

In the Morning Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020
Frances Joseph Gaudet, Educator and Prison Reformer, 1934

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Merciful God, who raised up thy servant Frances Joseph Gaudet to be a champion of the oppressed: Grant that we, encouraged by her example, may advocate for all who are denied the fullness of life to which you have called all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Dwelling in the Word

Luke 4:14–21

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

As you hear the passage being read, what word or phrase is God calling you to notice?
As you hear the passage read a second time, what might God be calling you to try on at this time?

Following your silent meditation after the second reading, please type your word or phrase into the Chat if you would like to share it. The officiant will invite all of us into a quiet time for a few minutes to prayerfully read and reflect on the words offered in the Chat.

The officiant will end this time of silent prayer with The Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Zoom Call

At end of zoom call

Closing Prayer

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

The poem "The Work of Christmas" is from Howard Thurman's *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations*

Blessing

Merry Christmas!! 🎄

FRANCES JOSEPH GAUDET, Educator and Social Reformer, 1934
Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018

Frances was born in a log cabin in Holmesville, Mississippi, in 1861, of African American and Native American descent. Raised by her grandparents, she later went to live with a brother in New Orleans, where she attended school and Straight College.

While still a young woman, Gaudet dedicated her life to prison reform. In 1894, she began holding prayer meetings for black prisoners. She wrote letters for them, delivered messages, and found them clothing. Later, she extended this ministry to white prisoners as

well. Her dedication to the imprisoned and to penal reform won her the respect of prison officials, city authorities, the governor of Louisiana, and the Prison Reform Association.

In 1900, she was a delegate to the international convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Edinburgh, Scotland. Gaudet worked to rehabilitate young blacks arrested for misdemeanors or vagrancy, becoming the first woman to support young offenders in Louisiana. Her efforts helped to found the Juvenile Court.

Deeply committed to the provision of good education, she eventually purchased a farm and founded the Gaudet Normal and Industrial School. In time, it expanded to more than 105 acres, with numerous buildings, and also served as a boarding school for children with working mothers. Gaudet served as its principal until 1921, when she donated the institution to The Episcopal Church in Louisiana. Though it closed in 1950, the Gaudet Episcopal Home opened in the same location four years later to serve African American children aged four to sixteen.

Frances died on December 30, 1934.