for Peter (Acts 9:38), who was in nearby Lydda. As evidence of her charity, they showed him some of the clothes she had sewn, and according to the biblical account he raised her from the dead.^[5]

She is celebrated as a saint by the Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, and some Protestant denominations.^{[6][7]}

Name

Continued Pg10

Announcements and Welcome

Rev. Allison Cornell

Salutation:

Presider: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ be with you

People: **and also with you.**

Priest: Let us pray the collect for purity together:

All: **Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our
hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Gloria:

**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 Collect:

Presider: The Lord be with you

People: **And also with you.**

Presider: Let us pray

**Most Holy God, who did raise from the dead your servant Tabitha to
display your power and confirm that your Son is Lord; Grant unto us your
grace, that, aided by her prayers and example, we may be given a new life in you,
to do works pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord; who
lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and
ever. Amen.**

The Readings: *(Please be seated)*

First Reading: A reading from Acts 9:36-42

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Psalm: 1

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, *
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!**
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, *
and they meditate on his law day and night.**
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; *
everything they do shall prosper.**
- 4 It is not so with the wicked; *
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.**
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, *
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.**
- 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, *
but the way of the wicked is doomed.**

Gospel Reading:

Deacon/Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
Matthew 25:1-13

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said, “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Deacon/Reader The Gospel of the Lord
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

SERMON/HOMILY

CONTEMPORARY NICENE CREED: *(please stand as you are able)*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People:

Leader: As God's people, called to love one another, let us pray for the needs of the church, the whole human family, and all the world.
For churches of all traditions:

People: That they may discover their unity in the One God and exercise their gifts in service of all, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: For the earth that it may be freed from war, famine, and disease,

People: And the air, soil, and waters be cleansed of poisons, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: For those who govern and maintain peace in every land,

People: That they may exercise their powers in obedience to your commands, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: For the strengthening of this nation to pursue just and honorable priorities,

People: So that all peoples may be reconciled; the young, educated; and the old, cared for; the hungry, filled; and the homeless, housed; and the sick, comforted and healed, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: For all who live and work in this town and county,

People: Preserve them in peace and safety, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: For those who face any difficulty or trial: the sick, the disabled, the poor, the oppressed, those who grieve and those in prison,

People: That you will comfort and empower them, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: Accept our thanksgiving for all faithful servants of Christ who entered their eternal rest,

People: Who, with us, await a new heaven and a new earth, your everlasting kingdom, we pray to you, O God.

Leader: In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer pray for **The Diocese of West Ankole – The Church of the Province of Uganda.**

People: May God bless and keep them.

Leader: In the Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for **St. James the Apostle, in Tempe.**

People: May God bless and keep them.

Leader: We pray for the first peoples of this land, especially the Apache and Tahona Odum peoples who call this area home.

People: May God bless and keep them.

Presider: Mighty God, whose Word we trust, whose Spirit enables us to
pray: Accept our requests and further those which will bring about
your purpose for the earth; through Jesus Christ, who rules
over all things. **Amen.**

The Confession:

Deacon: Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another:

All: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

Presider: May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace:

Presider: May the peace of the Lord be always with you!

People: And also with you.

(The people exchange greetings of peace)

Offertory:

Presider Walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God

The Doxology:

#380 vs 3

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise him all creatures here below
Praise him above ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The Lord's Supper: The Great Thanksgiving - CofE Prayer D

Presider: The Lord is here.

People: His Spirit is with us.

Presider: Lift up your hearts

People: We lift them up to the Lord

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Presider continues:

Almighty God, your face is turned towards your world. In love you gave us Jesus your Son to assure us of pardon and everlasting life. Your Word goes out to call us home to the places where angels sing your praise. We join with them in heaven's song:

Sanctus

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Father of all, we give you thanks for every gift that comes from heaven. To the darkness Jesus came as your light. With signs of faith and words of hope he touched untouchables with love and washed the guilty clean. This is his story.

All This is our song: Hosanna in the highest.

The crowds came out to see your Son, yet at the end they turned on him. On the night he was betrayed he came to table with his friends to celebrate the freedom of your people. This is his story.

All This is our song: Hosanna in the highest.

Jesus blessed you, Father, for the food. He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and said: "Take, eat: this is my body, given for you all. Do this in remembrance of me."

