



EPISODE TITLE: “For Such a Time”

Into This World, Episode 2

**Featured Guest:** *Stephanie Spellers*

Stephanie Spellers is an Episcopal priest, church planter and leader of ecumenical efforts to reinvent church for a changing world. The author of *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation* and other books, she teaches at General Theological Seminary in New York, directs missional initiatives in the Diocese of Long Island, and serves as a senior consultant for the Center for Progressive Renewal. She lives in Manhattan.

**Questions:**

1. What are you willing to make trouble over?
2. What stands out for you from the story of Esther? What are some of the moral quandaries for modern readers? How do you address those quandaries?
3. What connections do you make between the story of Esther and the quote from June Jordan, “We are the ones we have been waiting for”? What does the story of Esther ask of us?

**Pneuma Divina Scripture: Esther 4:1-17**

<sup>4</sup>When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; <sup>2</sup>he went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one might enter the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth.<sup>3</sup>In every province, wherever the king’s command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> When Esther’s maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. <sup>5</sup>Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. <sup>6</sup>Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate, <sup>7</sup>and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. <sup>8</sup>Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

<sup>9</sup> Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. <sup>10</sup>Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, <sup>11</sup>“All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden sceptre to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.”<sup>12</sup>When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, <sup>13</sup>Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. <sup>14</sup>For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”<sup>15</sup>Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, <sup>16</sup>“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.”<sup>17</sup>Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

*The New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized Edition)*, copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.