Jesus then gave thanks for the wine. He took the cup, gave it to them and said: “This is my blood, shed for you all for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.” This is our story.

All This is our song: Hosanna in the highest.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup (+) blessed by your Holy Spirit, we celebrate Jesus’ last supper before he died to show his love for us. Defying death he rose again and is alive with you to respond to our entreaties and to answer the cares of the world. This is our story.

All This is our song: Hosanna in the highest.

Send your Spirit upon us now (+) that by these gifts we may feed on Christ with opened eyes and hearts on fire. May we and all who share this food offer ourselves to live for you and be welcomed at your feast in heaven where all creation worships you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

*All Blessing and honor and glory and power be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Presider: And now as Jesus has taught us, we pray:

CONTEMPORARY LORD’S PRAYER:

Our Father 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. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread: *(Presider breaks the consecrated bread in silence)*

**All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us your peace.**

Invitation to Communion:

Presider: The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.

Continued from front Both her Jewish name,^[1] which is in Aramaic, rendered as Tabitha, and her Greek one, Dorcas, translate to [female] 'gazelle'.^[8] The equivalent Hebrew name is Zibiah, also spelled Tsibiah, a name carried by the mother of King Joash of Judah.^[9] Some explain the use of a Greek variant of Tabitha's Syriac Aramaic name by the fact that she was living in a port city, where many inhabitants and visitors would primarily communicate in Greek.^[9] Dorcas was a common name of the time both among Jews and Greeks.^[1] Today, the scientific name of one species of gazelle is *Gazella dorcas*, the dorcas gazelle.^[10] The Greek verb used in Acts 9:36 is *διερμηνεύω*, transliterated diermēneuō, which means "to interpret fully, to explain", and in this passage it is rendered "*is by interpretation*", which in context leads to the literal meaning: "*Tabitha, meaning Dorcas*" (i.e. 'gazelle').^{[11][12]}

Position in her community

It is unclear whether Dorcas was herself poor or a widow.^[5] Acts describes her as beloved in the specifically Christian community at Joppa, and by implication prominent in it.^{[5][9]} This might also be indicated by the fact that Peter took the trouble to come to her from a neighbouring city, when requested by the community members.

Although widowhood has been associated with poverty and dependence in the early modern Western mind, that was not necessarily the case for Dorcas. The Bible describes a variety of widows, both poor and rich, powerful and dependent. Under Roman law in this era, when a woman's father died, she would become legally independent and would conventionally inherit an equal share of his property along with her siblings. She controlled this property herself even if married. If her husband died, she would also recover her dowry, which would have been controlled, and possibly managed or invested, by her husband during their marriage. Thus a woman could actually become wealthier when her husband died.^[13] If Dorcas was a wealthy benefactress on the model of Mary Magdalene, then she nevertheless humbly sewed the clothes herself rather than simply buying them.

Death and burial sites

According to the New Testament, Tabitha died in Joppa, at the house of Simon the tanner. The house where she died and was resurrected by Saint Peter can still be visited in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. When she died a second time, she was buried in what are now the gardens of an Orthodox Church in Jaffa, where her tomb can still be visited.^{[14][15]}

In Christian tradition

Basil of Caesarea refers to Dorcas as an example in his *Morals* (rule 74): "That a widow who enjoys sufficiently robust health should spend her life in works of zeal and solicitude, keeping in mind the words of the Apostle and the example of Dorcas."^[16] She is also commemorated in poems by Robert Herrick ("The Widows' Tears: Or, Dirge of Dorcas") and George MacDonald ("Dorcas").

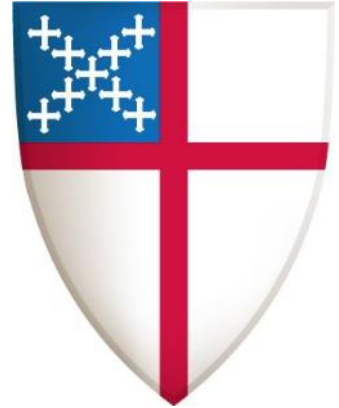
Feast

The Catholic Church commemorates St Tabitha on October 25,^[7] the same date as the Eastern Church.^[6] Dorcas societies, which provide clothing to the poor, are named after her.^[9] The Eastern Orthodox Church celebrates Saint Tabitha the Widow, raised from the dead by the Apostle Peter, on October 25.^[17]

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